

Moral Perception and Education in the World Today

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## ABSTRACT

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Moral perception is the non-inferential moral awareness immediately associated with moral emotion and action. Unfortunately, moral blindness, the incapability of moral perception, is frequently observed in the contemporary world. In order to account for the prevalence of moral blindness moral perception needs to be illuminated first, and the central purpose of this investigation is to elucidate the core property of moral perception. Moral perception has been denied by many modern moral theorists for a long time, but moral perception is an essential constituent of morality, which is also found in traditional moral philosophies, such as Aristotle's and Nietzsche's. Very recently, moral perception begins to be recognized as a way of moral awareness, but the number and diversity of research on it are still limited. Joining the recent effort to highlight moral perception this research attempts a new approach, phenomenological explication of moral perception, and Dewey's concept of perception and Heidegger's concept of thinking are mainly drawn on. For Dewey, perception presupposes the participatory subject who becomes to be related to the object or the situation, which is contrasted to the detached subject of recognition. Heidegger conceives thinking in a primordial sense which includes the perceptive level. Thinking begins with being inclined toward each other. On the ground of mutual inclination thinking becomes thanking to receive all that touch us. As Dewey and Heidegger similarly inform it, the essence of perception is the immediate connection between the perceiver and the perceived, and it is particularly distinct in moral perception. As an illustration of moral perception a Korean movie, *Poetry* by Chang-dong Lee, is introduced. Mija, the main character

of the movie vividly embodies moral perception contrasted to moral blindness of the modern world. Considering the circumstance of modern world where the natural cultivation of moral perception is hindered, it is time to ask what kind of seeing and thinking should be cared about for education today.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Moral Blind in the Contemporary World

#### Situation #1

In the video on a school bus a group of teenage boys is relentlessly tormenting the 68 year old woman who is the bus monitor with insulting words about her appearance, family, etc. It was recorded by one of bullies and posted on YouTube under the title, “Making the Bus Monitor Cry”.

#### #2

Mindless citizens had passed by a man lying on the street, who obviously needed urgent care. He was found dead later.

#### #3

Jack accepts the argument that meat factory farming is doing cruelty to animals and harmful to nature and the people who eat the meat, but he does not abstain from consuming factory farming meat. <sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately these are common cases of moral failure frequently observed in the contemporary world. The situations are alike in that they illustrate a sort of moral failure which moral theorists

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<sup>1</sup> The first situation is what happened in upstate New York, and the second in Beijing, China. The last one is not a real story, but it is a case which is introduced in Wisneswki and Jacoby’s discussion on the relation between moral intention and moral perception. Wisneswki and Jacoby’s discussion will be dealt with in Chapter 2.

regard as the failure of ‘seeing’. Here ‘seeing’ is certainly neither the visual sensation of colors or shapes nor the mindless recognition of objects or situations. For example, just seeing that there is a man lying on the street refers to moral perception which is immediately associated with non-inferential moral awareness.<sup>2</sup> What they fail to see, for example, in the second situation is that a human being’s life is endangered. The endangered human being would not be looked over by those capable of moral perception, and the perception would be immediately followed by moral emotion or action.

A classic example of moral perception is found in Mencius. Mencius says, “If anyone were suddenly to see a child about to fall into a well, his mind would be filled with alarm, distress, pity, and compassion.”(Ivanhoe, 2009, p35) Whoever to see it would spontaneously run to rescue the infant. Mencius reflects that in this immediate response any reasoning for gains is not involved. “That he would react accordingly,” Mencius says, “is not because he would hope to use the opportunity to ingratiate himself with the child’s parents, nor because he would seek commendation from neighbors and friends, nor because he would hate the adverse reputation [that could come from not reacting accordingly].” He continues, “From this, it may be seen that one who lacks a mind feels pity and compassion would not be human.” For Mencius moral perception is the essential capability that marks human beings. It is natural for human beings to perceive the situation that a human is endangered and immediately engage in it without any reason.

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<sup>2</sup> I suppose that moral perception is separate from moral awareness in defining the relation between moral perception and moral awareness by association. In fact, moral awareness and moral perception is hardly distinguished from each other in the empirical level. Awareness can be identified with perception in that they are a single instantaneous experience. They are only distinguished from each other when they are considered conceptually. The experience is called perception when its process is denoted, and it is called awareness when its consequential state is denoted.

In the situations of moral failure the boys, the citizens, and Jack are unable to perceive the moral situation. Their cases are different from self control failure to do something immoral because of strong desire in spite of instant awareness of the immorality. The moral failure in the examples is due to moral blindness. They behave immorally because they are ignorant of its immorality. Moral blindness should be considered as a more serious occasion than the failure of refraining from immoral action because moral perception is associated with moral responsibility on which moral discourse and intervention is established. For example, the difficulty that school teachers recently confront more often in dealing with school violence, such as bullying, mainly comes from student's moral blindness. Many students do not feel ashamed when they are admonished for their violent actions. Moral blindness is an acute problem as Mencius points out moral blindness as a manifestation of the lack of humanity. For him those who show moral blindness are more blamable than those who fail to refrain from some immoral desire. For example, the citizens passing by the deadly sick man are morally even worse than a thief rescuing the baby on the way going for thievery.

Some people might still doubt the seriousness of moral blindness and say, "The non-violent case of moral blindness in the citizens' and particularly Jack's is not a critical occasion of moral decline. In those cases they are simply not morally good. They cannot be the main target of moral blame because they are not that bad as long as they have never harmed others. What is more urgent is to eradicate cruelty from the world rather than to promote morally good action." The citizens' and Jack's moral blind are certainly different cases from the boys' in the respect that the formers are not the case of harming others whereas the latter is an unquestionable one. However, the non-violent moral blindness shows a fundamental problem of the lack of moral agency. To respond to moral situations is an essential element of morality. We become a moral

agent by doing something morally necessary or desirable rather than by merely not doing something morally bad. If our agency degenerates, then our world will fall into an amoral space where there is no will to cope with the cruelty that inevitably keeps arising. The weakness of moral agency is accompanied with the lack of moral engagement, and it forms a favorable circumstance for the unyielding violence. The increase in violence is inseparable from the decrease in agency, and these are two inseparable sides of moral blindness. In this respect the violent moral blindness and non-violent moral blindness equally indicates the moral decline in modern times.

In order to account for the prevalence of moral blindness in the contemporary world, moral perception needs to be illuminated first. To join the philosophical effort to explicate the concept of moral perception, the central purpose of this investigation is to elucidate the core property of moral perception. Moral perception is a conception of moral awareness, which has been compared with moral reasoning. David Hume is one of the earliest philosophers who find the ground of morality somewhere else than reason. He claims, “Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason.”(1975, p. 325) As Hume’s view on morality represents it, there has been the view to consider that moral awareness does not come from reason. The moral awareness that is considered to be unrelated to reasoning faculty is designated as moral perception, which is analogized to color sensation or esthetic appreciation, such as seeing beauty in a landscape. We see what is morally good and bad immediately without any reasoning process to find it out, and the strength of this moral awareness is that it is associated with moral emotions and actions as Hume emphasizes it.

However, the opposite view to consider reasoning as the only reliable way of moral awareness has been dominant in moral philosophy. From this view, the validity of moral perception which tends to be intimately related to emotion is denied, and it might be said that if there is so-called moral perception, it refers to some seeming moral phenomenon which actually has nothing to do with the essence of morality and possibly even hinders moral reasoning, the genuine moral awareness. It seems that under the profound influence of the dominant view, moral perception has not lively been discussed in the field of moral philosophy. However, moral perception very recently begins to be revisited as we will see the recent researches on moral perception in the next chapter.

However, some people holding the dominant view to regard moral reasoning as the only genuine moral awareness might express the concern that to illuminate moral perception would not deepen our understanding of moral blindness, since moral perception is not a substantial moral awareness. It would be beyond the scope of this research to spell out the validity of moral perception, and there are researches to attempt to demonstrate it.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it seems to be worthy to address this issue briefly in that it reflects how this research will approach moral perception.

As it was mentioned, the doubt about moral perception usually arises from the unreliability of moral perception. The evidence is that people's immediate decision or judgment about given moral situation, such as moral dilemma, is affected by emotions, word choices, and the like whereas the situation does not change.<sup>4</sup> Perception cannot be trusted because it is subject to the extrinsic circumstance. In this critical view, moral perception is dealt with as an

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote number 9 in Chapter 2 to find the relevant researches.

<sup>4</sup> See Musshenga (2009).

epistemic mode, so that what is concerned with is whether moral truth can be sought or not by perception. However, the doubt about moral perception does not negate its validity when moral perception is considered as an ethical phenomenon, not as the epistemic one. From the ethical perspective the inconsistent response to the intrinsically identical moral situation does not prove moral inability. As long as one perceives that the given situation morally matters and tries to engage in it, for example, one comes to have a relevant emotion, the one displays the moral capability. Particularly, in a complex situation moral perception possibly yields different reactions, but it does not indicate the failure of moral awareness. To see it as a moral situation and participate in it is the evidence of moral agency, since from the ethical perspectives the essence of morality does not lie in getting at moral truth, but in moral engagement in the world.

The assertion that the essence of morality is not relevant to the ability to find out the moral truth could be interpreted to hold relativism. It is not the case, but it is also beyond the scope of this research to elaborate why the assertion should not be associated with relativism. Very briefly speaking, moral truth is not revealed in the tricky situations. We can see moral truth in a more straightforward situation, such as the first and second situations presented at the beginning of this chapter. The moral truth found in those situations is “Do not hurt others, but help.” Moral truth is not what is relatively established but what is disclosed when we become a moral agent, in other words, when we have a good will.<sup>5</sup>

In terms of terminology, many theorists have used moral intuition or moral sense instead of moral perception.<sup>6</sup> Moral intuition and moral sense can be taken as synonyms of moral

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<sup>5</sup> The concept of good will was drawn on from Kant’s *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1997, pp. 9-22).

<sup>6</sup> For example, see Musshenga (2009), Audi (2004), and Huemer (2005).

perception in that all of them denote non-inferential moral awareness, but for this research moral perception is employed for two reasons. Firstly, recent researches in moral philosophy use the term of moral perception more often than that of intuition and sense particularly when they deal it with from the ethical perspective, and thus I follow the current terminological tendency. Secondly and more importantly, perception carries the phenomenological connotation of moral awareness in question, “take in.” As the origin of perception composed of *per-* “entirely” and *capere* “take” manifests it, perception means to receive the whole being.<sup>7</sup> Moral perception is a representative sort of perception which manifests the core property, the holistic receptivity. In moral perception the entire being of object is taken in to be related to the entire being of the subject. Through the sheer connection moral agency is provoked to participate in the situation, and it comes into view in the form of moral emotion and action immediately accompanies the moral perception.

It is a significant point that the term of perception carries the phenomenological connotation of moral perception, since it suggests that moral perception can be considered as perception in the first place, and thus moral perception can be illuminated by the phenomenological explication of perception. The relation between moral perception and perception can be compared to that between handshaking and greeting. There are many ways of greeting, for example, writing some greeting words in letters, saying hello, bowing, eye contacting or smiling, handshaking, hugging and kissing, and so on. Handshaking could be regarded as a representative way of greeting in that it embodies well the essence of greeting. Handshaking is to approach the other to recognize her existence in the most primordial manner, touching, and let her do so simultaneously. On the other hand, the meaning of handshaking could

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<sup>7</sup> Referring to *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2003, s.v. “perception.”

be also illuminated by an elucidation of the aspiration of greeting. Similarly, moral perception is a representative one among many sorts of perception, so that moral perception and perception are in the relation to shed light on each other. This point is a ground for the plan of this investigation, illuminating moral perception by the explication of perception.

Phenomenology is adopted as the methodology for this research. This methodology is distinctive in that phenomenological approach is very rare in the field of moral philosophy. However, phenomenology is pertinent in that for this research moral perception is considered as an ethical event rather than an epistemic mode as it was stated previously. Put differently, from the phenomenological perspective perception is a characteristic human experience, and this view is congruous with the ethical view to take moral perception as moral experience, not as a way of searching for the moral truth. The pertinence of the method gets more evident when the limitation of conventional approach to moral perception is reckoned. There has been the tendency to conceive moral perception focusing either on the cognitive aspect or on the emotional.<sup>8</sup> Moral perception is a cognitive experience, but there is the emotional level in it as Hume stresses that passion is an element of morality. However, cognitive and emotional aspects are seldom concurrently included in the explication of moral perception because of the tendency to suppose the antithesis between cognition and emotion. The tendency to conceive moral perception partially focusing either on the cognitive aspect or on the emotional aspect will be overcome through phenomenological approach, which adopts the holistic manner of illustration. The dichotomous orientations in the research of moral perception will be elaborated in Chapter 2.

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<sup>8</sup> To explicate moral perception focusing on the cognitive aspect should be distinguished from to take moral reasoning as the only authentic moral awareness. In the former view the validity of moral perception is not doubted, but the cognitive aspect is focused in explicating moral perception. In the latter moral perception in itself is doubted.

For the phenomenological explication of perception John Dewey and Martin Heidegger will be drawn on. Dewey and Heidegger provide profound ideas which inform moral perception. Dewey's concept of perception is often called on in the researches about moral perception particularly with regard to moral education. For Dewey, perception is the way of seeing for esthetic experience which is not restricted to artistic experience but including all experiences of the esthetic quality. Perception is distinct in that it presupposes the participatory subject who becomes to be related to the object or the situation. Dewey compares perception with recognition to highlight the participatory feature of perception which is contrasted to the detachment of recognition. For perception, to take in the other being, one should be engrossed in the situation, and the participatory state brings about continuous active engaging between the subject and the object, which results in the esthetic quality of experience, a single quality harmonizing the whole experience.

Contrary to the case of Dewey, some might be dubious about drawing on Heidegger, since it is rare to draw on Heidegger in terms of morality, and moreover any direct conception of perception is not found in his philosophy. However, Heidegger's idea of thinking is also relevant to this research in that he deals with thinking in a primordial sense which includes the perceptive level. For Heidegger thinking is best characterized as poetic. Thinking is a sort of poetic perception, which can be compared with Dewey's esthetic perception in that thinking also involves the relational encounter. Thinking begins with being inclined toward each other. On the ground of mutual inclination thinking becomes thanking to receive all that touch us.

As it is manifest in the brief overview of Dewey and Heidegger' conception, the immediate establishment of relation between subject and object is the essence of perception which enables the inclusive receptivity. Perception is not a unilateral control for the subject to

grasp the object. It is to evoke one's own being to receive the being of the other on the ground of interrelation between the perceiver and the perceived. This essential property of interrelatedness is particularly visible in moral perception which is accompanied by moral emotion or action. As we saw it in Mencius's instance of seeing a child about to fall into a well, the moral perception is immediately followed by the emotion of alarm, distress, pity, and compassion, which is the manifestation of the observer's relational situating of one's own being to take in the being of the child.

As explained so far, the major task of this investigation is to carry out the phenomenological explication of perception, but before getting down to it a preliminary step will be taken. Moral perception has been doubted by many moral theorists as it has been mentioned above, and moral perception might appear to be a new concept to many people. Thus, the purpose of the preliminary part of this research is to delineate the place of moral perception in existing moral theories.

The preliminary part is composed of two chapters, Chapter 2 and 3. In Chapter 2 contemporary researches on moral perception will be reviewed to show that moral perception is acknowledged as a substantial element of morality. Moreover, literature review needs to be carried out on the traditional purpose to point out the limitation of existing researches and highlight the necessity of this research. In Chapter 3 more classic theories will be explored to show the deeper and more extensive ground of moral perception. Aristotle and Nietzsche will be introduced as classic moral philosophies including moral perception as an essential element of morality. Both make a point that human have the inherent capability to see what is good and the tendency to be inclined toward it. Aristotle supposes that we are born with natural excellence to be inclined to the good. Natural excellence is not a complete moral ability compared with

excellence in the strict sense to see exactly what is right to do, but excellence in the strict sense cannot be cultivated without the natural excellence. Nietzsche supposes that our nature ability to perceive the good is the ground of morality. When human nature is oppressed, morality falls into slave morality, which is prevalent in modern times. Aristotle and Nietzsche's moral philosophies are also significant in that they include obvious implications about the cultivation of moral perception.

After two chapters on the review of the contemporary and the traditional theories on moral perception, the phenomenological research on perception will follow as the core part of the whole investigation. This part will be composed of three chapters, Chapter 4, 5, and 6. Chapter 4 is on Dewey's idea of perception, and Chapter 5 is on Heidegger's idea of thinking. Chapter 6 is added to those core chapters, and it is about a Korean movie, *Poetry* by Chang-dong Lee. *Poetry* is set in to serve as a vivid illustration of perception. In the movie an elderly woman is taking a poetry lesson and involved in a teenage girl's suicide. The woman who embodies poetic perception and moral perception as well is starkly contrasted with the moral blindness of the society.

For conclusion of this research, educational implication will be explored. This research ultimately aims to examine implications about moral education from the level of schooling to self-cultivation. Before discussing what could be suggested in terms of moral education, the three cases of moral blindness with which this chapter began will be revisited in the light of what have been discussed. As it is reiterated, it is necessary to grasp the moral blindness first in order to deal with it, and this research will enhance our understanding of moral blindness. Considering that moral perception is a paradigmatic sort of perception, moral blindness not only indicates moral decline but also the degeneration of human perceptual capacity. The moral blindness

today is not just a moral problem, but it reveals the change of our vision of the world and thus the change of our way of engaging with the world, and it forms adverse circumstance to hinder the development of perception and moral perception as well. In this respect to establish a better environment for the cultivation of perceptual disposition is urgent today.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Place of Moral Perception in the Contemporary Literature

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to delineate the place of moral perception in the contemporary literature. Precedent discussions on moral perception in the contemporary moral theories will be analyzed in expecting that it will dispel the doubt about the substantiality of moral perception and show the fact that the significance of moral perception is recently acknowledged by more moral theorists even though the number of them is still small. The additional expectation, which is more important, is that it will enable us to see the existing conception of moral perception. It will be focused on how moral perception is conceived by contemporary theorists, and through the process the necessity of this research which suggests phenomenological approach will get clearer as it was indicated in the former chapter.

The contemporary researches on moral perception can roughly be grouped into two approaches, the epistemological and the ethical. The first approach, which is relatively prevailing, is to prove logically that moral perception is a proper mode of moral awareness.<sup>9</sup> Their arguments are centered on the epistemic feature of moral perception that it is non-inferential knowledge of moral property. They analytically demonstrate that we can perceive moral property as we can perceive non-moral property. For example, if a person sees a group of boys pouring gasoline on a cat and lighting it, he or she perceives that it is wrong. Without any inference and reflection the perceiver immediately grasps the moral property as a vintner perceives the taste of

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<sup>9</sup> See McGrath(2004), Cullison(2009), McBrayer(2010), Audi(2010), and Chappell(2008).

wine. On the contrary to this direct confrontation with the long lasting doubt about moral perception, some other researchers merely assume what the first group try to prove, the fact that perception is an indubitable way of moral awareness, and rather focus on explicating moral perception as an ethical experience. This present research is concerned on moral perception as a distinct moral ability rather than merely as a sort of epistemic mode to know the truth. In this respect the ethical approach is more relevant to the present research, and thus it will be reviewed in detail. The ethical approach can be divided by what aspect of moral perception is more illuminated. Some focus on the cognitive aspect of moral perception, and some other the emotional.

### **1. The cognitive aspect of moral perception**

Virtue ethics scholars and Lawrence Blum (1994) discuss moral perception as a cognitive experience, but they are differentiated from those who take epistemological approach in that they deal with moral perception not merely as an epistemic phenomenon but as a moral one.<sup>10</sup> In the epistemological approach the issue is the demonstration of the possibility of moral perception to perceive moral properties, whereas in the virtue ethics and Blum's discussion the issue is the elucidation of the necessity of moral perception for moral practice. In virtue ethics moral perception is to see what to do in moral situations. Put differently, in virtue ethics moral perception refers to the acquisition of conclusive moral knowledge which immediately leads to

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<sup>10</sup> In virtue ethics the term of "moral perception" actually has not very often emerged. However, recently the term is often employed to indicate the moral capacity of virtuous people to see what to do. For example, John McDowell, a representative scholar of virtue ethics, use "perception" rather than "moral perception", but later scholars use "moral perception" when they draws on McDowell. See Jacobson(2005) and Blum(1994).

moral actions.<sup>11</sup> For Blum moral perception refers to initial identification of moral situation, and it can be followed by other moral cognitive activity, such as deliberation.

Jacobson (2005)'s skill model exemplifies the conception of moral perception centered in moral judgment, the conclusive moral knowledge of what to do. Virtuous people can "see" what to do in the given situation. This conception of moral perception seems to resonate with intuitionism of G. E. Moore, but Jacobson following John McDowell rejects it and tries to elaborate moral perception in a more realistic way. Jacobson's way to avoid intuitionism is to adopt a skill model to illustrate how to acquire the ability of moral perception. According to him virtuous people can be compared to experts producing correct practical decisions even though they are unable to articulate the applied principles. Virtuous people come to have the skill by accumulating experiences with the feedbacks of success and failure.

The skill model gains plausibility to some extent by explaining that moral perception is not a mysteriously intuitive ability but an acquired ability. However, the skill model lacks explicative power, since it can be applied to the development of human abilities in general, not particularly to the development of moral perception. Moreover, moral perception is hardly regarded as a skill acquired by mechanical training controlled by the feedback of success and failure. Jacobson could adopt the skill model by reducing the complexity of moral perception to the very consequence of it, the judgment of what to do, the rightness and wrongness of which can be assessed. To investigate how moral perception is reduced to the moral judgment of what to do in the virtue ethics, it might be helpful to trace its origin.

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<sup>11</sup> I use the word, "conclusive" to characterize virtue ethic's account of moral perception, whereas Starkey (2006) uses "action-guiding". I sympathize with Starkey's characterization, but I use "conclusive" instead of "action-guiding" in order to highlight the juxtaposition between virtue ethics' view and Blum's in the respect of temporality.

In virtue ethics “seeing” implies that virtuous people can see what to do in the given situation. This notion of moral perception is derived from Aristotle’s account of practical wisdom:

That practical wisdom is not knowledge is evident; for it is, as has been said, concerned with the ultimate particular fact, since the thing to be done is of this nature. It is opposed, then, to comprehension; for comprehension is of the definitions, for which no reason can be given, while practical wisdom is concerned with the ultimate particular, which is the object not of knowledge but of perception—not the perception of qualities peculiar to one sense but a perception akin to that by which we perceive that the particular figure before us is a triangle.

(Aristotle, 1995, 1142a 23-28)

Practical wisdom is the ability to be aware of what is right to do in a particular situation, not the state to have abstract knowledge which can be applied regardless of the situation. In other words, practical wisdom is the ability to make a good judgment about the given situation. However, the way to make this kind of judgment is different from reaching a conclusion through reasoning. It is to discern immediately the right thing to do like to recognize a triangle. As Aristotle emphasizes it, this ability to know immediately what to do is acquired through experiences, and thus it is called “wisdom” which belongs only to the old or the experienced.

The problem of virtue ethics’ conception of moral perception putting emphasis on right judgment and on the accumulation of relevant experiences as the way to cultivate it is that it is not applied well to some typical cases of moral perception. It does not involve “seeing” in the three situations that were introduced in Chapter 1 as the failures of moral perception. The essential element of moral perception in virtue ethics is the wisdom that makes the immediate judgment. From the standpoint of virtue ethics the cause of inability to see is the absence of

wisdom, in other words, the lack of related experience accompanied with the feedback. Those three situations do not seem to require wisdom in order to respond morally. The boys could treat the child morally without any wisdom, and the reason that citizens overlooked the dying man is not because they did not know that it is morally right to help him. In Jack's case he even knows what to do in spite that his judgment is obtained by reasoning rather than perception, but he does not act according to the judgment. Their moral failure is prior to the failure of judgment. They even do not form the intention to act rightly. In the three examples they are simply disinterested in right action.

The fact that the chief cause of failure of moral perception in those cases is the absence of moral intention is related to the view that emotion is an essential part of morality.<sup>12</sup> From the view that stresses the importance of emotion, the boys, citizens, and Jack fail to perceive the situation morally because of the absence of the emotional ground that motivates moral perception, and thus the primary source of moral failure is emotion rather than cognition. Some virtue ethics scholars actually acknowledge that there is the emotional element in virtue, and they might maintain that virtue ethics' notion of moral perception is actually applicable to those three cases, since immediate judgment includes emotion, more precisely, moral intention.<sup>13</sup> McDowell is one of virtue ethic scholars who hold this view, and he explicitly deals with the issue of the relation between emotion and cognition in moral perception.

McDowell defines moral perception as seeing a salient fact in the given situation (1998, p. 68). When he examines possible objections to his discussion of moral perception, he illustrates

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<sup>12</sup> Those who consider emotion as a constituent of moral perception will be reviewed in the following section.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Jacobson counts John McDowell, Julia Annas, Rosalind Hursthouse as those who acknowledge emotion as a part of virtue. See Jacobson (2005, p. 388).

one of them, which stresses emotion as a constituent of morality, but as a separate element of morality. McDowell writes, “The most natural way to press the objection is to insist on purifying the content of what is genuinely known down to something that is, in itself, motivationally inert (namely, given the concession above, that one’s friend is in trouble and open to being comforted); and then to represent the “perception” of a salience as an amalgam of the purified awareness with an additional appetitive state.” (1998, p. 70) McDowell refuses the separation of emotion from cognition by the purification of content of perception. He maintains that the state of being virtuous is a cognitive state, not the conjunction of the cognitive and the emotional because moral perception is a practical state in which reason to act operates in the psychological level. He writes, “But if someone takes that fact as the salient fact about the situation, he is in a psychological state that is essentially practical. The relevant notion of salience cannot be understood except in terms of seeing something as a reason for acting that silences all others.” (1998, p. 70) According to McDowell moral perception always includes the reason that forms intention to act. It implies that moral perception is cognition involving emotion, not the purified cognition which can be connected to emotion when it is necessary.

McDowell’s seems to overcome successfully the objection that the emotional state should be added to perception to elicit action by pointing out that moral perception itself elicits action. However, he adds one more possible objection to his view, which he considers as another kind of non-cognitivism objection. McDowell writes putting on the voice of objection to him, “We can be got into a cast of mind in which—as it seems to us—we have these *problematic perceptions*, only because we can be brought to care about certain things; hence, ultimately, only because of certain antecedent facts about our emotional and appetitive make-up.” (1998, pp. 71-72, emphasis is added) McDowell calls this objection a more subtle non-cognitivism, since it accepts

the inseparability between the cognitive state and the appetitive state in moral perception.

However, what is pointed out in this objection is that this specific kind of perception requires the subject's emotional state as a ground that launches it. The point of this objection is that judging through this kind of perception cannot be taken merely as a cognitive state because we call only the mental activity concerned with true or false about the independent reality, namely cognition.

McDowell does not bring forth a detailed counterargument. He merely argues that the background of this objection is the scientific conception of reality, which is disputable.<sup>14</sup> However, it seems that this objection brings up a significant point in McDowell's conception of moral perception no matter whether the objection is based on a valid presupposition or not. From the view of objection moral perception is a problematic kind of perception because of its characteristic relation with emotion. This objection stems from McDowell's insufficient elaboration of moral perception. He gives a drastically simplified conception that moral perception is to see the salient fact in particular situations. It makes moral perception appear as a pure cognitive state which is not congruous with the complex moral phenomenon.

This problem seems to arise from the virtue ethic scholars' tradition to conceive moral perception based on Aristotle's concept of practical wisdom which is the core ability of virtuous people. Perception of the virtuous occurs in a consummate level, and thus it is uneasy to be analyzed. It is like the vintner's perception of wine, which is characterized by immediate appreciation and judgment. Because of the consummate level of immediacy of perception, only the judgment, the content of which is conclusively produced, is noticeable, but it is hard to observe what is going on in the operation of moral perception. Thus, virtue ethic scholars give

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<sup>14</sup> McDowell does not elaborate the scientific conception of reality. I guess that it is a kind of positivism to consider the scientific way as the only way to know the reality objectively.

the concept that moral perception is to see what to do, in McDowell's words, the salient fact. They focus on the visible object, *what to do* or *the salient fact*, rather than the invisible process or activity, *seeing*, *the problematic kind of perception* itself.

In order to examine thoroughly the concept of *seeing* I suggest to look not only into virtuous people's perception, but also into moral perception in the developmental phase. Drawing the analogy of vintners again, any vintner has had the very moment when she for the first time has appreciated the good taste of wine. Before the first appreciation, she had felt the taste of wine simply bitter, sour, and the like. It seems that the very first moment when the essential characteristic of appreciation of the taste of wine is revealed is critical.

In the case of moral perception what is more critical might be the perception of the good rather than that of the virtuous. Practical wisdom is essential for the virtuous is, and we cannot take the good as the virtuous because of the absence of wisdom. "Arete" which is the Greek word of "virtue" is also translated to "excellence", so that the difference between "good" and "virtuous" is possibly taken as the different degrees between "good" and "excellent". However, the difference is actually closer to that of quality even though there should be continuity between the good and the virtuous.<sup>15</sup> As we can see it in the analogy of wine tasting, the perception of a person who begins to appreciate the taste of wine is qualitatively different from that of a vintner, since the novices cannot discern what the experts can do precisely. They can roughly perceive the good or bad taste of wine, but they cannot indicate what makes the wine good or bad. In moral situations the good are different from the virtuous in that they are usually characterized by their positive or negative emotional response to moral situations, whereas the virtuous by their

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<sup>15</sup> The continuity between the good and the virtuous will be briefly discussed in following section where empathy and sympathy are mentioned.

ability to see the right thing to do additionally to the same emotional response. What decisively marks the virtuous is practical wisdom which can be cultivated through relevant experiences like vintners' trained sensitivity. Like novice wine tasters who have entered the realm of wine tasting but have no training yet, good people have entered in the realm of morality, but they are not yet wise enough to see infallibly and immediately the right thing to do.<sup>16</sup>

If the difference between perception of the good and that of the virtuous is qualitative, it can be said that there are two different kinds of moral perception, that of the virtuous and that of the good. Perception of the virtuous always includes that of the good, but what makes the former different from the latter is practical wisdom. What seems to be problematic in McDowell's conception is that he tries to envelop two kinds of moral perception in the simplified conception of perception of the virtuous. Two perceptions are combined in virtuous people's experience. However, McDowell sheds light only on the conclusive perception, seeing a salient fact in the given situation, without any account of the continuity of two perceptions in the virtuous. The weakness of McDowell's conception is manifested in the fact that it has no explanatory power for the real cases. His conception is not pertinent to most of moral failure, since most are the cases of failure of perception of the good as we saw in the three situations that were provided in Chapter 1.

Laurence Blum seems to have sensed the difference between two moral perceptions, since in his discussion of moral perception he only deals with the case of the perception of the good. He draws on McDowell's conception of moral perception that it is to see the salient fact. However, he interprets it as the initial recognition of moral situation rather than as seeing the

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<sup>16</sup> The notion of morally good is not defined here, but for the purpose of this dissertation it may be sufficient to state that concern for well-being of human or more extensively well-being of the live is a significant feature of good people.

right thing to do. The salient fact is not only for knowing what to do, but also more significantly for identifying the given situation as a moral one. Blum actually criticizes McDowell's restricted conception:

As McDowell develops his argument, however, the notions of perception, salience, and sensitivity become defined solely in terms of the generating of right actions. What is to be perceived becomes, for McDowell, that consideration in a situation the acting on which will produce right action. The notion of salience is cashed out as that moral consideration among all those present which would be picked out as the one to act on if the agent is to engage in right action. Lost is the idea of moral reality the accurate perception of which is both morally good in its own right and also provides the setting in which moral response in its broadest sense takes place

(Blum, 1994, p. 44)

Blum provides three situations to illustrate his notion of moral perception. The first is John's case where he was unable to recognize a woman's discomfort on a subway train because of his situational self-absorption or attentional laziness. The second is Theresa's lacking of empathy. As an administrator she does not appropriately respond to Julio who keeps asking for accommodating his disability. These are the cases of moral failure of being unable to see that there is a moral situation. The fact that Blum conceives moral perception focusing on the initial cognition is more evident in the third situation in which Tim failed to detect a moral situation immediately but later can see it through a construal and inferential process. Tim took a taxi which had passed by an African American woman and her daughter. In the taxi he idly ruminates on the situation and eventually concludes that the taxi driver passed by them out of racism. This awareness does not involve immediacy which is usually regarded as an essential trait of perception. Blum explains why he includes this case, "The point is that perception occurs prior to deliberation, and prior to taking the situation to be one in which one need to deliberate. It is precisely *because* the situation is seen in a certain way that the agent takes it as one in which he feels moved to deliberate." (1994, p. 37) For Blum moral perception refers to the first step to

identify a situation as a moral one and thus possibly intrigues further response, such as deliberation. In Tim's case his perception of racism can be taken as a moral perception as long as he eventually recognizes the situation as a moral issue even though he was not able to perceive it immediately, since the core property of moral perception for Blum is identify moral situations.

Blum's conception is pertinent to interpreting many cases of moral perception, for example, the three situations in Chapter 1 whereas McDowell's is not. However, Blum deals with moral perception in terms of the cognitive aspect but leaves the emotional aspect unexplained. In this respect Blum is not free from the non-cognitive objection to McDowell either. The exact place of moral failure in the three situations is that they fail to form moral intention, in other words, to have moral emotion. For Blum the success of moral perception depends on whether one has recognized the moral situation.

The fact that Blum is vulnerable to the non-cognitive objection becomes obvious if Tim's case is compared with Jack's.<sup>17</sup> For Blum both are successful cases of moral perception whereas I consider that the success of moral perception in those cases depends on the emotional aspects. In Chapter 1 Jack's case was introduced as failure. Jack reaches the judgment through reasoning, but he does not act in accordance with it. More exactly speaking if he is not concerned about the conclusion of reasoning in his everyday life, it becomes a case of failure of moral perception because it manifests that moral intention has not been formed. However, if Jack is really concerned about it, for example, if he has a certain kind of feeling like scruples at least whenever he acts in opposition to the conclusion, it manifests that he has perceived the moral situation. On the contrary, from Blum's view Jack's could be a successful case because Jack at least

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<sup>17</sup> To remind Jack's case, Jack acknowledges the argument that meat factory farming is cruel to animals and harmful to nature and the people who eat the meat, but he does not abstain from consuming factory farming meat.

recognizes the moral situation when he does the reasoning as Tim recognizes the racism in the construal and inferential manner.

From the view stressing emotion as a constituent of morality, the recognition of moral situation is not sufficient for moral perception. The success of moral perception is verified by moral response, moral emotion and action additional to the recognition of moral situation. About Tim's case we cannot say whether he is successful or not until it is verified that the perception is accompanied with moral emotion or action. Some might also point out that Tim's inference is not the case of perception because immediacy is the characteristics of perception. However, there would be two cases that Tim actually perceives the situation. One is that Tim at first perceived it but vaguely, and the later reasoning process makes the perception clear. The other is that he failed to perceive it at first, but the reasoning process makes him imagine the situation again and perceive it morally within the taxi. Whichever is the case, the clearest evidence of occurring of moral perception is the following moral emotion or action because they are infallible consequence of moral perception. If Tim becomes emotional or actually acts because of the awareness, for example, expressing his disapproval to the taxi driver, it is clear that he has perceived the situation morally.

Some might argue that if Tim expresses his moral concern to the driver in an inappropriate way, his action is not moral, and thus his perception is not either. This objection is valid from virtue ethics' view because he does not see the right thing to do. However, from the view that acknowledges moral perception of the good who have not reached the virtuous state, Tim perceives the situation morally even though his judgment and action are not right, in another word, virtuous. The criterion for someone to be morally good is not whether he or she sees the

right thing to do but whether he or she forms a moral intention manifested by a moral response of emotion or action.

Those who try to illuminate moral perception focusing on the cognitive aspect of moral perception seem to be not free from the general critique on cognitive approach to morality. The most representative theory of cognitive approach is Lawrence Kohlberg's moral reasoning, and the prevalent critique about moral reasoning is that it does not guarantee moral action according to the conclusion of reasoning. In fact reasoning can be meaningful in itself. It aims to reach a certain logical conclusion, and thus it is not necessarily connected to actions. It is like solving puzzles or mathematical equations which have nothing to do with one's own being and others' either. Moral reasoning which is not accompanied with emotional response is merely a sort of reasoning that deals with moral situations, and thus it is by itself not moral activity as an artistic activity using food ingredients is not a cooking. Moral perception is a moral activity only when the subject actually motivated. If the subject only aloofly sees that there is a moral situation and what is the right thing to do, but does not respond emotionally or by action, the cognition is not moral perception but general cognition which has nothing to do with moral agency.

Virtue ethics theorists and Blum are certainly in the oppositional position to those who assume that cognition is the only ground of morality. Virtue ethics theorists and Blum argues that morality involves emotion as well. As it is mentioned in the discussion of McDowell above, virtue ethics is with the ethic of caring in the position that objects to cognitive moral theories. Blum is a representative scholar who emphasizes the significance of emotion as a constituent of morality. However, if the emotional aspect of moral perception is not properly illuminated, any explication of moral perception has the danger to reduce moral perception to a mode of cognition. In this respect the key point in elaborating moral perception would be to demonstrate the link

between the cognitive and the emotional aspect, and it is necessary for giving a more plausible elucidation of *the problematic kind of perception*.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. The emotional aspect of moral perception

Some theorists attempt to illuminate the emotional aspect of moral perception. J. Jeremy Wisnewski & Henry Jacoby (2007) highlights intention linked to moral perception. Arne Johan Vetlesen (1994) argues that the cognitive and emotional faculties function in the equal level for moral perception. Pamela J. Simpson & Jim Garrison (1995) and Kathleen Knight Abowitz (2007) discuss moral perception in the context of education. Even though Simpson & Garrison and Abowitz do not deal with moral perception as perception in typical moral situations, they give some illuminating discussion on the emotional quality of moral perception.

Wisnewski and Jacoby maintain that moral intention can be formed by moral perception. They originally provide Jack's case that Jack accepts a moral judgment made through reasoning:

- i. If one's actions support cruelty to animals, then one should avoid those actions.
- ii. Supporting factory farms (eating factory-farmed meat) supports cruelty to animals.
- iii. Therefore, one should avoid supporting factory farms (eating factory-farmed meat).

However, Jack does not stop eating factory-farmed meat. He does not participate in the moral action not because of the weakness of the will to do the good. Wisnewski and Jacoby distinguish not having the strength of will to do the good from Jack's case, not having the will itself.

Wisnewski and Jacoby draw on Leontius's case from Plato. Leontinus has the intention to avoid looking at corpses, but eventually sees them because of his appetitive desire. Jack's case is

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<sup>18</sup> See the above discussion of McDowell's conception of moral perception to remind the problematic kind of perception.

irrelevant to appetitive desire as they say, “Jack never forms the intention to begin with, and hence there is no need for desire to stand in contract to intention.” They maintain that there are so many cases of the same kind of moral failure and suggest that actual observation will promote moral intention and consequently action. If Jack has the opportunity to observe actually the cruelty of daily operation of factory farming, the inferential conclusion would have power to be realized.

It seems that the importance of actual seeing in moral perception can give an excuse to Jack. Someone might say, “Jack’s case is not a failure of moral perception, since he has never been in the situation in question. The relevant actual situation, the factory farming, was not present in front of him, and thus it is not the case that he is unable to perceive but that he has no opportunity to perceive.” It is indubitable that actual viewing has more possibility to provoke moral intention and response, but I argue that Jack’s should be considered as a failure of moral perception because of human capability of imagination. Jack does not necessarily see the actual situation for moral perception. Without actual viewing Jack could have perceived it through imagination. Imagination does not necessarily mean recollection of specific visual experience. It is rather perceptual experience when some object or situation is not present, since “seeing” in moral perception implies not the visual sensation but the participatory state of being.<sup>19</sup> In this sense Jack could imagine what would happen in factory farming even though he has never actually seen it.

Whereas Wisnewski and Jacoby put emphasis on moral emotion, exactly intention, as the effect of moral perception, Vetlesen puts emphasis on emotion as the prerequisite of moral perception. She objects to Hannah Arendt’s cognition-based explanation of moral blindness.

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<sup>19</sup> The participatory feature of moral perception will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Arendt considers Adolf Eichmann's case as a challenge which serves to illuminate a significant aspect of morality.<sup>20</sup> Eichmann had done evil things as a Nazi member, but it was revealed in his trial that he was merely a mediocre person who had obeyed his organization, not a monstrous one who had vicious intentions. Arendt responds to this challenge by characterizing his moral failure as cognitive failure, thoughtlessness. (1963, p. 288) Vetlesen sympathizes with Arendt that Eichmann's moral blindness is a significant case which reveals some critical aspect of morality, but she argues that Eichmann's shows the importance of emotional capacity rather than cognitive capacity. She writes, "What Eichmann epitomizes is not so much thoughtlessness as *insensitivity*. The capacity he failed to exercise is emotional rather than intellectual or cognitive; it is the capacity to develop *empathy* with other human beings, to take an emotional interest in the human "import" of the situation in which the persons affected by his actions found themselves." (1994, p. 105) Vetlesen considers that the critical moral defect of Eichmann is the absence of emotion which would enable him to take the given situation and the other human beings as relevant to him. In this respect what Eichmann reveals is that emotion is an essential element of morality.

Vetlesen's conception of morality based on emotion is manifest in her outline of the scheme of moral practice which is juxtaposed with Arendt's scheme of moral practice:

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<sup>20</sup> Adolf Eichmann(1906-1962) was a German Nazi SS and one of the major organizers of the Holocaust. He was capture by Mossad operatives in Argentina and taken to Israel to face trial in an Isreli court on 15 criminal charges, including crimes against humanity and war crimes. He was found guilty and executed by hanging in 1962.

Arendt's					
Level:	THINKING	→	JUDGMENT	→	ACTION
Faculties involved:	intellectual		intellectual		—

Vetlesen's					
Level:	PERCEPTION	→	JUDGMENT	→	ACTION
Faculties involved:	cognitive-emotional		cogn.-emot.		—

Vetlesen puts perception as the initial step instead of thinking, and she characterizes moral perception as joint undertaking of cognition and emotion. Without the precedence of moral perception moral judgment is not initiated, since what is present does not draw attention as morally relevant. In order to perceive others or situations morally, certain emotional arising of the subject is necessary. For example, “To “see” suffering as *suffering*,” Vetlesen writes, “is already to have established an *emotional bond* between myself and the person I “see” suffering.” (1994, p. 159)

Vetlesen specifically indicates empathy as a part of moral perception, but she stresses that it is not a sort of emotion but a faculty. To ascribe the feature of faculty to empathy implies that she regards empathy as an inherent human ability to understand another’s feeling and emotion. She does not explicitly states it, but her consideration of empathy as a faculty can be interpreted as a claim that empathy has a cognitive dimension which makes possible access to another person’s emotional experience. For Vetlesen empathy is a perceptual activity concerning to human feeling and emotion, rather than a passive reception to be subject to certain feeling and emotion.

Vetlesen’s comparison between compassion and empathy is helpful for the clarification of her conception of empathy as a mode of perception. She draws on Schopenhauer’s concept of

compassion in order to illuminate a feature of empathy that the subject is separate from the object:

Compassion, in Schopenhauer's sense, requires of subjects that they abandon themselves, that they suspend their distinct selves, their very selfhood. ... The fundamental difference between my position and the foregoing consists in the fact that my own conception of empathy is of a *Sichmitbringen*, as opposed to a *Sichaufgeben*. Empathy is irreducibly other-directed; directing my capacity for feeling-with at another person. ... In my conception, the call for, indeed the phenomenon of, empathy arises because your pain is yours and not mine, because we are separate individual human being; the call can be met because we are all human beings, principally sharing, through our emotional faculties, the same access to the experience of pain.

(Vetlesen, 1994, p. 207)

It is a crucial feature in Vetlesen's concept of empathy to sustain the subject's being separate from the other's being. Compassion and empathy is the same in the respect that both are to feel other human being's emotion. However, in compassion the subject loses his or her self and becomes in identical state of another, whereas in empathy the subject maintains his or her self. Vetlesen might try to avoid the occasion in which a compassionate one is equally overwhelmed by another's emotion rather than proceeds to moral judgment and action. She highlights moral agency in empathy by stressing subject's selfhood. To feel the same emotion as another's does not always manifest the exercise of empathy. What truly shows it is to become concerned with another's feeling or emotion, since the essence of empathy is the action of mind to get involved in others.

Vetlesen's view on moral perception is especially significant in that she finds emotion as a constituent of moral perception rather than merely as a provoked state by perception. As it is stated above, empathy is the key concept in her explication of moral perception, and the cognitive feature of empathy is particularly illuminated. Deweyan views on moral perception can be compared with Vetlesen's in that they also consider emotion as a prerequisite of moral perception. Drawing on Dewey's concept of perception, Abowitz and Simpson & Garrison take

moral perception as perception in the first place, but they characterize perception by its emotional quality.

Abowitz emphasizes the importance of aesthetic experience for the cultivation of moral perception. For her aesthetic experience is aesthetic appreciation, such as seeing paintings at art museums. She stresses passion as a significant emotion which can be provoked by aesthetic encounters. This argument is related to Wisniewski and Jacoby's argument that moral intention can be generated by actual seeing of the relevant situation. Abowitz particularly deals with some historical occurrence which there is no way to observe actually. She contends that we can have the opportunity of moral perception of the past situations by appreciating arts which represent what happened.

What draws more attention in her discussion is that she uses Dewey's powerful notion of perception. Quoting Dewey she writes, "Aesthetic experience, then, is not merely a reception of art. Dewey distinguished reception from perception. The former is the mere act of assigning the "proper tag or label" on something one senses, "as a salesman identifies wares by a sample." However, perception is "emotionally pervaded throughout" and involves bare reception and an involvement with and in the object for performance. (2007, p. 293) What Abowitz names reception is actually recognition in the original text by Dewey. In order to elaborate the emotional quality of perception, Dewey compares it with recognition:

Bare recognition is satisfied when a proper tag or label is attached "proper" signifying one that serves a purpose outside the act of recognition—as a salesman identifies wares by a sample. It involves no stir of the organism, no inner commotion. But an act of perception proceeds by waves that extend serially throughout the entire organism. There is, therefore, no such thing in perception as seeing or hearing *plus* emotion. The perceived object or scene is emotionally pervaded throughout. . . . Perception is an act of the going-out of energy in order to receive, not a withholding of energy. To steep ourselves in a subject-matter we have first to plunge into it.

(Dewey, 2005, p. 55)

Dewey here deals with the primary notion of perception rather than the usual one, “to interpret or regard someone or something in a particular way”<sup>21</sup>. Perception is a radically different kind of awareness from recognition. Recognition is for an aloof subject to designate an object usually as something useful but has nothing to do with the subject’s being in a deeper level. Perception is to open our eye of mind or awaken the being of subject, in Dewey’s words, the energy of organism so as to be connected to the being of object. Perception has the emotional quality of being provoked and bound to the object. <sup>22</sup>

Even though Abowitz discussion is focused on the suggestion of aesthetic experience for cultivating moral perception, rather than explication of moral perception, her discussion and Dewey’s conception of perception provide a profound implication that perception is a congruent way of awareness with morality. Perception requires immediate relating between the subject and the object. The subject of perception should have a participatory attitude which allows the perceiver to access to the essence of the object. The participatory feature of perception is particularly prominent in the perception of moral situation. In this respect moral perception is a paradigm of perception.

Simpson and Garrison also call on Dewey, but they do it in order to discuss teacher’s perception of students. They assert that moral perception is crucial for the fair assessment of students’ ability. They suppose that teaching is a caring profession that presupposes moral relationship between teachers and students and that moral perception is required for the assessment of student’s ability. “We believe that,” they write, “complete assessment must be caring assessment. It must involve moral perception of the individual student. Assessment must

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<sup>21</sup> Referring to *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2003, s.v. “perception.”

<sup>22</sup> Dewey’s concept of perception will be elaborated in Chapter 4.

include the role of emotions, imaginings, and sympathetic insights to be entirely complete and competent.”(1995, p. 253) Simpson and Garrison consider sympathy as a central element of moral perception. They write, “Sympathy allows us to perceive the needs, desires, cares, concerns, and interests of our students. Such perception is absolutely necessary for every intelligent action and response in the classroom. It involves the use of emotion and imagination. Sympathy carries us beyond our selfish interests and directs our selective attention outward toward others. Such self-transcendence is typical of the caring professions. (1995, p. 257) Sympathy is the capacity to direct the attention, in Dewey’s word, the organic energy, to others’ state. It is to exert one’s own energy to receive others’ energy. It is impossible to discern other’s emotion, desire, and interest without the subject’s attunement to the object. Simpson and Garrison use the term, self-transcendence to characterize the attunement, but it might not imply to move beyond the self, in other words, to lose the sense of self. The attunement for sympathy implies transposition of the subject from the self-centered to the participatory stand, and thus it is to make the self more vivid by being connected to the object, not to dismiss the self.

Simpson and Garrison give an instance of teacher’s moral perception. An empirical study on Tony’s case demonstrates how the absence of teacher’s sympathy affects assessment of students. Tony had missed most of his formal education from first to third-grade because he had been traveling with a circus group. He enrolled school again when he was 11 year old, and he was placed in fourth-grade class. Judith, his teacher, measured Tony’s language and math ability by skills, and he was assessed to have very weak skills compared with other fourth-graders. Tony was assigned to memorize flashcards and complete phonic workbooks to make up the skills he missed. Tony was merely classified or, in Dewey’s word, recognized by the simplified skills without teacher’s due consideration of his personal history, interests, and needs, which requires

sympathy. The teacher's lack of sympathy is particularly prominent in her failure to discern Tony's response which can be considered either as correct or incorrect. When Tony worked on a workbook for handwriting training, Tony wrote "jog" instead of the listed word "hop" because of the picture beside the word, which appears to be either a hopping or a jogging person. Tony was not doing what was supposed to be done by the instruction, but his error is reasonable one which could be regarded as a correct activity from the sympathetic standpoint. However, Judith recognizes Tony's writing in the mechanical manner, and she marked it as incorrect.

It seems that Simpson and Garrison's emphasis on the central role of sympathy in teacher's moral perception resonates with Vetlesen's view that empathy is the key faculty of moral perception, since there is the family resemblance between two concepts, sympathy and empathy. Vetlesen states that empathy is a faculty, and sympathy is a manifestation of empathy. However, it would be necessary to scrutinize the continuity of two concepts, since it is not obvious in the cases of moral perception that Simpson & Garrison and Vetlesen give. Simpson and Garrison deals with moral perception in the pedagogical context where teacher's comprehensive grasp of the complexity of students' state is necessary whereas Vetlesen discusses on moral perception in more typical moral context where it is necessary to perceive apparent human feelings and emotions, the weal and woe of others, and these two perceptions appear to be different sorts from each other because of the difference of what are eventually perceived, the ability of students and the emotion of others.

The relation between sympathy and empathy can be clarified by examining it in the light of the relation between moral perception of the virtuous and that of the good, which was suggested concerning to McDowell's conception of moral perception. It was argued that moral perception of the virtuous includes practical wisdom, whereas that of the good does not. As it

was seen in the case of teacher's perception of student in Simpson and Garrison, sympathy that is required for teacher's fair assessment of students and appropriate reaction to them is pertinent to the case of moral perception of the virtuous. Teacher's perception is for a caring profession as Simpson and Garrison claimed it, and thus it requires practical wisdom which guides appropriate actions to care for the students. On the contrary, empathy as a faculty can be considered to be pertinent to more straightforward case of moral perception, such as perceiving the human weal and woe. It is as if the faculty of color sight can be tested by the perception of color samples, whereas the capacity to appreciate colors, which is essential for painting or other visual production, can be attested by the perception of colors in more complicated states, such as blue of the sea. In this respect, there is continuity between empathy as a faculty, which can be revealed in more straightforward moral situations, and sympathy as a manifestation of it, which is revealed in more complicated situations.

It seems to be necessary to emphasize again the relation between emotional and cognitive aspect of moral perception, since the premise that moral perception of the virtuous includes practical wisdom might give an impression that moral perception is exercised by the cooperation of two separate faculties, empathy and practical wisdom. Empathy comes first to grasp other's feeling or emotion and then practical wisdom follows to figure out what is the right thing to do. As it is found in a quotation above, Dewey asserts that perception is not cognition *plus* emotion, and many theorists on moral perception, such as McDowell, explicitly state that moral perception is not composed of two separate entities, emotion and cognition. This consensus is also applied to the case of moral perception of the virtuous. Moral perception of the virtuous is not empathy *plus* practical wisdom. Empathy and practical wisdom can be regarded as two different constituents in the conceptual level, but they do not separately operate in the empirical level. As

Vetlesen identified the faculty of moral perception as single one, cognitive-emotional rather than cognition and emotion, moral perception has the emotional and cognitive level rather than separable operations of emotion and cognition.

The inseparability of emotion and cognition in moral perception is also elucidated in Dewey's discussion of sympathy:

The only truly *general* thought is the *generous* thought. It is sympathy which carries thought out beyond the self and which extends its scope till it approaches the universal as its limit. It is sympathy which saves consideration of consequences from degenerating into mere calculation, by rendering vivid the interests of others. . . . Sympathy is the animating mold of moral judgment not because it dictates take precedence in action over those of other impulses. . . . but because it furnishes the most efficacious *intellectual* standpoint.

(Dewey, *Ethics*, p. 270, quoted in Simpson and Garrison, 1995, p. 257)

Moral perception, which I consider as a sort of generous thought, is a categorically different thought from calculation. Generous thought is not a combination of emotional connection with others and meticulous consideration. Through sympathy we are situated in a specific position where the characteristic act of mind, generous thought is provoked, which itself has emotional and cognitive quality. Even though many theorists and practitioners seem to believe it, it is almost unlikely that a smart person becomes virtuous by being equipped with emotional capacity or that an emotional person becomes virtuous by strengthening the power of thought. Each capacity is certainly necessary to some extent as we see that severe cognitive or emotional defect results in fatal moral blindness, but the possession of cognitive and emotional capacity is not sufficient for moral perception.<sup>23</sup> Moral perception is rather emotional cognition or cognitive emotion, which should be demarcated from cognition *plus* emotion.

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<sup>23</sup> See Oatley and Jenkins (1996).

## **Conclusion**

It may be a legitimate complaint to describe moral perception as the problematic perception, since it is complicated to analyze moral perception with the conceptual scheme of cognition and emotion. Moral perception easily degenerates into cognition or emotion as Eichmann's immorality is accounted for thoughtlessly by Arendt and emotionlessly by others. These accounts appear irreconcilable because of the contradictory features of cognition and emotion. However, both are reasonable accounts to some extent as we have seen that cognition and emotion form the characteristic relation in moral perception. The problem of the complicated relation of cognition and emotion in moral perception rather suggests that it is a restricted approach to adhere to the customary configuration of human psychology, the pair of cognition and emotion. In this respect the phenomenological approach to moral perception would be helpful to deepen our understanding of moral perception, since moral perception can be dealt with as human experience in the first place as Dewey's account of moral perception gave us an inkling of the phenomenological perspective. I will try the phenomenological approach on a full scale in Chapter 4 and 5.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Vein of Moral Perception in Traditional Moral Philosophies

#### Introduction

In Chapter 2 the contemporary researches on moral perception were reviewed to see how moral perception has been conceived, and it is also contributed to the aim to illuminate the substance of moral perception. This chapter shares the aim to manifest that moral perception is substantial concept, and it will be tried in a broader theoretical picture of morality. As it was stated in Chapter 1 moral perception has been denied or ignored by many recent moral theorists. In this chapter I will discuss the deeper and extensive ground of moral perception in the traditional moral philosophies to show that moral perception has been discussed as a constituent of morality from a long time ago.

I will particularly explore Aristotle and Nietzsche to map out the relevance of moral perception to their moral theories. Some might question why only Aristotle and Nietzsche are discussed rather than other profound moral philosophies, such as Kant. Aristotle and Nietzsche are alike in that their major task is the explication of human moral capability rather than the theoretical account of moral principle. They deal with morality as vivid human experience related to virtue, emotion, love, intelligence or other psychological properties. In the respect that moral perception is a moral ability, Aristotle's and Nietzsche's moral philosophy are more pertinent to this research which aims ultimately to find implications about moral development. Moreover, it is natural to include Aristotle in that many of contemporary researches draw on Aristotle to define moral perception. Comparatively Nietzsche appears undeserved to be included in this research in that he has never been referred to in contemporary literature on moral

perception. However, I consider that the ground of moral perception is elucidated in Nietzsche's moral philosophy.

Another purpose of this chapter is to secure moral perception not to fall into a sort of perceptual experience lacking moral relevance particularly when it is discussed from the phenomenological perspective in the following chapters. The study of this chapter would have an effect to undergird following studies not to disperse to mere elaboration of perception of certain kinds rather than moral perception.

The basic framework of this section is examination of the concept of "good" in moral theories. As it was argued in the former section, moral perception in contemporary researches usually denotes moral perception of the virtuous rather than that of the good, but perception of the good is the primary sort of moral perception, the absence of which results in severe moral blindness. The examination of the concept of morally "good" would help us see that the essence of morality is found in the characteristics of the good rather than in that of the excellent.

Aristotle was briefly mentioned in the former chapter in discussing the conception of moral perception in virtue ethics. In this chapter I will try to show that Aristotle actually supposes that there are two kinds of moral perception, perception of the virtuous, to see exactly what is right, and perception of the good, to see rough directionality of what is good. Contemporary virtue ethic scholars identify the former with moral perception, but they disregard the latter which is the prerequisite for the cultivation of the former. Nietzsche supposes that the perception of the good is the ground of morality, exactly saying, the ground of noble morality, which enables us to engage creatively with the reality. Moral perception in Nietzsche is poetic perception which can be compared with the perception of poets.

## 1. Moral perception in Aristotle

One of the premises on which Aristotle's account of morality is based is that humans have functional existence. In *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle keeps referring to artists and professions, for example, flute-players and doctors, in elucidating human good. Aristotle states that a clear account of human good can be given when the function of men is defined. If there is a distinctive function of human, human good is to do it well, just as flute-players has the function as flute-players and what is good for them is to do it well. With this assumption Aristotle defines the human function and a good man. He writes, "...the function of man to be a certain kind of life, and this to be an activity or actions of the soul implying a rational principle, and the function of a good man to be the good and noble performance of these, and if any action is well performed when it is performed in accordance with the appropriate excellence." (1995, 1098a 13-16) The criterion for the good and noble performance is whether it is in accordance with the excellence, and thus excellence is the key concept in defining human good.

Given the notion of excellence is not known, however, this account of a good man or human good seems confusing in that to explain human good by drawing on excellence is a sort of circular argument because excellence involves the notion of good. Aristotle's way to resolve this difficulty is to bring in the additional notion of mean to illustrate excellence. He writes, "Now excellence is concerned with passions and actions, in which excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success; and both these things are characteristics of excellence. Therefore, excellence is a kind of mean, since it aims at what is intermediate. (1995, 1106b 24-28) Now, human good is more clearly defined. The good and noble action of soul is to look and go for excellence which is best denoted by the concept of mean. The strength of this account is the visualization of excellence with the reference of mean.

Mean is a form of success which is the intermediate between two extremes of excess and defect. This image of excellence enables us to see the possibility of measurement of excellence, since the mean might be determined through the comparison of two opposites of vices.

This Aristotle's quantitative illustration of excellence, however, can give a misleading impression that the measurement of mean is as easy as the calculation of average, but Aristotle makes it clear that it is not so. Mean is determined not absolutely but relatively. Aristotle says that the intermediate to us is not one nor the same for all (1995, 1106a 31-1106b 6). The proper amount of a day calorie for one is relatively determined according to the necessary calorie for the momentum of that day, the digestion function, and all the like conditions that should be taken into account even though there is the standard daily calorie. So do mean in moral cases. A morally good action cannot be identified without regard to relevant conditions of a particular situation. Aristotle reiterates that moral excellence is to feel and act at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way (1995, 1106b and other places). It is complicated to designate a mean relatively determined in a particular situation, and it is impossible to generalize it.

Aristotle famously names the ability to discern a mean "practical wisdom" (1995, 1141a 28-29). Practical wisdom is a power of foresight with regard to life. As it was mentioned in Chapter 2, Aristotle compares practical wisdom with the perception of triangle. This is one of the most profound statements of Aristotle's, which gives a simple picture of practical wisdom and hence that of moral excellence. However, it could also mislead us to suppose that moral perception is plain like geometric perception. We all naturally develop the perception of geometric figures, and thus to perceive the figures, such as a triangle, is plain for us. The mean in a moral situation, in other words, the right thing to do in a given situation is also salient and easy

to perceive for those who have practical wisdom, but it does not imply that moral perception is applicable to normal people too. To see immediately the right thing to do is a distinctive ability of those who have practical wisdom which is actually hard to achieve.

To recall Aristotle's other accounts of practical wisdom is necessary to clear up the false impression that moral perception in Aristotle's sense is the pain sort of perception. In elaborating practical wisdom Aristotle uses perception as it was discussed so far, but he additionally uses deliberation and calculation. Practical wisdom is to deliberate well or calculate correctly what the mean is in the given situation. These three terms are employed to illuminate different aspects of practical wisdom. As Aristotle compares practical wisdom to the perception of triangle, the term of perception is employed to indicate the feature of immediacy of practical wisdom. Considering that numerous facts are involved in moral perception, the feature of immediacy of perception should not be taken as the evidence that moral perception is a straightforward cognition like the recognition of the color of color sample. This is obvious if we consider the term of deliberation that Aristotle uses for practical wisdom. Practical wisdom is to deliberate well, and deliberation requires experiences. Aristotle says, "While young men become geometricians and mathematicians and wise in matters like these, it is thought that a young man of practical wisdom cannot be found (1995, 1142a 13-15)." Wisdom cannot be achieved without the life time that broadens experience. Deliberation is intellectual dealing with the present for the future by the virtue of the past, the accumulated experience. In the respect that extensive experience is essential for practical wisdom, the third term, calculation can be interpreted as comparing experiences. Calculation is possible only with commensurable reserves gained and accumulated from the past experience, with which the present are compared.

Now, if it is considered that moral perception involves deliberation and calculation, Aristotle's analogy of moral perception to the perception of a triangle can be expounded as follows:

When we perceive a figure as a triangle, we have to grasp all the elements, such as segments, angles, apex, and the like which are integrated in a single figure and how those elements related to each other, and furthermore the elements should be compared with those of other figures, such as rectangular, which have been perceived previously. All after the synthetic evaluation, we can see that it is a triangle, not a square.

The perception of triangle is actually not that simple cognition at all, even though it is easy for us to perceive geometric figures immediately because we have naturally and pretty early in life developed the intellectual ability for it through relevant experiences. Similarly, moral perception is a perceptive ability to discern a mean immediately, but comparing with the geometric perception the cultivation of moral perception requires a tremendous amount of time and experiences. Confucius sets down his own moral development stages, and he seems to have reached the excellence in Aristotle's sense at the age of seventy. He says, "At seventy I follow the desires of my heart and do not overstep the bounds."<sup>24</sup>

Moral excellence is a quite high level of moral development that a small number of people actually achieve at their late age. It should be the reason why Aristotle continuously relates legislation to morality. The polity is composed of people most of whom have no moral perception. The laws to guide citizens' actions are indispensable for the maintenance of polity, and thus legislation is a significant task for those who have achieved excellence. However, if it is true that moral perception is limited to a few seniors, and their perception is set as laws for most

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<sup>24</sup> Confucius' *Analects*, 2.4

citizen who have not achieved excellence, is there any possibility that some are morally good while some others are not as we say it in our everyday life? Is there any place in Aristotle for moral perception of good people, which could be distinguished from the perception of excellent people?

In Aristotle's moral theories some can be considered as morally good even though they are not so in the strict sense. Put differently, Aristotle would say that many people are morally good to some extent even though they have not entered Confucius's stage of his seventy. It can be inferred from Aristotle's further account of excellence. Aristotle explains difference between moral excellence and practical wisdom in the respect of function and difference between natural excellence and excellence in the strict sense in the respect of moral development. In these comparisons it is found that moral excellence or natural excellence is pertinent to good people who have not achieved practical wisdom yet.

Excellence can be divided into moral excellence and intellectual excellence or practical wisdom. "Again," Aristotle says, "the function of man is achieved only in accordance with practical wisdom as well as with moral excellence; for excellence makes the aim right, and practical wisdom the things leading to it. (1995, 1144a7-9)" As it was mentioned, Aristotle's account of the good begins with the supposition of the functional existence of human. Human good is to act well, and good action has two steps, aiming the right thing and then actualizing it. Moral excellence is concerned with the former step while practical wisdom is with the latter. This distinction of the initiating step and the actualizing step appears to be contradictory to Aristotle's other explanation about excellence and practical wisdom. As we have seen so far, practical wisdom is an essential component of excellence. Practical wisdom is a perceptive

ability to discern even what should be set as a right aim as well as the other relevant facts, so that it seems impossible to see the right aim without practical wisdom.

However, the separation between moral excellence and practical wisdom seems to gain more plausibility if they are considered as developmental phases rather than as the functional procedures, and the developmental aspect of excellence is more explicit in the distinction between natural excellence and excellence in the strict sense. Natural excellence refers to good characters, the inherent moral dispositions, and excellence in the strict sense involves practical wisdom:

... all men think that each type of character belongs to its possessors in some sense by nature; for from the very moment of birth we are just or fitted for self-control or brave or have the other moral qualities; but yet we seek something else as that which is good in the strict sense—we seek for the presence of such qualities in another way. For both children and brutes have the natural dispositions to these qualities, but without thought these are evidently hurtful.

(Aristotle, 1995, 1144b 3-10)

We have some natural excellence, in other words, moral characters. However, there is always the possibility that the natural excellence generates vice rather than good if it is not accompanied by practical wisdom. Natural excellence is a sort of passion, desire, or disposition to incline toward good. The disposition toward good is usually revealed in the typical and uncomplicated moral situations, but it also possibly goes beyond the mean to the excess or to the defect. For example, a considerate girl acts carefully with a good intention when she visits her friend's family, but she makes the family strained because of her excessive carefulness with them. There are many more drastic cases, such as the death of a brave teenager jumping into a river to rescue his drowning friend. Natural excellence is a certain directionality which is not yet controlled by practical wisdom whereas excellence in the strict sense is the state that the passion or the disposition is

combined with the intellectual regulation, and in this sense excellence is also characterized by Aristotle as “desiderate thought” or “intellectual desire”. (1995, 1139b4-5)

Nevertheless, without moral excellence, moral disposition, there is no initiation of deliberation and accordingly no cultivation of practical wisdom. Even though moral disposition does not include practical wisdom to discern immediately what is right and what is necessary to actualize it, it designates the direction toward the good, and thus it provokes deliberation to inquire the way to determine the exactly right aiming point and how to actualize it. Natural excellence is prior to practical wisdom in terms of developmental phase, and it implies that natural excellence involves some sort of perception to be aware of the direction toward good at least until it cultivates practical wisdom which can discern the exact aimed place and the way to arrive at it. Without moral disposition or the rough perception of direction toward good, human being is just an amoral being who would never feel the necessity to act morally. When we call some people a good boy, a good girl, and a good person, we do not expect that they infallibly perceive what is right as Confucius did at the age of seventy, but they see what is good and is naturally disposed to it.

Excellence is cultivated on the foundation of natural excellence which is a sort of passion, desire, or disposition. However, it should be noted that vice is the same sort. “There are three kinds of disposition,” Aristotle says, “then, two of them vices, involving excess and deficiency and on an excellence, viz. the mean, and all are in a sense opposed to all. (1995, 1108b 12-14)” Aristotle reiterates that passion or desire is a constituent of excellence. Excellence is not differentiated from vice in that both are passions. They are alike in the respect that they are all dispositions represented as directional forces of the opposites, and thus it is evident that natural excellence can generate vicious actions when it goes too far beyond the mean.

Considering that both excellence and vice are dispositions, it seems to be natural that the way to cultivate excellence is to manage the directional force. Aristotle compares the way of moral education to straightening bent sticks. He says, “We must drag ourselves away to the contrary extreme; for we shall get into the intermediate state by drawing well away from error, as people do in straightening sticks that are bent.” (1995, 1109b 4-6) As it is apparent in the analogy of the bent stick, it is in a negative manner that excellence is cultivated. Moral education is mainly to subdue the dispositions by introducing an opposite force whenever a directional force, a human disposition goes beyond the mean. Thus, the way to cultivate excellence is mostly to moderate dispositions rather than to strengthen or encourage.

Aristotle maintains that laws are crucial for moral development. He says, “It is difficult to get from youth up a right training for excellence if one has not been brought up under right laws.” (1995, 1179b 32-33) Legislation is the account by those who have excellence, but it does not imply that laws indicates means and even less that it helps the development of practical wisdom. Even though laws are established by those who have practical wisdom, laws do not indicate means, which are concerned with particulars. Laws are general accounts which more likely indicate extreme excesses and defects to make people avoid them. Laws are not related to the cultivation of excellence in the strict sense but to that of moral disposition. The force which goes beyond the mean can be moderated by making it face the opposite force formed by laws, most of which are prohibitions. It directs toward the intermediate from the excess or from the defect. Within the centripetal tendency that laws forms the young keep facing the opposite force whenever they go out beyond the intermediate, and they eventually become habituated to be inclined to the intermediate. This cultivated inclination can be taken as similar to natural excellence if natural excellence is an inborn good character in the strict sense. For Aristotle laws

have the significant educational role to foster the basis on which practical wisdom and accordingly excellence in the strict sense could be cultivated.

In *Nichomechean Ethics* the main aim is to give an account of human good, and thus Aristotle focuses on elaborating excellence itself. However, it can be conjectured that for Aristotle there is the place not only for the perception of those who have achieved practical wisdom but also for the perception of good people who do not have practical wisdom yet. Those who either were born with natural excellence or have cultivated moral disposition in educational environment established by laws should have the perception of direction toward the mean. It is evident that good people immediately recognize vice which is excess or defect and avoid it, and this fact manifests that they perceive the right direction even though they cannot discern the exact intermediate point. In this sense the feature of this sort of moral perception is directionality.

## **2. Moral perception in Nietzsche**

The concept of natural excellence in Aristotle can be compared with Nietzsche's idea of human nature. Nietzsche has a polemical view on Aristotle's explication of morality. He often mentions Aristotle's moral theory as one of the cases of slave morality which he depreciates comparing with noble morality. Aristotle supposes that human disposition, either good or bad one, requires the guide of laws helping the cultivation of excellence, the ability to see what is right in the given situation according to rational principles. Even though Aristotle acknowledges human disposition as a constituent of morality, he considers that it should be moderated by the rationality which is embodied in laws. Human dispositions should be tamed under laws in order to develop into excellence in the strict sense to see and pursue what is in accordance with the rational principles. In this Aristotle's account of morality, rationality is taken as more crucial

than human natural disposition, and this is the point that Nietzsche opposes. Nietzsche's objection to Aristotle becomes clearer when we consider Nietzsche's project.

Nietzsche is usually known to be an anti-moralist who argues the futility of morality. Nietzsche's project is definitely to attack the morality grounded in asceticism and idealism, but when he problematizes morality, he also stresses the foundation of humanity, "nature" or "instinct" which has been oppressed for a long time under a certain kind of morality which should be differentiated from a healthy one. The fact that Nietzsche indicates the anti-nature or anti-instinct morality when he opposes morality is obvious in his statement, "The loss of the center of gravity, resistance to the natural instincts—in one word, "selflessness"—that is what was hitherto called *morality*." (1989, p. 292) Nietzsche's project is to discover nature, the crude ground of morality, which has been buried under the dominant ideas and practices of morality. Even though Nietzsche disputes Aristotle's view that rationality is the essence of morality, Nietzsche's maintain that nature is the ground of morality seems to be in accordance with Aristotle's acknowledgement of natural excellence or moral excellence as a necessary element of morality. This fact clues that the possibility of moral perception is found in Nietzsche as the rough perception of directionality is found in Aristotle. However, Nietzsche's conception of moral perception should have substantial difference from Aristotle's in that Nietzsche considers nature as the ground of morality rather than as a subordinate constituent of morality.

In order to illuminate moral perception in Nietzsche it is necessary to see what the morality that he attacks looks like. When he criticizes morality, the exact object is the existing morality which has been dominant for a long time. When we mention morality, it naturally means the contemporary morality, the existing system of value and principle of conduct. It is taken as the typical moral phenomenon that rules and norms are imposed on individuals as social

duties, and public penalty and censure are imposed when they break it. It is hard for us to imagine the possibility of another kind of morality because of the strong impression of normative and institutional morality. However, Nietzsche takes it as one kind of morality of which Christianity is the representative, and he compares it with another kind of morality, individualized morality, such as the Presocratic morality, which relies more on individuals' capacity to engage with the reality than on social norms and rules. He names the first one as slave morality characterized by passivity and the latter as noble morality characterized by activity.

Nietzsche classifies into slave morality the moralities that have existed from ancient to modern times. From the popular perspective of history ancient, medieval, and modern times have significantly distinct cultures each and in the respect of morals as well.<sup>25</sup> The turn from the ancient, a more humanistic era, to the medieval, a religious era, is considered as a substantial change, and the turn from the medieval to the modern as a more drastic alteration. Modern times began with the degeneration of Christianity, and the moral decline accompanies the spread of atheism, which is one of the most characteristic features of modernity. From this popular view of historical division the morality of each age should be differentiated, and thus Nietzsche's broad division seems to lack subtlety.

As it was mentioned, the common substance of the moralities of the ancient, the medieval, and the modern times is passivity, which enables Nietzsche to identify them as slave morality. Nietzsche finds the origin of the passive characteristic in the pervasive psychological state of

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<sup>25</sup> Nietzsche mentions Asian moralities such as Confucius's and Buddhism as the cases of slave morality, but he mainly examines European cultures. The ancient, the medieval, and the modern age is also the division of European history. As it was mentioned above, Nietzsche divides the ancient age into Presocratic and Socratic time and considers the latter as when the slave morality emerged. Thus, the slave morality in the ancient time indicates that of Socratic.

human in those times, and he specifies resentment as the ground emotion where slave morality arises. Resentment is a sort of perverted will which culminates in asceticism. Nietzsche explains that it is “insatiable instinct and power-will that wants to become master not over something in life but over life itself, over its most profound, powerful and bad conditions.”(1989, p. 119) To want to master or influence the other thing is a natural and fundamental instinct of life, but when this will is directed to life itself, it begins to hate life. When life is recognized as the source of all sorts of bad occasion, it becomes a necessity to subdue life. Life is taken as the origin of uncertainty and objectified as what should be overcome. The unnatural discipline of ascetic priests, such as the extreme level of abstention is a radical way to deny even their own life. Nietzsche considers that idealism to disparage the contingent earthly life and seek the permanent truth shares the ascetic aversion of life. Resentment has been the ethos of three related phenomena of asceticism, idealism, and morality, in more exact words, slave morality.

However, we, moderns, cannot perceive the existence of resentment behind slave morality to be still dominant morality in modern times according to Nietzsche.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, morality seems to be a separate issue from religion and idealism, since it is rather concerned with how to regulate our behaviors and our way of life, in other words, how to live well or act well as Aristotle examines it in *Nicomachian Ethics*. Even though the ethos of resentment is not very manifest in moral practices, it is hidden in its influence on the way to conceive “good”.

Nietzsche compares the slave morality’s characteristic way to conceive “good” with that of the noble morality:

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<sup>26</sup> Some might say that we now live in postmodern era which is distinct from modern times, particularly Nietzsche’s time. In Nietzsche’s view on morality, the contemporary time belongs to modern time which is merely a later part of Socratic time. Moreover, there is no drastic difference between contemporary time and Nietzsche’s in that some feature of slave morality is even strengthened these days. It will be elaborated when Henry Bergson’s view on morality is discussed later in this section.

.. picture “the enemy” as the man of resentment conceives him—and here precisely is his deed, his creation: he has conceived “the evil enemy,” “*the Evil One*,” and this in fact is his basic concept, from which he then evolves, as an afterthought and pendant, a “good one”—himself! This, then, is quite the contrary of what the noble man does, who conceives the basic concept “good” in advance and spontaneously out of himself and only then creates for himself an idea of “bad”! This “bad” of noble origin and that “evil” out of the cauldron of unsatisfied hatred—the former an after-production a side issue, a contrasting shade, the latter on the contrary the original thing the beginning, the distinctive *deed* in the conception of a slave morality—how different these words “bad” and “evil” are, although they are both apparently the opposite of the same concept “good”

(Nietzsche, 1989, pp. 39-40)

While “good” is conceived in the first place in noble morality, it is secondarily conceived in slave morality. The criterion for the evaluation of good in slave morality is subject to the idea of evil which is formerly formed in the negative psychological state, resentment. Resentment is the antipathetic emotion which is undissolved, and what is once recognized as an evil in this state hardens as “the Evil One.” Within the immutable enclosure of evils “good” is posed as the avoidance of evils. This negative conception of good is prevalent even now in that “morally good” is usually taken as “not immoral” or “not illegal”.<sup>27</sup>

The moralities based on the negative conception of “good” primarily aim to prevent the evil, and regulation and prohibition becomes the central feature of morality.<sup>28</sup> Within the fortified realm of slave morality individual person’s inherent potency tends to be identified with the potential evil, Nietzsche writes, “All these moralities which address themselves to the

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<sup>27</sup> It is particularly evident in the second case of failure of moral perception that was provided as moral blindness. The citizens passed by a man lying on the street should have considered themselves as good in that they have never done any evil, particularly any illegal action.

<sup>28</sup> As it was discussed in the beginning of this section, Aristotle supposes that laws play a significant role in the formation of moral disposition, and in this sense morality conceived by Aristotle is a kind of slave morality in Nietzsche’s view. Aristotle’s emphasis on deliberation to cultivate practical wisdom also is one of objects of Nietzsche’s critique. Nietzsche often mentions prudence as a calculative way of seeing the reality, and it should be a disparaging expression of Aristotle’s concept of deliberation or calculation. It will be elaborated later in this section Nietzsche’s objection to the conception of morality based on the intellectual ability.

individual person, for the promotion of his ‘happiness’ as they say – what are they but prescriptions for behavior in relation to the degree of *perilousness* in which the individual person lives with himself; recipes to counter his passions, his good and bad inclination in so far as they have will to power in them and would like to play the tyrant... because they address themselves to ‘all’, because they generalize where generalization is impermissible...” (2003, p. 119) The perilousness is inexorable quality of life. The nature, which is the circumstance of life, is full of danger, such as the severely cold weather and the chance to be a prey to others as we can observe it in the life of animals, and humans are neither free from the all sorts of danger of nature at all. However, humans form their own environment, society, which is comparatively much safer than the crude nature. But under this distinctive human condition of life, danger is associated more with human passion and inclination, human innate nature than with the external nature. Passion is the source of life without question, but it can occasionally bring about harmful effect on the society. When this human disposition is recognized as a potential danger to the society, it is labeled as an evil. As it was discussed in the former section, Aristotle’s also perceives the danger inherent in human nature, and thus he emphasizes that even natural excellence should be directed under the guide of laws. However, Nietzsche penetrates the historical phenomenon that life itself has been forbidden under the name of suppression of the evil. The ascetic aversion to life underlying slave morality reigns over individuals through the norms and laws most of which are inevitably overgeneralizations. The desire to give a permanent order to nature first of all transforms human, the most perilous beings, into passive beings who subdue one’s own nature to the norms and rules.

On the contrary to Nietzsche’s depreciation of it, the birth and continuation of slave morality can be positively considered. The slave morality has greatly contributed to the

preservation of society which presents enormous benefit to its members. The benefit of the communal way of life has made slave morality dominant in human societies for a long time. Henry Bergson is the one who discusses slave of morality in a more mild tone compared with Nietzsche's strident one. Bergson's view on morality helps us see more clearly that slave morality continues or even becomes stronger in modern time which appears to be an amoral era. Nietzsche's polemic particularly against Christianity and occasionally against Buddhism can mislead us to believe that his objection is only to the morality which is closely connected with religious practice to obey the absolute authority and thus that the widespread atheism and individualism in contemporary time is an evidence of the decline of slave morality. It is true that Nietzsche considers that Christianity had reinforced the ethos of slave morality in Europe, and asceticism and idealism culminated with the flourishing of Christianity. However, it does not follow that the decline of Christianity in contemporary societies is accompanied with degeneration of slave morality. The compatibility between slave morality and atheism is more manifest in Bergson's illumination focusing on the necessity of morality for the preservation of society, which is also the supreme importance even in the era of atheism.

Bergson's conception of morality is consonant with Nietzsche's. Bergson also explains that there are two different kinds of morality in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. One is for the stability of existing society and the other is for the reformation of society. The first morality is marked by social consciousness to comply with obligations for sustaining common safety, and the second is by will to take the risk of endangering one's own life for establishing new and just social orders. The first morality is static or social morality which can be compared to slave morality, and the second is absolute or human morality which can be compared to noble morality. These two kinds of morality dwell in tension throughout the human history.

The central feature of social morality is immobility which is associated with the regularity and stability of society. Bergson illustrates the stable state employing the image of circle. He writes, “Immanent in the former (social morality) is the representation of a society which aims only at self-preservation; the circular movement in which it carries round with it individuals, as it revolves on the same spot, is a vague imitation, through the medium of habits, of the immobility of instinct.” (2006, p. 51) In order to remain on the same spot in the same status, in other words, to remain in a closed extension, the society should cope with the two forces which could destabilize the circular movement. One threatens from the outside, and the other from the inside. The closed society is wary of foreign force that comes from the other societies or cultures. However, it is more crucial to manage the ever present potential danger within the society which can arise among its members, particularly the new ones born into the society.

For the preservation of communal life it is required to make the new members adapt themselves to the existing circular movement. In the case of communities living animals, such as ants and bees which are strikingly similar to human in the respect of form of life, the new born naturally become members of community merely by following their instinct, but it is not that easy and natural for human beings because of the distinctive human nature, free will. Bergson states that one of our earliest memories is the prohibition that is imposed by other individuals, such as parents and teachers. However, Bergson argues that the pressure on us is actually neither visible nor tangible because the authority of commands does not come from each individual but from the collective existence of people, namely society. The sense of society is what enables us to moderate the free will ourselves and comply with social norms and rules in order to belong to the society. The sense of society in Bergson can be compared with herd-instinct in Nietzsche. The consciousness of the big circular tide that encompasses the society is what makes us to be

drawn into that movement as among a herd of cow the individual cows cannot but move in the direction that the whole herd moves in.

The cultivation of social morality in Bergson's term or slave morality in Nietzsche's thus involves dealing with the potency of members, and it is inevitably in the tension with human morality or noble morality through which human societies can make a forward thrust movement. The possibility is high that in imposing social morality the potency of individual human is suppressed and consequently that the germ of human morality is damaged. This danger always exists, and it is still considerable in modern time when the societies get bigger and bigger and accordingly more and more highly institutionalized. The norms and rules are even more overgeneralized to the extent that morality is reduced to legal and illegal dichotomy, which gives the amoral impression of modern societies that the legal system replaces morality. However, from Bergson and Nietzsche's view it is merely an institutional version of social or slave morality of which the passivity becomes as extreme as individuals are drowned in the systematic tide. The impersonal and callous society establishes more formidable circular movement even though it is not as explicit as that in the traditional society where persons, such as priests or seniors were the living agent of social or slave morality.

What is particularly significant in Nietzsche's discussion on morality is that he points out that the intensification of slave morality brings a concomitant risk of cognitive degeneration. Nietzsche designates stupidity as a distinguishing feature of slave morality. He writes, "Regard any morality from this point of view: it is 'nature' in it which teaches hatred of *laissez aller*, of too great freedom, and which implants the need for limited horizons and immediate tasks – which teaches the *narrowing of perspective*, and thus in a certain sense stupidity, as a condition of life and growth." (2003, p. 112) The necessity to restrict free will of individuals is inevitably

related to narrowing their view. Under the pressure generated by society individuals are intent on moving mechanically within the rigid realm of norms and rules and unable to see the other possibilities as a cow within a herd has too narrow perspective to see the wider circumstance.

However, the stupidity should not be simply identified with the intellectual disability. Nietzsche also remarks that cleverness and prudence are the characteristics of slave morality. It is the aim of slave morality to preserve the existing order of society, but it is actually not that easy to keep the existing order, since the precarious reality is the circumstance of society. As it was mentioned in the former section, when Aristotle discusses how to act well, he reiterates that it is required to act at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way. The society firmly equipped with norms and rules is not free from the complexity of the reality either. The way of slave morality to see and deal with the complexity is precise calculation.

Calculation for right judgment is definitely a high level mental activity. Why then does Nietzsche depreciate slave morality as stupidity? In Nietzsche's view something essential is absent in this way of seeing and dealing with the reality. It is a sort of cleverness but the cleverness within the narrow perspective. It is a way of understanding of reality which occurs in the conscious level whereas there is another kind of understanding in the unconscious level. Nietzsche writes, "They felt unable to cope with the simplest undertakings; in this new world they no longer possessed their former guides, their regulating, unconscious and infallible drives: they were reduced to thinking, inferring, reckoning, co-ordinating cause and effect, these unfortunate creatures; they were reduced to their "consciousness," their weakest and most fallible organ!" (1989, p. 84) Noble men conceive the basic idea, "good," out of themselves whereas slave men conceive it as the opposite of evils. The noble men's direct conception of

“good” is possibly due to their “unconscious and infallible drive”, the instinctive human ability to grasp the reality immediately. It is a perceptive ability to see or feel good and bad as human are instinctively able to perceive an apple as good or bad just by seeing, smelling, or having a bite of it without the scientific measurement of the amount of sugar contained in it. Moral perception to see good and bad in noble morality does not require any conscious process, such as inference and calculation based on rational principles.

The cognition in the conscious level, in another word, intellect is taken by Nietzsche as the weakest and most fallible organ.<sup>29</sup> Nietzsche considers that the reality cannot be fully grasped by intellect, and he indicates its reductive tendency as one of the grounds of his depreciation of intellect. He writes, “The power of spirit to appropriate what is foreign to it is revealed in a strong inclination to assimilate the new to the old, to simplify the complex, to overlook or repel what is wholly contradictory.” (2003, p. 160) The intellectual understanding is basically the analysis of the components of reality and the inference of relationships among them. It is to attempt to enclose the reality in ideas and principles, which is impossible without the reduction of the complex of reality to something simpler to be easily encapsulated in the existing ideas and thus to be easily dealt with. For the sake of the intellectual understanding of reality, the other way of understanding is dismissed. Nietzsche writes, “This same will is served by an apparently antithetical drive of the spirit, a sudden decision for ignorance, for arbitrary shutting-out a closing of the windows, an inner denial of this or that thing a refusal to let it approach, a kind of defensive posture against much that can be known, a contentment with the dark, with the

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<sup>29</sup> Nietzsche uses the four terms of cleverness, prudence, reason, and intellect as synonyms of rational cognition or the faculty, which is the contrast to the instinctive cognition or instinct. I will mostly employ the term of intellect from now on. It is to follow Henry Bergson’s terminology in *Creative Evolution* where intellect and instinct are discussed as two divergent evolutionary directions of life. I consider that Nietzsche’s contradictory conception of intellect and instinct is equivalent to that of Bergson. Bergson’s view on intellect and instinct will be discussed later in this section.

closed horizon, an acceptance and approval of ignorance.” (2003, p. 161) When the conscious level of cognition operates, the perceptual reception of the reality is blocked. It is required to block out the instinctive faculty through which the crude complex of reality comes in, since the complex is hard to be handled in the conscious level.

The intellect’s necessity to block out the instinctive perception of the complex of reality is in accordance with philosophers’ tendency to hate becoming or the changing but worship being or the constant. In common sense philosophers are those who maximize their intellectual ability, and their distinct trait is to favor the unchanging. The very essence of intellect is to imagine rather than to perceive particularly when it is obsessed with something permanent and unchanging:

You ask me which of the philosopher’s traits are really idiosyncrasies? For example, their lack of historical sense, their hatred of the very idea of becoming, their Egypticism. They think that they show their respect for a subject when they de-historicize it, *sub specie aeterni*—when they turn it into a mummy. All that philosophers have handled for thousands of years have been concept-mummies; nothing real escaped their grasp alive. When these honorable idolators of concepts worship something, they kill it and stuff it; they threaten the life of everything they worship. Death, change, old age, as well as procreation and growth, are to their minds objections—even refutations. Whatever has being does not become; whatever becomes does not have being. Now they all believe, desperately even, in what has being. But since they never grasp it, they seek for reasons why it is kept from them. “There must be mere appearance, there must be some deception which prevents us from perceiving that which has being: where is the deceiver?”

(Nietzsche, 1982, pp. 479-480)

The philosophers long for the truth, the principles consistently applied to the reality which is endlessly becoming and changeable. The difficulty that they keep confronting in dealing with the reality makes them to repute our senses which perceive the reality as contradictory to their wish. They imagine the constant realm of being beyond the reality that is becoming.

Nietzsche’s doubt about intellect still seems to demand some supportive account. Bergson again helps us see more clearly why Nietzsche considers intellect unreliable as for

grasping the reality. According to Bergson, intellect is originally the faculty concerning to solids. “When we pass in review the intellectual functions,” he writes, “we see that the intellect is never quite at its ease, never entirely at home, except when it is working upon inert matter, more particularly upon solids.”(2005, p.169) Intellect is fundamentally the faculty for making and using unorganized instruments. As the first moment of the emerge of human species is identified with when it began to make tools, such as the hatchets made of stone, intellect primarily aimed at mechanical invention, and the material for it was solid. However, it does not imply that intellect only objectifies unorganized solid. It is obvious that intellectual activity is not limited to making and using some tools made of solids. It has manufactured languages, societies, very recently the internet world, and so on. However, what makes all the kinds of manufacture possible is the intellect’s inherent tendency to deal with anything as if it is solids.

Intellect tends to deal with moving or changing matters as if they are inert. Bergson writes, “... it (intellect) always starts from immobility, as if this were the ultimate reality: when it tries to form an idea of movement, it does so by constructing movement out of immobilities.” (2005, p. 171) The flourishing of human species is absolutely thanks to intellect, and its power actually comes from its strong tendency to ignore the continuity and mobility of reality. Humans have gained effective control over unorganized materials as observed in our modern life full of all kinds of useful tools, and humans have been successful to some extent in extending its control over organized materials by the insatiable desire to analyze them into inert elements and recompose them into mechanical relationships. Nevertheless, the realm of organic and mobile reality, in another word, life still seems to be invincible.

Bergson emphasizes the limitation of intellect’s understanding of life in a penetrating voice, and particularly points out the failure of medical and educational practice:

We see that the intellect, so skillful in dealing with the inert, is awkward the moment it touches the living. Whether it wants to treat the life of the body or the life of the mind, it proceeds with the rigor, the stiffness and the brutality of an instrument not designated for such use. The history of hygiene or of pedagogy teaches us much in this matter. When we think of the cardinal, urgent and constant need we have to preserve our bodies and to raise our souls, of the special facilities given to each of us, in this field, to experiment continually on ourselves and on others, of the palpable injury by which the wrongness of a medical or pedagogical practice is both made manifest and punished at once, we are amazed at the stupidity and especially at the persistence of errors. We may easily find their origin in the natural obstinacy with which we treat the living like the lifeless and think all reality, however fluid, under the form of the sharply defined solid. We are at ease only in the discontinuous, in the immobile, in the dead. *The intellect is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life.*

(Bergson, 2005, pp.181-182)

Some might object to Bergson's view that we have not been so successful in medical and educational practices. We certainly have had considerable achievement in those practices, but comparing with the speed of progress in our mechanical control over the physical world, the progress in the practice concerning to living is quite retarded. For example, the rapid scientific progress in the beginning of modern times, which can be taken as an intellectual flourishing, made people have so many expectations. Plenty of dreams, such as space travel, have been realized very rapidly while many others particularly concerning to living, such as the invention of perfect treatments for cancers, seem to be practically unrealizable when the speed of progress is considered. In regard to education science seems to have been even more unsuccessful in considering the behaviorists' conviction about the control over human behaviors and educational engineering's about the dramatic enhancement of educational efficiency. It would be a legitimate objection that the intellectual approach to the reality cannot be reduced to the scientific approach. However, considering the modernization of education, in other words, institutionalization of it, which is the outcome of intellectual approach to education, it is hard to say that a big progress has been made through the modernization. The expansion of educational opportunity is certainly

an enormous success of modern setting of education, but it is still hardly the evidence of the success of intellectual approach to education.

Reconsidering Nietzsche's view on morality in the light of Bergson's explication of intellect, slave morality should be a prolonged attempt of intellect to form and preserve a solid human society. It has the same desire and tendency as intellect's to reduce the living, individuals, to inert beings, passive members of society. For this it is required to tame their free will to be subject to the rigid structure of rules and norms which has been formulated by intellect. However, slave morality merely continues the vain struggle with the living in the obstinate manner. It is a project which can never be entirely successful to analyze human beings' mind and behavior and recompose them to be a part of the systematic movement of society. Repeatedly speaking, slave morality has been dominant for long time, and this fact can be interpreted that it has been as effective as it contributes to the continuation of society. However, the revolutions and reformations in human history reveal that there have been eruptive movements breaking through the circular movement. The circular movement driven and kept by slave morality always has the danger to form a deadly stagnant and barren environment, which can be only broken by the abrupt surges of life. The danger comes from the innate contradiction of slave morality to try to form a solid society with human beings who have the most fluid nature.

If slave morality is merely one of the worst cases of intellect's tendency to deal with livings like the dead, intellect might not be a part of healthier morality at all and that instinct replaces intellect for noble morality. Nietzsche appears to argue it. He writes:

A race of such men of *ressentiment* is bound to become eventually *cleverer* than any noble race; it will also honor cleverness to a far greater degree: namely, as a condition of existence of the first importance; while with noble men cleverness can easily acquire a subtle flavor of luxury and subtlety—for here it is far less essential than the perfect functioning of the regulating *unconscious* instincts or even than a certain imprudence, perhaps a bold recklessness whether in the face of danger or of the enemy, or that

enthusiastic impulsiveness in anger, love, reverence, gratitude, and revenge by which noble souls have at all times recognized one another.

(Nietzsche, 1989, pp38-39)

The supposition that there is no place for intellect in noble morality is hard to accept. It is almost unimaginable that there is any sort of morality which is not associated with intellect but only with instinct. Morality is one of the most distinctive and human phenomena, and intellect is what demarcates human beings from the other animals. It seems that the human species would not have emerged as a moral being without the development of intellect. If it is so, it is awkward to suppose that only instinct is concerned with noble morality. Nietzsche actually does not dismiss intellect for noble morality at all. What he problematizes is the attempt to purify intellect by separating it from instinct, human nature. The stupidity of slave morality comes from the aborted intellect which has lost the access to the reality which cannot be attained without the flesh of human being.

The fact that intellect also has a crucial role for noble morality is revealed in the dual notion of the reason or intellect in Nietzsche. Reason should be what enables the imagination of slave morality to repress instinct, but it results in turning against reason itself. Nietzsche writes, “To renounce belief in one’s ego, to deny one’s own “reality”—what a triumph! not merely over the senses, over appearance, but a much higher kind of triumph, a violation and cruelty against *reason*—a voluptuous pleasure that reaches its height when the ascetic self-contempt and self-mockery of reason declares: “*there* is a realm of truth and being, but reason is *excluded* from it!” (1989, pp. 118-119) Reason is the faculty to understand and deal with reality, but under slave morality it rather focuses on subduing one’s ego, one’s own “reality”, which is actually the ground of reason. The stupidity of slave morality is characterized by the cleverness of reason which even desires to reign over its own ground, but it merely results in ruining the footing of

reason. The reason that desires to be separate from instinct is the purified reason the absolute case of which is that of philosophers to look for the realm of truth beyond perception as it was discussed above.<sup>30</sup> Reason has the capacity to grasp and handle the reality, but it is fully exerted only when it supervenes upon the instinctive contact with the reality. When it is isolated from the reality, reason, which is the imagining organ to capture the reality in pictures and think up some possibilities, loses its power to grasp the reality.<sup>31</sup>

The purification of reason culminates in the philosopher's project to search for the eternal truth as it was reiterated, but it is practically exhibited in the agenda of objectivity. The actual way of the purification of reason is to eliminate any affect which is considered to be the most common hindrance to the objective view of reality. Nietzsche argues that to suspend affects is actually to debilitate our capacity of seeing or knowing itself:

Henceforth, my dear philosophers, let us be on guard against the dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a "pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject"; let us guard against the snares of such contradictory concepts as "pure reason," "absolute spirituality," "knowledge in itself": these always demand that we should think of an eye that is completely unthinkable, an eye turned in no particular direction, in which the active and interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes seeing *something*, are supposed to be lacking; these always demand of the eye an absurdity and a nonsense. There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective "knowing"; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity," be. But to eliminate the will altogether, to suspend each and every affect, supposing we were capable of this—what would that mean but to *castrate* the intellect?—

(Nietzsche, 1989, p. 119)

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<sup>30</sup> David Owen (1995) names this purified reason as liberal reason in order to differentiate it from the original sense of reason. See his book, *Nietzsche, Politics & Modernity*, chapter 3 "On the Genealogy of Modernity: A Critical History of the Philosophical Commitments of Liberal Reason"

<sup>31</sup> In *Philosophical Investigation* Wittgenstein also points out the fallibility of intellect saying "don't think, but look!" (2008, §90) He remarks that intellect tends to be directed toward the possibility of phenomena, not toward phenomena.

The feature of the perception that is embedded in the instinctive or unconscious level of reception of reality is will or affects accompanying the perception. Since will or affects is the indispensable circumstance of reason, it is the absurd debilitation of reason to try to see something disinterestedly for the sake of objectivity. Nietzsche points out that objectivity is secured by diverse affects rather than by the absence of affect. The lack of objectivity has nothing to do with affect itself, but the key point is being possessed with “an” affect or “a” perspective. The one-sided seeing tends to make the illusory view of reality, such as that of the slave morality possessed with resentment. The objective perception is gained through diverse experiences to keep adopting new perspectives and being immersed in different affects according to the fluid of reality. As Nietzsche maintains that enthusiastic impulsiveness in anger, love, reverence, gratitude, and revenge is the sign of noble souls, having diverse affects is the evidence of riding the flow of reality.

Having diverse affects does not mean a capricious, frivolous, or emotional personality. Human can be emotional without the perception of the given situation because of inherent characters, certain affective habits, or because of listening to music which is a very effective and immediate way to stir emotions. Affect discussed here is in regard to the perception of reality, and it does not denote affect or emotion itself. It rather indicates the unconscious level of awareness by being absorbed in the situation, which is phenomenally being in a certain psychological state can often be identified with a specific emotion. Anger, love, reverence, gratitude, and revenge are the cases of more intense and distinct affect, but there are many other sorts and degrees of affect including some feelings which have no word to be denoted. Having diverse affects implies that one has dwelled in one’s reality and perceived the reality thoroughly. It is the attitude toward the reality, not to turn one’s eye away from it even in offensive or

uncomfortable situation. This sort of state tends to be immediately followed by active participating in the situation with the help of intellectual imagination to capture it and contrive some related possibility. When reason operates within affects, it becomes a part of the agent who actively grasps and responds to the reality rather than remains as the fallible organ to imagine some possibility inappropriate to the earthly reality.

The perception as the intertwined work of intellect and affects is more palpable in poet's creative perception. Nietzsche compares creative seeing of poets with contemplative seeing of higher human beings:

*The fancy of the contemplatives.*—What distinguishes the higher human beings from the lower is that the former see and hear immeasurably more, and see and hear thoughtfully—and precisely this distinguishes human beings from animals and the higher animals from the lower. ... He (the higher man) fancies that he is a *spectator* and *listener* who has been placed before the great visual and acoustic spectacle that is life; he calls his own nature contemplative and overlooks that he himself is really the poet who keeps creating his life. ... As a poet, he certainly has *vis contemplativa* and the ability to look back upon his work, but at the same time also and above all *vis creativa*, ... We who think and feel at the same time are those who really continually *fashion* something that had not been there before: the whole eternally growing world of valuations, colors, accents, perspectives, scales, affirmations, and negations.

(Nietzsche, 1974, pp241-242)

The contemplative, higher human beings would like to remain as spectators who are seeing the stage from out of it. They are viewing but not involved in what is really happening on the stage. They have the higher view point that might allow the broader view to catch more things, but what they miss instead is the feelings which can only be felt when the distance between the stage and the audience is obliterated. The creative vision of what is in front of us is always accompanied with the feelings as the creative moments of poets come with inspirations. As poets would not be able to create new images with the aloof and accurate capture of details, we would not become authentic creators of our life and world just by the contemplative seeing. The poetic

perception is a mode of awareness that enables the subject to have firm grips with the reality even in the unconscious or instinct level and thus to have the freedom to respond to it creatively.

To create the world definitely means to make things, values, practices, and so on which have never existed in the world, but to remake what has existed in human history can also be the creation of the world. For example, recurrent everyday cooking for one's own family is creative practice even though it is not to make new dishes. Cooking is certainly a creative, in another word, artistic practice to involve qualitative perception, instinctive measurement, spontaneous response, and imagination. Moral practice in the sense of noble morality likewise is creative even when it is a part of everyday affairs, such as holding entrance doors for the following people if it is done from the respect of human beings, in other words, unless it is the habitual following of the social custom without the poetic perception of humanity. The same habit to hold doors can be a practice of slave morality or social morality in Bergson's word when it has been formed merely on the purpose to belong to the society whereas it can be a noble behavior when it is a spontaneous action associated with the re-perception of humanity. Moral perception is definitely a sort of poetic perception that is essential for the creation of the world in the level of ground, not in the higher level.

Nietzsche maintains that moral perception, "absorption, immersion, penetration into reality," comes with "great health." (1989, p. 96) In other words, moral perception requires the recovery of humanity that involves the unconscious and instinctive level of capacity to engage with the reality. In comparison with Aristotle's view, Nietzsche puts more emphasis on the importance of natural excellence as a more fundamental capacity for morality while Aristotle on rationality to moderate the natural excellence. It appears that in Nietzsche's view any kind of moral education is not necessary for moral development, or it rather hinders natural moral

development whereas Aristotle explicitly remarks the importance of moral education to have experiences under the guide of rationality and continue the intellectual analysis of the experiences to achieve practical wisdom. It seems to be natural to consider that Nietzsche has an unfavorable view on moral education if the socialization is taken as the primary purpose of moral education. In schooling and the other informal education the primary aim is actually to foster the spirit of law-abiding citizens, and Nietzsche might worry it. However, it should not be interpreted that Nietzsche absolutely denies education. Nietzsche would be concerned about it when education merely favors the development of slave morality or social morality at the expense of that of noble morality or human morality

Nietzsche actually stresses the importance of education, and an aim of *Ecce Homo* is the elucidation of his own way of self-cultivation. Like Aristotle Nietzsche considers that experience is crucial for education. Experiences from small things, such as diet, to sufferings, the unavoidable experiences of human life, are the source for the cultivation of morality. However, the difference between Nietzsche and Aristotle is distinct in the respect of how experience contributes to the cultivation of morality. As it was discussed above for Aristotle experiences are resources for deliberation and calculation to judge what is right thing to do. Experiences are analyzed and accumulated to establish the wealth of information which will be referred to for similar or relevant situations. In terms of capacity the intellectually handled and accumulated experience is called practical wisdom. For Nietzsche experience needs to become more substantial part of self. Nietzsche writes that experience should be digested first. He writes, “*Not to wish to see too soon*—As long as one lives through an experience, one must surrender to the experience and shut one’s eyes instead of becoming an observer *immediately*. For that would disturb the good digestion of the experience: instead of wisdom one would acquire indigestion.”

(1989, p. 184) Nietzsche stresses that the embodiment of experiences for the formation of self requires the suspension of seeing from the observer's perspective. It implies that the digestion of experience requires the perceptual attitude to be immersed into the situation and to respond instinctively rather than immediate deliberation to take a step back from it and think about it. The experiences to be perceived in the deeper level could be integrated into the self, and the digested experiences, in other words, the perceived reality which is hardly differentiated from the self, could eventually be contemplated. This sort of thought based on the perceived experiences is not the aloof calculation but active participation in the reality. As the capacity of active and creative thinking in cooking comes from a great deal of perceptual experiences, such as smelling, tasting, and feeling, self-cultivation requires great health, the perceptual disposition to jump first into the world, to become a part of it and consequently to make it a part of self.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I tried to show that moral perception is a grounded concept by indicating the place of moral perception in Aristotle and Nietzsche. I will give an outline of their conceptions of moral perception in a comparative manner to illuminate significant points particularly in Nietzsche. As I mentioned it at the beginning of this chapter, I suppose that the ground of moral perception is elucidated in Nietzsche's moral philosophy, but due attention has never been paid to it. Thus, it would be worthy to give more light on Nietzsche.

In Aristotle moral perception is divided into the perception of the excellent and the perception of the good. The former is excellence in the strict sense, capability to see the right thing to do, and the latter is natural excellence or moral excellence, an instinctive and affective perception of the directionality toward goods. The two kinds of moral perception compose

operational phases and developmental phases. In terms of operation natural excellence is what initiates moral perception, but it is insufficient, since it lacks practical wisdom which is necessary to complete moral perception. In terms of moral development natural excellence is a prerequisite for excellence in the strict sense, but excellence in the strict sense is eventually achieved only when practical wisdom is cultivated to moderate natural excellence.

Noble morality in Nietzsche can be taken to correspond to excellence in Aristotle. However, whereas Aristotle differentiates between natural excellence and excellence in the strict sense in terms of the operational level and the developmental level too, Nietzsche does not employ the analytic method to separate affective and intellectual components of morality and explain their relationship. Furthermore, he does not even distinguish the developmental phases of noble morality. Like Aristotle Nietzsche discusses the cultivation of morality, and he also puts emphasis on experience. However, it does not follow that natural noble morality is more instinctive, and cultivated noble morality is more intellectual. There is no substantial difference between natural noble morality and cultivated noble morality in the respect of the characteristics. Natural and instinctive digestion of experience, being absorbed in experiences is the essence of moral development, and it is to strengthen the natural capability to perceive and respond to the reality instinctively, not to complement the deficient nature by intellectual cultivation. What definitely characterizes noble morality in the cultivated phase is still the affective and spontaneous perception and response rather than the rational or wise consideration.

As it was discussed, noble morality involves the clear and broad vision of the reality compared with slave morality's confined vision, and thus noble man's seeing can be characterized as wise as well. However, as it is evident in the comparison between Aristotle's illustration of morality and Nietzsche's, Nietzsche does not subordinate instinct to intellect. For

Nietzsche morality requires natural engaging with the reality rather than intellectual soaring above the reality to overlook it, and in this respect seeing in morality is poetic perception, which is sympathetic understanding to perceive the holistic quality of an object or situation, and this qualitative awareness tends to be immediately followed by active and creative response or involvement. It is different from the analytic awareness to keep the distance from the object to look into the details in that poetic perception requires for the subject to participate in the object or situation. The participatory feature of moral perception will be clarified in the next chapter on the phenomenology of perception.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Phenomenology of Perception**

#### **Introduction**

As we saw in Chapter 2 that contemporary approaches to moral perception can be grouped into two: one that conceives moral perception focusing on the cognitive aspect, mostly Aristotelian approach, and the other including Deweyan approach that throws more light on the emotional aspect. In this chapter I will try to strengthen the latter approach by means of phenomenological elaboration of perception. In the latter approach it is argued that emotion is a key component of moral perception, and it is attempted to explicate moral perception in illuminating emotion as well as cognition. In spite that it is a valuable attempt to bring emotion into a spotlight, it is also exposed to the danger to reduce moral perception to the partial aspect. When we explicate moral perception focusing either on cognition or on emotion, it easily degenerates into cognition or into emotion, since it is particularly difficult to preserve the complicated relation between cognition and emotion, which is the substantial characteristic of moral perception. Aristotelian approach takes the emotional component as an incorporated part of cognition as it was discussed in Chapter 2. However, it is merely to avoid dealing with the problematic formation of moral perception by oversimplifying the relation between cognition and emotion. This is the point that the latter approach adequately criticizes. However, the complicated relation of cognition and emotion is not dealt with appropriately even in the latter approach. Some might criticize that the latter approach is like to shed two separate lights on cognition and emotion, and it is a worse way than that of Aristotelian approach, since the overall

view of moral perception is dismissed while the essential elements of cognition and emotion are separately indicated.

As it was suggested at the end of Chapter 2, phenomenological approach would be an adequate way to illuminate moral perception preserving its essential feature of emotional cognition or cognitive emotion. Through phenomenological approach moral perception is dealt with in the manner of descriptive analysis, and in this way we can attain a holistic sense of moral perception which renders our perception of the *problematic* quality of moral perception possible.<sup>32</sup> To elaborate moral perception from the phenomenological perspective, I will draw on John Dewey. As we have seen some of Dewey's remarks on perception in Chapter 2, he provides a profound elucidation of perception particularly in *Art as Experience*. For Dewey esthetic experience is not restricted to experience only related to art. Even though esthetic experience is typically observed in situations related to art, such as painting, any consummatory experience including everyday experience, such as cooking, is esthetic. Even though Dewey does not explicitly say it, I suppose that moral experience is a paradigmatic kind of esthetic experience in Dewey's sense, and thus the characteristic of moral perception is well delineated when it is considered as a sort of esthetic experience.

There might be another doubt which is not directly related to this research, but concerned about the classification of Dewey's explication of perception as a phenomenological approach. Dewey is a representative philosopher of pragmatism which is by some considered as contradictory to phenomenological tradition. They consider those two traditions as

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<sup>32</sup> The term of "problematic" was drawn on from the objection to McDowell in Chapter 2.

incompatible.<sup>33</sup> This view has a long history and even exists among contemporary scholars. However, there have been objections to this view as well arguing that pragmatism and phenomenology is two different approaches to human experience in the common context, so that informing each other is possible.<sup>34</sup> From the latter view to see the compatibility between two traditions, Dewey, particularly his explication of perception, is possibly examined from phenomenological perspective.<sup>35</sup> The next chapter is on Martin Heidegger widely acknowledged to be one of the most important philosophers who contribute to phenomenology. We will see later the fact that Dewey and Heidegger similarly inform moral perception, and this will be a demonstration of the connection between pragmatism and phenomenology.

### **1. “That was an experience.”**

To elaborate Dewey’s concept of perception it is necessary to examine his concept of experience first, since he deals with perception as a component of experience, which determines the quality of experience. For Dewey perception cannot be discussed without the consideration of experience as we cannot understand the operation of lens of camera without the sense of the whole mechanism of camera. Thus, I will explore Dewey’s concept of experience in this section in order to set the background of the discussion of perception.

Experience is a concept indicating certain spatial-temporal existences of human species. Human life is composed of actions and states endlessly successive through time, and in this respect we are not very distinctive from other animals. However, we tend to mark out some

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<sup>33</sup> For example, Scott Aikin (2006) argues that the naturalism background of pragmatism is contradictory to anti-naturalism of phenomenology.

<sup>34</sup> See Rosenthal and Bourgeois (1980).

<sup>35</sup> See Kestenbaum (1977). He exactly says this point on Dewey.

durations of life as experiences, and we often recall them as “an experience.” An experience is in other words esthetic experience. Esthetic experience is not restricted to artistic experiences, such as painting, but it rather indicates the esthetic quality of experience with which an experience comes to have a unity marked out from the other continuously distracted and dispersed actions and states. In this sense any kind of experience can be esthetic as Dewey enumerates instances of it from everyday events to special events:

A piece of work is finished in a way that is satisfactory; a problem receives its solution; a game is played through; a situation, whether that of eating a meal, playing a game of chess, carrying on a conversation, writing a book, or taking part in a political campaign, is so rounded out that its close is a consummation and not a cessation. Such an experience is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is *an* experience.

(Dewey, 2005, P. 37)

An esthetic experience which is a part of the continuous duration of life can be recognized by its end. We realize that we had an esthetic experience only after the event ends as Dewey points out that we say of it in the past tense, “That *was* an experience.” (2005, p. 36) However, we do not recall all happenings as an experience at the end. An event can be identified as an experience only if the end of it is a consummation, not a cessation. If the difference between “an experience” and the meaningless time passing lies in the difference between consummation and cessation, it would be crucial to explicate how the consummation is differentiated from the cessation.

An obvious evidence of consummation seems to be a successful result of the experience. As we can see it in the instances of an experience that Dewey provided in the above quotation, consummation is often accompanied with fruitful results. “A piece of work is finished in a way that is satisfactory; a problem receives its solution.” In these instances there must be an intentional beginning point of the experience, such as to have an aim to write a book. Thus, when

the experience finishes with the satisfied result by the following action, the end becomes a consummation whereas it becomes a cessation when the aim fails to be achieved in a hazy manner.<sup>36</sup> Experiences which have the purposeful beginning and the successful ending are the definite instances of an experience in that the successful result itself demonstrates that the series of happening of the experience flew well to form the integrated whole, and thus it gives the clear sense of individualizing quality.

However, experiences which end up with fruitful results are not always esthetic experience. Dewey excludes from the category of esthetic experience a certain kind of successful experience the result of which is achieved by mechanical efficiency. He says, “The activity is too automatic to permit of a sense of what it is about and where it is going. It comes to an end but not to a close or consummation in consciousness. Obstacles are overcome by shrewd skill, but they do not feed experience.” (2005, p. 40) Many of experiences which begin with an aim, go without distraction, and end up with a good result, are not perceived as an experience. It means that whether it ends up with a satisfactory outcome is not the criterion of an experience, and it is evident in that even failure is often recalled as an experience.

It is most clear in Dewey’s another example of an experience, an encounter of a storm which is undergoing rather than an action that purposeful beginning and successful ending has nothing to do with the esthetic quality of experience. He writes, “... Then there is that storm one went through in crossing the Atlantic—the storm that seemed in its fury, as it was experienced, to sum up in itself all that a storm can be, complete in itself, standing out because marked out from what went before and what came after.” (2005, p. 37) Imagine that in 1910 a 17 year old

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<sup>36</sup> I added “in a hazy manner” to elaborate the counter instance of an experience because some failures can be an experience. It will be discussed later.

boy was traveling from London to New York City by a ship. On a day he and the other passengers meet a fierce storm in the middle of Atlantic. As a passenger he has nothing to do but just waits for the storm to pass. In this experience there is no intentional aspect at all. It is merely an undergoing of a natural phenomenon, which has nothing to do with the successful result. The storm should have passed in any situation, and in this respect it appears to be more appropriate to regard the end of the storm as a cessation which merely implies the end itself rather than as a consummation, the completion. However, the end of storm could become a consummation, and the boy would say, "That was an experience." It is manifest in this case that what renders an experience esthetic is certainly not the intentional beginning and the successful ending which appear to be what round out an experience.

The example of encounter with a storm shows that the esthetic quality of experience comes from how the subject takes the occurrence, not from the objective property of it. The end of the storm was a consummation to the boy, but it could be a cessation to the other. A sailor who was in the ship felt relieved at the end of storm, but he possibly would not recall it as an experience. It could be a banal event to him which would be immediately forgotten. In this respect, whether an end of event becomes a consummation or a cessation is a subjective matter. However, it does not mean that the esthetic quality of experience cannot be seen from the objective perspective. Observers would be able to see the esthetic quality of a certain event, but as it is obvious in the case of the encounter of storm, the crucial constituent of esthetic experience, what is going on in the subjective level, is not visible. The subjectivity of an experience rather implies that the most decisive indicator of esthetic experience is the subject's perception of the esthetic quality of one's own experience, the appreciative uttering, "That was an experience."

Dewey's elaboration of the characteristics of unity of an experience would help us at this point to see the relation between the subjectivity and the essence of an experience. He writes, "An experience has a unity that gives it its name, that meal, that storm, that rupture of friendship. The existence of this unity is constituted by a single quality that pervades the entire experience in spite of the variation of its constituent parts. ... In going over an experience in mind after its occurrence, we may find that one property rather than another was sufficiently dominant so that it characterizes the experience as a whole." (2005, p. 38) What makes an experience esthetic is a single quality which pervades through the experience and thus gives the sense of unity and integration which individualizes it from the endlessly dispersed and distracted happenings. When we state that esthetic experience is a subjective phenomenon, it means that the pervasive quality is not perceived by the other, but only by the one who has the experience. The single quality of experience involves what is going on in the mind of subject while he or she has the experience, and in this respect the single quality has the subjective level.

To highlight the subjectivity of experience certainly appears to assume a relativistic view which I briefly tried to avoid above in saying that the esthetic quality can be observed by others, but a more elaborate explanation may be necessary. I am not insisting that esthetic experience is an absolutely subjective phenomenon, but stressing that it has the subjective level as an essential element. In other words, I am emphasizing the subject's mindful engagement in experience. It does not assume the relativism saying that we cannot share experiences because what is experienced contains personal interpretations which can by no means be identified with those of the other even though they were in the same situation. I try to illuminate the significance of the inner being of subject, what happens in the subject's mind, as it is manifest in the difference between the boy and the sailor. The storm itself has the objective property, such as the sound of

clashing thunder and the view of forked lightening, which can be commonly perceived by people, and this objective property appears equivalent to the quality that rounds out the experience.

However, the fact that there could also be those who did not have an experience from it shows that additionally to the objective property of the storm, there should be something going on in the subjective level to deal with the objective existence of storm. The single quality that pervades and unifies the experience does not refer to the objective property of storm but to some distinct quality which is generated through the subject's mindful engagement with it.

The significance of subject's mindful engagement is more clearly revealed in Dewey's another characterization of an experience. Dewey often uses the term of "emotional" almost as the synonym of "esthetic" to characterize an experience. He accepts that the term of emotional can be confusing, and he clarifies the notion of emotional. "In fact", he writes, "emotions are qualities, when they are significant, of a complex experience that moves and changes. I say, when they are *significant*, for otherwise they are but the outbreaks and eruptions of a disturbed infant. ... The intimate nature of emotion is manifested in the experience of one watching a play on the stage or reading a novel. It attends the development of a plot; and a plot requires a stage, a space, wherein to develop and time in which to unfold. Experience is emotional but there are no separate things called emotions in it." (2005, p. 43) When Dewey states that experience is emotional, it does not mean that experience is always accompanied by emotions, such as fear, joy, anger, and the like strong reactive feelings. When emotion is an overwhelming feeling, it rather disconnects the flow of experience, and in this case the experience fails to be unified and thus does not have the esthetic quality. Esthetic experience is emotional in the sense that the subject is attentive to what is happening as it is apparent in the case of watching a play or reading a book. Emotion in question refers to this subject's continuously getting to grips with each part

of experience which will constitute the unity at the end. Emotion in this sense is not separate entities intruding into experience. It is a qualitative state of subject's mind goes along with the experience.

When an experience is characterized as esthetic, its objective or visible aspect is more likely referred to, whereas its subjective and invisible aspect is referred to when it is characterized as emotional. The term of esthetic itself implies the congruous and integrated quality, and thus when an experience is considered to be esthetic, it is more likely supposed that a third person can observe the esthetic quality of it from the well managed actions and the good consequences. However, as it is reiterated, an experience necessarily has the subjective level that is not visible to a third person. We can even say "That was an experience" about an experience which appears clumsy and unsuccessful, in other words, not esthetic from the third person's view. On the other hand, some experience appears esthetic is actually not so as Dewey does not take what is done in the mechanical manner as an esthetic one. Some objectively esthetic experience can be regarded as an experience only when the objective esthetic quality of experience is confirmed by the subject's emotional quality. For example, a skilled singer performed well on a stage, but we cannot say whether she had an experience or she merely performed in a habitual manner until it is found that she feels herself that it was an esthetic moment. However, an experience which has the emotional quality is not necessarily required to be confirmed by the objective esthetic quality. This fact indicates that emotion is what decisively renders the esthetic quality to experience.

Dewey explicitly remarks that emotion generates the esthetic quality of an experience. He writes, "Physical things from far ends of the earth are physically transported and physically cause to act and react upon one another in the construction of a new object. The miracle of mind

is that something similar takes place in experience without physical transport and assembling. Emotion is the moving and cementing force. It selects what is congruous and dyes what is selected with its color, thereby giving qualitative unity to materials externally disparate and dissimilar. It thus provides unity in and through the varied parts of an experience.” (2005, p44)

Emotion is invisible to the other, but it is actually active force to move and cement to generate an experience. Going back to the boy’s experience of the storm again, it is merely an observation of natural phenomenon, and it seems awkward to describe the action of observation as esthetic if the notion of esthetic refers to the objectively perceivable artistic quality. In this sense we should say that the storm has the esthetic quality rather than that the observation has it. However, in the sense that the esthetic quality of experience comes from the emotional quality of subject, we can say that the observation is esthetic. What was going on in the boy’s mind has the emotional quality that renders the experience the esthetic quality.

Dewey’s description of experience in terms of process shows how emotion or mindfulness comes into the picture of an experience. For Dewey an experience in the simplest sense is the combination of doing and undergoing.<sup>37</sup> As it is apparent in that experience usually involves a series of action by the subject, there is the phase of doing. On the other hand, without the phase of undergoing to take in what happens by the actions, the actions hardly compose the harmonious whole, the unity. In the phase of undergoing the subject becomes passive compared with the active state of doing, but the passivity of undergoing includes activity in that the subject’s inner being needs to be animated to take in the situation. The quality of undergoing determines the quality of doing and consequently the experience, since doing are supposed to be

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<sup>37</sup> The combination of doing and undergoing seems to be Dewey’s basic conception of experience. See *Art as Experience* pp. 45-46 and *Democracy and Education* pp.146-147, etc.

in accordance to undergoing.<sup>38</sup> The boy's encounter of the storm is the extreme case that the phase of undergoing is amplified, so that the whole experience is composed only by undergoing phases. The fact that undergoing by itself becomes an experience implies that the essence of esthetic experience lies in the phase of undergoing.

There is the tendency that experience is considered to be identical with action which is the visible aspect of experience, and undergoing, the invisible, is disregarded. Undergoing, the act of mind, constitutes the substantial aspect of experience and thus our existence. "Mind is primarily a verb." Dewey says, "It denotes all the ways in which we deal consciously and expressly with the situations in which we find ourselves." (2005, pp274-275) In this statement Dewey succinctly captures our situated being through the action of mind. When we say, "That was an experience," we actually appreciate our own emotional being, our mindful being, that was undergoing the experience. The subject of experience can perceive the esthetic quality of one's own experience only through the perception of one's own emotional saturation in the situation. The consummation is to look back to appreciate an experience and it is the very moment when we discern our existence in the world.

## **2. Perception**

As it was stated in the former section, for Dewey the basic formation of experience is doing and undergoing, and the emotional or mindful feature of undergoing phase is what gives the esthetic quality of experience. Undergoing is an experiential denotation of the phase to take in the situation, whereas the epistemic denotation of it is perception. There are different sorts of

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<sup>38</sup> I state that actions are supposed to be in accordance with undergoing assuming that doing is subject to undergoing. The relationship between doing and undergoing will be discussed later in the subsection on perception.

way to cognize the situation, and the sort of seeing in esthetic experience is perception. It is certainly not the mechanical visual sensation, such as seeing red color as red. It is the immediate awareness of an object or a situation, which can inform following actions when it is necessary.

Dewey elucidates perception by comparing with recognition<sup>39</sup>. Recognition and perception are similar modes of awareness in respect of instantaneity. Both are ways of grasping an object or scene in a moment, but they are not synonymous. The difference between recognition and perception seems to lie in the situational difference. In encountering a familiar object, we tend to recognize it, but in encountering an unfamiliar object we tend to perceive it. This difference is verified by the conceptual formation of recognition, which is the combination of prefix, “re,” and “cognition.” So, recognition literally means to cognize once again whereas perception does not imply repetition.

For example, when I see a street vender selling cheap perfumes who always stands in front of the subway station in my neighborhood, I recognize him as the vender that I know. Dewey writes, “In recognition we fall back, as upon a stereotype, upon some previously formed scheme. Some detail or arrangement of details serves as cue for bare identification.” (2005, p54) The street vender’s location, in front of the subway station, the setting of the stall, full of small bottles and boxes of perfume, his appearance, dark face, middle height, and a somewhat overweight body, and the like, enable me to cognize him again as “the” street vender. It is almost unconsciously performed as Dewey says, “Recognition is too easy to arouse vivid consciousness.” (2005, p55) However, if one day I find that a new person is occupying his location, then it would be more probable for me to perceive the new person than to recognize as Dewey describes in the

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<sup>39</sup> I introduced Dewey’s comparison between recognition and perception in Chapter 2. Here, I will explore it on an extended scale.

following the situation of perception. He writes, “Sometimes in contact with a human being we are struck with traits, perhaps of only physical characteristics, of which we were not previously aware. We realize that we never knew the person before; we had not seen him in any pregnant sense. We now begin to study and to “take in.” Perception replaces bare recognition. There is an act of reconstructive doing, and consciousness becomes fresh and alive.” (2005, p. 54)

Encountering new objects or situations makes us to be more conscious and try to cognize the new in a reconstructive manner. The unfamiliarity definitely requires us the vivid consciousness to grasp what is new to us.

However, it does not follow that the unfamiliar always trigger perception nor that the familiar always trigger recognition. Dewey writes, “There is not enough resistance between new and old to secure consciousness of the experience that is had. Even a dog that barks and wags his tail joyously on seeing his master return is more fully alive in his reception of his friend than is a human being who is content with mere recognition.” (2005, p. 55) In the case of the new street vender I might just recognize him as a vender even though I have never seen him before. He is a new person to me, but I recognize him as one of the many vendors selling scarves and gloves that I have frequently seen in the street of Manhattan. No fresh and vivid consciousness is necessary in identifying the new person with a vocation. Likewise I could perceive the old vendor that I have frequently seen for a long time. One day I find that the street is quite empty, and the vender looks tired and lonely. He is the person that I have always merely recognized or more often overlooked, but I suddenly become aware of his existence vividly. In the respect that the difference between recognition and perception does not come from the familiarity and the unfamiliarity, it seems that the crucial difference is in the manner for the subject to cognize. In

other words, the subject's intentional or dispositional choice influences which of recognition and perception would rise in the same situation.

It is obviously not true that perception and recognition are incompatible kinds of cognition. To some extent perception and recognition are related to each other. We cannot recognize something without perception in the initial moment. On the other hand, perception mostly involves recognition, as it is clear in the case of perception of the familiar, such as the dog's perception of his master. The point is that recognition and perception have the intentional or dispositional level, and thus in many situations the manner of the subject is pertinent to the mode of cognition.

Irish Murdoch's story of mother-in-law's vision of her daughter-in-law shows that recognition and perception can be subjectively chosen:

A mother, whom I shall call M, feels hostility to her daughter-in-law, whom I shall call D. M finds D quite a good-hearted girl, but while not exactly common yet certainly unpolished and lacking in dignity and refinement. D is inclined to be pert and familiar, insufficiently ceremonious, brusque, sometimes positively rude, always tiresomely juvenile. M does not like D's accent or the way D dresses. M feels that her son has married beneath him... However, the M of the example is an intelligent and well-intentioned person, capable of self-criticism, capable of giving careful and just attention to an object which confronts her. M tells herself: 'I am old-fashioned and conventional. I may be prejudiced and narrow-minded. I may be snobbish. I am certainly jealous. Let me look again.' Here I assume that M observes D or at least reflects deliberately about D, until gradually her vision of D alters. ... D is discovered to be not vulgar but refreshingly simple, not undignified but spontaneous, not noisy but gay, not tiresomely juvenile but delightfully youthful, and so on.<sup>40</sup>

(Murdoch, 2010, pp16-17)

We often experience the drastic change of our vision when the object is as it was. In M's case, M initially had a negative attitude toward D. As Dewey says, "Bare recognition is satisfied when a proper tag or label is attached "proper" signifying one that serves a purpose outside the act of

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<sup>40</sup> M is the abbreviation of the mother-in-law in the story, and D is that of the daughter-in-law.

recognition” (2005, p. 55), the purpose of M was formed from the negative perspective, and thus she saw D in the manner of recognition which is intrinsically a sort of reduction in accordance with her negative perspective. M could not appreciate the real qualities belong to D, but she reduced and labeled them in the hostile way. However, later M reflectively resolves her hostile attitude toward D, and she is able to see D’s authentic characteristics in the perceptual manner.

Dewey’s illumination of perception in the respect of activeness confirms that perception can be a chosen action. He writes, “Perception is an act of the going-out of energy in order to receive, not a withholding of energy. To steep ourselves in a subject-matter we have first to plunge into it. When we are only passive to a scene, it overwhelms us and, for lack of answering activity, we do not perceive that which bears us down. We must summon energy and pitch it at a responsive key in order to *take in*.” (2005, p. 55) In the respect that perception requires the perceiver’s exerting energy, it is a sort of intentional action. Perception requires the voluntary activation of faculty, namely mind, intelligence, or spirit.<sup>41</sup> It is like to stretch out our mind to take in the object as we get near and stretch out our hand to touch the water of stream. In Murdoch’s example M’s initial negative attitude made M remain passive with D’s existence, and due to M’s passivity her vision falls into the recognition, the partial vision of D’s existence. In the second case M intentionally channel her energy into answering to D’s existence, and this attitude enables M to perceive the holistic being of D.

All the remarks about recognition so far, particularly M’s example, give the impression that recognition is a defective mode of cognition whereas perception is a complete one. Some

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<sup>41</sup> As it is manifest in the fact that I put intelligence with other terms, such as mind and spirit, I use the term, intelligence in a broader sense, not in the narrow sense in which intelligence was contrast with instinct or emotion in Chapter 3 The term of intelligence will show up again in this section, and it will keep denoting the broad sense.

might doubt that we can really lead our everyday life if we should always perceive rather than recognize. When Chris Higgins tries to defend art education, he puts this skeptical voice nicely. He writes, “A life without purpose and recognition would be impossible. Maybe you aesthetes have time to stand around staring at people on the street, but I am trying to get somewhere. Without recognition, you wouldn’t even be able to find your way to the museum!” (2008, p. 13)

This doubt is entirely plausible in that most of our cognitions in our everyday life are recognitions. Recognition is fundamentally the most efficient mode of awareness intellectually created in order to save energy. Whereas perception is an original or primordial way to be aware of the reality, recognition is a derivative one. We dealt with the previous perceptions to store them in the form of scheme which we draw on to be identified with the object in question. By using schemes we can instantly grasp the reality without consuming much energy to perceive. However, recognition in the basic sense which Dewey calls “bare recognition” is inevitably reductive, and particularly when the subject is driven by some preoccupation, such as an extrinsic purpose or a prejudice, he or she tends to draw on schemes in accordance with it. Presupposition makes the subject keep the distance with the object or the situation, and view it from the prefixed perspective. It hinders the subject to become vividly conscious to take in the situation. Even though recognition is a definitely intellectual activity and much more efficient than perception, it is passive, disinterested, simplified way of awareness compared with perception which requires the active mindful state.

In the former section the mindful characteristic of subject in esthetic experience was discussed. It is the emotional state to move and cement the parts of experience into a whole. In explicating perception Dewey also emphasizes the emotional quality. He writes, “Bare recognition is satisfied when a proper tag or label is attached “proper” signifying one that serves

a purpose outside the act of recognition—as a salesman identifies wares by a sample. It involves no stir of the organism, no inner commotion. But an act of perception proceeds by waves that extend serially throughout the entire organism. There is, therefore, no such thing in perception as seeing or hearing *plus* emotion. The perceived object or scene is emotionally pervaded throughout. (2005, p. 55) Reiterating it, emotion usually means strong reactive feelings, such as pleasantness and sadness, but emotion in question means to be in a state which enables the sympathetic connection between the perceiver and the perceived. It is to evoke one's own existence to take in that of others. For example, if we see a red sock on the wall, then one may mindlessly think that there is a red sock hanging on the wall. This kind of aloofly seeing is recognition which does not require the emotional attunement. On the contrary, when we perceive a red sock, we become emotional to receive the warm quality of the color and texture and maybe the pleasant feeling of Christmas.

The instantaneity which is the shared trait of recognition and perception is attained in different ways. The quickness itself is the purpose of recognition, so that it draws on the scheme corresponding to the object as it was mentioned above. On the contrary, perception occurs momentarily, since the perceiver is connected to the perceived. It is more like resonating to have and feel within the perceiver the same quality as that of the perceived. In this sense the rapidness of perception should be termed “immediacy” rather than “instantaneity” because the rapidness does not come from the quick and clever manner to use representations but from the manner to join up with the perceived without mediation. Through the connection the warm and pleasant quality of the red socks flows into the perceiver, and the perceiver can directly feel it as if it is her own quality.

As it was briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, participatory attitude is required for perception. In the light of the discussion on experience and particularly on difference between perception and recognition, participatory attitude can be encapsulated in the emotional attunement to be situated with the perceived. For more elaboration of the essence of perception it will be helpful to examine Dewey's another qualification of perception. As it is manifest in the quotation above, Dewey often employs scientific terms, such as energy, waves, and organism to express the distinct feature of perception. In Dewey's philosophy organism is a significant concept which expresses the human condition that is not different from the other living organism. To understand what he means by the concept of organism it is necessary to see the fundamental characteristic of his philosophy, the objection to the dualism.

Dewey raises, as an important issue of philosophy, dualism, such as between mind and matter, mind and body, mind and the world, individuals and relationships with other individuals, etc. He reckons the dualism as a severe traditional fallacy which has been dominant and adversely affecting our practices including education, and thus it is a significant task for him to resolve the dualism.<sup>42</sup> Considering his philosophical background, to stress the organic aspect of human experience is a way to elucidate the continuity of mind and body, the mind and the world, and perception is the primordial mode of human awareness which is based on the integrated existence of mind, body, and the world.<sup>43</sup>

Dewey particularly objects to the view to elevate mind to the soaring level to look down and control what happens in the world while it is remotely hidden within the body. He writes,

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<sup>42</sup> See *Democracy and Education* pp. 147-150, p. 333, and p. 346.

<sup>43</sup> The importance of the role of body in human awareness in Dewey's philosophy seems to be recognized by many contemporary scholars. For example, Eisner (2004) uses the term of somatic knowledge to indicate it.

“The thing essential to bear in mind is that living as an empirical affair is not something which goes on below the skin-surface of an organism: it is always an inclusive affair involving connection, interaction of what is within the organic body and what lies outside in space and time, and with higher organisms far outside. For this reason, organic acts are a kind of fore-action of mind; they look as if they were deliberate and consciously intelligent, because of necessity, intelligent action in utilizing the mechanisms they supply, reproduces their patterns.” (1958, p. 282) Dewey supposes that how mind works is projected in the organic action the characteristic of which is inclusive. The act of organism is fundamentally to interact with what is outside, either the physical environment or the other organisms. The organic action is usually described as the forceful and destructive taking or consuming the other being in order to sustain one’s own life. However, the substance of living phenomenon is rather to include the other being and to be included in the other through the interaction which demonstrates genius to keep making life together. Not only the individual organism’s action, such as the symbiosis which is an incredible case to prove the genius, but also the natural problem solving power of ecological systems in general indicates that organism involves something like intelligence, which is often considered to belong only to the human mind.

Dewey certainly states that he is not saying that animals also think.<sup>44</sup> He introduces the continuity between organic action and mind in order to highlight the organic property of mind. Organisms look intelligent, but it does not imply that all organisms have mind. Organic action rather informs how human mind works. As it was discussed above, the substance of organic action is the inclusiveness. In other words, organic action is to include and be included. Put differently, organic action in the primary sense is participation. Drawing on this inclusive image

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<sup>44</sup> See *Experience and Nature*, p. 282

of organic action, the substance of operation of mind can be considered as engaging rather than as observing or analyzing from a distance. As Dewey described the mindful action of perception, it is to plunge into subject-matter to take in. It is to be included in order to include.

Additional to the inclusive feature of organic action, reproduction is also its distinction. As Dewey says in the quotation above, organisms repeat certain sorts of action, and the patterns make up the duration of life. If we consider that the fundamental purpose or drive for any living being is certainly to keep living, it is the simplest illustration of life that a certain action calls up an action and then the called up action calls up another action again. And this repetition forms some patterns, such as doing and undergoing of Dewey's formation of an experience.

Collectively considering two essential elements, the inclusive and the reproductive, organic action can be redefined as including and being included so as to include and be included.

Organic life is continuous participation. Organisms repeat certain actions. However, it is not the mechanical repetition like the up and down movement of piston of an engine. Because of the inclusiveness of organism, the patterns come to have the variation and the continuity at the same time, and thus they constitute a drama or a history of life.

Going back to the issue of mind, Dewey explicates mind and perception in the light of continuity:

When a state of affairs is perceived, the perceiving-of-a-state-of-affairs is a further state of affairs. Its subject-matter is a thing in the idiomatic sense of thing, *res*, whether a solar-system, a stellar constellation, or an atom, a diversified and more or less loosely interconnection of events, falling within boundaries sufficiently definite to be capable of being approximately traced. ... For this reason, and not because of any unique properties of a separate kind of existence, called psychic or mental, every situation or field of consciousness is marked by initiation, direction or intent, and consequence or import. What is unique is not these traits, but the property of awareness or perception. Because of this property, the initial stage is capable of being judged in the light of its probable course and consequence. There is anticipation. Each successive event being a stage in a serial process is both expectant and commemorative.

(Dewey, 1958, p.101)

Dewey designates perception as what enables us to have the durational existence, in another word, experience. We can have experience not because of the separate observer within our body, namely psychic or mental, which willingly keeps paying attention to external happenings, but because of our perception which naturally leads the successive perception of perceiving itself. Perception has the organic property that the perceiver is included in the event in order to include it, and the perceiver again includes the event which has included the perceiver and thus has been included by the perceiver. The continuous inclusion between the perceiver and the perceived is possible by anticipation, which is a psychological manifestation of the intrinsic organic drive or energy of perception.

Anticipation as the property of perception might give the impression that perception and experience always involves purpose as a prerequisite. Dewey's illustrations of experience appear to affirm it, since he often highlights the end as what generates the desire to consummate an experience. The following might be one of his most exemplary illustrations:

A generalized illustration may be had if we imagine a stone, which is rolling down hill, to have an experience. The activity is surely sufficiently "practical." The stone starts from somewhere, and moves, as consistently as conditions permit, toward a place and state where it will be at rest—toward an end. Let us add, by imagination, to these external facts, the ideas that it looks forward with desire to the final outcome; that it is interested in the things it meets on its way, conditions that accelerate and retard its movement with respect to their bearing on the end; that it acts and feels toward them according to the hindering and helping function it attributes to them; and that the final coming to rest is related to all that went before as the culmination of a continuous movement. Then the stone would have an experience, and one with esthetic quality.

(Dewey, 2005, p. 41)

In this quotation, what mainly gives the impression that experience is purposive is the line "the ideas that it looks forward with desire to the final outcome." The desire to the final outcome seems to be what initiate an experience, forms the motivation to progress it until it meets the outcome.

However, as it was examined in the discussions on an experience and on recognition and perception, to have a purposive intention is not a critical element of esthetic experience, and sometimes it even disturbs the subject's perception which is the essential mode of awareness in esthetic experience, so that the subject's awareness remains as recognition. This point demands more careful reading of the above quotation to resolve the contradiction. What we should pay more attention in the quotation is that the final outcome is not specifically predetermined. The desire is not toward a specific outcome or result but toward an end itself, not in the sense of cessation but in that of consummation. In the last line we can find some elaboration of what the final outcome means: "and that the final coming to rest is related to all that went before as the culmination of a continuous movement." Thus, the desire to the final outcome is actually the desire to a process which will end up with an outcome. In this respect a more significant line would be the one includes interest: "that it is interested in the things it meets on its way, conditions that accelerate and retard its movement with respect to their bearing on the end." The desire to the final outcome is equivalent to the interest which has the cementing power to complete a congruous process.

The teleological image of experience and perception turns out to be untrue, and the concept of interest helped us see that the consummatory end of experience is not what is achieved but the natural consequence of a holistic process. Dewey's analogy of the rolling stone visually represents the significance of process. The stone does not have an aimed spot to be at rest. It just begins to roll, and the rolling provokes the next rolling, and so on. Through the process of rolling following rolling it comes to be at rest. In this respect, anticipation, the unique property of perception, is to look forward to becoming rather than to achieving. Perception is to be absolved in the present, but at the same time it is to see the associated future perception or

action. However, it does not imply that it is always to see the present in the light of a prefixed purpose, a far ending result. Anticipation rather enables the perceiver keeps responding in the manner of participation to the events continue to occur as the rolling stone acts and feels toward them according to the hindering and helping function it attributes to them.

The anticipatory property of perception is bound to the issue of agency<sup>45</sup>. Perception including the future oriented view firmly linked to the view of the present brings about responses. In other words, perception provokes agency. The responses are not always the perceiver's action on the object as it is seen in the case of the experience of a storm. In watching a storm responses are mostly emotional reactions or appreciations rather than intentional actions. In this sort of experience perception only raises perception, and thus the connection between perception and agency is not prominent even though I think that there is the level of agency in the provoked perception, since perception can be taken as a sort of action in the respect that it requires activeness to plunge into the situation. In some other cases perception actually provokes perceiver's spontaneous action. The connection between perception and agency is particularly manifest in the cases that perception is immediately connected to action, such as the case of the thief in Mencius running to rescue a baby who is about to fall into a well.

Some might question the logical validity of the statement, "perception generates agency," supposing that agency cannot be brought about by any other than the subject itself by the

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<sup>45</sup> The term of agency is here used in a broad sense, not restricted to the sense of Kantian moral philosophy. Agency is usually understood as the capacity to act in accordance with moral duty, which demonstrates autonomy from the external condition. Agency here means the capacity to act on the world, in other words, the creative power. However, I consider that the Kantian sense is included in the broad sense. Moral action is also a sort of creative action on the world even though it is particularly on the other human beings. The issue of the compatibility between Kantian morality and creativity is beyond the scope of this search, so that I will not deal with it here. There are many researches discuss the compatibility between Kant's moral philosophy and Nietzsche's, and those give an inkling of the issue. See Cartwright (1984), Williams (1999), Downard (2004), Hill (2005), and Sokoloff (2006).

definition. This objection seems to be supported even by Dewey when he delineates what happens at the very first moment of perception. We are first seized by the holistic quality of the object. Dewey writes, “The total overwhelming impression comes first, perhaps in seizure by a sudden glory of the landscape, or by the effect upon us of entrance into a cathedral which dim light, incense, stained glass and majestic proportions fuse in one indistinguishable whole. ... As the painter Delacroix said about this first and pre-analytic phase, “before knowing what the picture represents you are seized by its magical accord.”” (2005, p. 151) The term, seizure, encapsulates the state of the perceiver to become subject to the object in the initial phase of perception. As Delacroix uses the term of magical, the holistic quality of the object has the mysterious power to capture the perceiver’s attention. Dewey terms the quality which has the magical power surplusage. He writes, “The tendency is for actual perception to limit itself to the minimum which will serve as sign. But, in the second place, since it is never wholly so limited, since there is always a surplusage of perceived object, the fact stated in the objection is admitted.<sup>46</sup> But, it is precisely this surplusage which has no cognitive status. It does not serve as sign, but neither is it known, or a term in knowledge. (*Essays in Experimental Logic*, p. 393 as cited in Webber, p.180) Surplusage is the pervasive quality in the object which can be perceived but not well captured conceptually. It has the enchanting power, so that it is not grasped by the perceiver but seizes the perceiver instead. In the initial stage of perception the perceiver appears to be the seized, captured one by the surplusage which belongs to the object. The perceiver would merely respond in the seized state and thus have no autonomy.

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<sup>46</sup> The objection that Dewey mentions in the quotation is not the same one as the objection to my using of the term of agency. The objection in the quotation is an epistemological argument not to accept the non-cognitive awareness.

Since the doubt is grounded in the former feature of perception which appears incompatible with the latter, it can be dispelled if the contradictory characteristics of seizure and anticipation are reconciled. A perceiver has two emotional states sequentially. Seizure is the emotional state of perceiver in the very first moment and it immediately turns into anticipation. A perceiver is seized through the glance of surplus, and then the perceiver becomes more vividly conscious to view it. The surplusage creates the circumstance to include a perceiver as a part of the situation. When a perceiver discerns the enchanting quality, she is attracted, in other words, included into the situation, and in this situated state she becomes to perceive the object in a more dedicated sense, in other words, include it. In the perception of the second sense anticipation emerges. The perceiver does not remain in the seizure but progress to the anticipatory state to see the situation with the future oriented vision, and in this phase agency is activated.

The sequential alteration of seizure and anticipation is usually not once only occurrence. It has been stressed in many places in this section that experience is the circular movement between undergoing and doing, being included and including, and the like. It is also pertinent to the relation between seizure and anticipation in that perception itself comes to be a subject-matter for the immediately following perception. In this respect anticipation always carries the state of seizure, and seizure is not only the very initial state even though it is most intense and thus most distinct in the first moment to encounter an object or a situation.

Some might find that the doubt about the connection between perception and agency is not cleared up by the fact that seizure and anticipation forms separate phases, since the phase of anticipation does not arise alone. The fact that seizure always precedes anticipation means that the former provokes the latter. Moreover, anticipation has the circular relationship with seizure, in other words, anticipation keeps carrying the state of seizure in a certain sense, and it implies

that anticipation can be regarded as a reactive state to surplusage which belongs to the outside of self. This point presses for a further explanation of the connection between perception and agency. If surplusage is the original cause of anticipation, it is inappropriate to say that any following actions are autonomous. In order to address this point, to emphasize Dewey's objection to the dualism is necessary, since the objection assumes the dualistic relation between the world and self.

The enchanting power belongs to the object which is separate being from the subject, and it implies that the perceiver is subject to the world, not autonomous. However, if we consider the organic property of human existence, the mutual inclusive relation between the self and the world, we can see that surplusage which appears originated from the world actually comes from the perception itself. Put differently, the power of surplusage is neither from the object separate from the perceiver nor from the subject. It comes from human ability to perceive the world and to perceive oneself within the world at the same time. Surplusage is rather the peculiar quality engendered in the mutual inclusion between the self and the world, which occurs at the initial moment of encounter. The self and the world turn toward each other to take in each other, and the perceiver is seized in the initiation of the inclusiveness. In this respect there is the level of agency even in the phase of seizure. The other way around is also true. There is the level of receptivity in agency. There is no such mind that absolutely autonomous like the God, but also there is no world completely out of us which solely enchants us.

Through the mutual inclusion, the action of perception, the self is located within the world. Our agency is activated through perception. A perceiver becomes participatory in a more passive sense in finding herself within the world, and she becomes participatory in a more active sense in finding the world that she takes in. She also sees the possibility of following action on

the world as Dewey characterizes this vision as anticipation which engenders continuous participation possibly influences the object or the situation. Participation grounded in the inclusion cannot be a forceful intervention, since participation is an action on the world and on the self at the same time. In the case that there is a transformation of the object or situation by the participation, it is actually a mutual becoming of the object and the subject which has esthetic quality. Perception is itself highly active engagement in the world, but it also establishes the ground for the creation of the world and the self as well.

Merleau-Ponty seems to be sympathetic with Dewey's objection to the dualism between the mind and the world. For him our being is a part of the world, but the world is also an extended part of our being. He points out that self-consciousness through perception consists of two opposite directional sorts of awareness. One is to be aware of the fact that self is also a thing entangled in the world, and the other is that the world is composed of what is grasped around us by our power of action. He writes, "This initial paradox cannot but produce others. Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it moves itself and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself. Things are an annex or prolongation of itself; they are incrustated into its flesh, they are part of its full definition; the world is made of the same stuff as the body." (1964, pp. 163-164) When perception is understood as embodiment, the connection between perception and agency gets more obvious. In this picture self is located in the center of the world not in the sense that self is isolated from the world or placed in a separate location encompassed by things like a fort. Self is a part of the world, and the world is an extended part of self, and in this sense self is more like an organic center, such as a nucleus which is a cytoplasm of a cell. The whole cell is under the sway

of the nucleus, but the nucleus is also subject to the metabolic mechanism of the whole cell as a constituent of it.

As it was mentioned, the connection between perception and agency is not very noticeable. The chief reason for it is that actions following perception occur spontaneously and organically. Spontaneous actions tend to be regarded as reaction rather than as autonomous action. Immediate reactions similar to other animals' instinctive actions are usually taken as unwilling actions. However, as it was discussed, the reaction has the autonomous level in that it is accompanied by the self-consciousness of being located within the world. The self-consciousness is the critical point to distinguish human autonomous action from the other animals' instinctive reaction.

Nevertheless, some might question if we are actually able to conscious of ourselves when we perceive and spontaneously act. It seems to be a reasonable doubt in that there might be no room in our mind to be conscious of ourselves while we perceive and act, since absorption is a distinctive feature of perception and action. The subject is engrossed in the situation, and it rather seems to disturb the self-consciousness. The answer to this question is that self-consciousness is found retrospectively, and the evidence of it is the exclamation after experience. As it was discussed at the end of the former section on Dewey's concept of experience, a distinctive feature of "an experience" is that the appreciative emotion follows after it. One says, "That *was* an experience" in recalling what happened. The retrospective appreciation manifests that she also perceived the self, mind, or emotion that was becoming with the world. Even though the existence of self-consciousness is not simultaneously discerned during the experience, there should be a line of consciousness in the inner level of mind which attends the flow of mind. Without the memory of what had been seen by the inner eye there would not be a consummatory

retrospection, but a cessation of event which would be never recalled in the manner of appreciation.

## **Conclusion**

Dewey elucidates perception as a mode of awareness in esthetic experience. The esthetic quality of experience lies in the emotional state of the subject to perceive, to take in a certain object or situation. Put differently, esthetic experience requires the activation of the mindful state to receive the other being and thus to be involved in the situation. In the respect that perception is bound to the emergence of being related to the other being, perception should not merely be taken as an operation of a certain faculty specialized to grasp the qualities of object. It is rather an esthetic existence to participate in the world.

As the existential feature of perception is underscored, the problem of the complicated relation between cognition and emotion seems to be resolved. The composition of cognition and emotion is too rough representation of perception to capture the substance. Human mind or existence cannot be reduced to cognition plus emotion, and no more does perception. Perception is not to use at the same time the right hand, the cognitive capacity, and the left hand, the emotional. It is rather like to open up the whole body to embrace the other being. The essence of embracement is not to hold using both hands, but to touch, to be connected with the other being. Thus, cognition and emotion are not necessarily analyzed to be disintegrated from the whole. To scrutinize the operation of arms and hands is not to illuminate the essence of embracement. To address directly the issue of the problematic relation between cognition and emotion, it is not necessarily explicated. Considering the enigma of human mind, the inscrutable relation between cognition and emotion could be taken to be natural. The attempt to clarify the relation might

rather make us to miss the whole picture of perception and stray about between cognition and emotion. As Dewey demonstrates it, phenomenological description provides more palpable conception of perception even though the relation between cognition and emotion still remains obscure.

Phenomenological approach to perception is also significant in that it informs the conception of moral perception. As it was mentioned in Chapter 2, some doubt if moral property can be perceived, and this doubt stems from the presupposition that perception is an epistemic mode to sense qualities. However, when the experiential aspect of moral perception is highlighted, it is manifest that moral perception is an indubitable sort of perception. Perception is to enter the mutual inclusive being with the world, to keep being concerned with what is coming. By perception we participate in the world, more precisely in the becoming of the world. Moral perception is a paradigmatic kind of perception in that the relational and participatory characteristics of perception are particularly conspicuous in moral situation. By perception we are related to other human beings or living beings, and it immediately provokes our agency to participate in the situation.

In a certain sense moral quality characterizes perception. Perception is to be related to other being as if we are morally related to. We often have moral feeling such as caring toward things which we have engaged with in the esthetic way. We also appreciate morality as if it has the esthetic quality. For example, moral excellence is usually described as beautiful. Moral quality and esthetic quality has the alternative relation, and it might suggest that moral capacity and esthetic capacity diverge from the identical origin, the most primordial way of human beings to be related to the world. When Nietzsche strongly asserts that human nature should be protected, he indicates the nature as the ground of poetic perception which is the essential mode of seeing

the world in noble morality. Poetic perception seems to be the most illustrative sort of perception manifesting the convergence of morality and esthetics, and we will see Heidegger's elucidation of it in the following chapters.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Perception and Thinking**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is the latter part of phenomenological trajectory of perception which is composed of Chapter 4 on Dewey's concept of perception and Chapter 5 on perceptual aspect of thinking mostly drawing on Heidegger's concept of thinking. Heidegger does not explicate moral perception as there is not such explication in Dewey. Moreover, there is no specific work focusing only on perception in Heidegger's philosophy in general. However, I suppose that the essence of moral perception, which is not easily encapsulated in the conventional conception as it was seen in Chapter 2, will become more palpable with the help of Heidegger's phenomenological illumination of thinking.

It seems to be necessary to dispel several doubts about the plan for this chapter to try to disclose the essential characteristics of moral perception by drawing on Heidegger. In the first place, some might question why Heidegger is mainly drawn on for this research rather than Maurice Merleau-Ponty who is the most recognized philosopher of the phenomenology of perception. As Merleau-Ponty was actually drawn on in the former chapter, it is true that his philosophy is more specialized in perception, and a considerable relevance should be found throughout his voluminous work on perception. However, the reason that Heidegger is drawn on in this chapter is that he works on thinking, not on perception. As I will show, Heidegger's phenomenological examination of thinking is particularly pertinent to the subject matter of this research, moral perception.

This answer naturally makes the next question arise. Some might immediately point out that the supposition of the intimate relation between thinking and moral perception is not in accordance with the major points made here so far. They consider that moral perception should be distinguished from thinking in the respect that thinking, the apathetic reasoning process, is hardly related to our conception of good people or Nietzsche's noble morality. In order to respond properly to this doubt which is much more relevant than the first, it is necessary to recall Vetlesen's objection to Arendt in Chapter 2. She objects to Arendt's cognition-based explanation of the moral blindness of Adolf Eichmann, one of the major organizers of the Holocaust. Eichmann is considered as the case of thoughtless by Arendt and as the case of emotionless by Vetlesen. However, both are correct considerations to some extent as we have seen that cognition and emotion form the characteristic relation in moral perception which Aristotle long ago encapsulated in "desiderate thought" or "intellectual desire". The fact is that thinking has not been rejected as a constituent of morality so far in this research, but perception is selected as a pertinent concept which better conveys the characteristic relation between cognition and emotion in moral awareness.

The false impression of the incompatibility between perception and thinking stems from our habit of common conception of thinking in the purified sense. Thinking is usually envisaged as the logical and objective reasoning process represented by the scientific thought which never admits the subjective and experiential level in it. This kind of thinking or reasoning is what Nietzsche designates as the significant part of the dehumanizing whirl of modern times, which has brought out the blindness of slave morality as it was discussed in Chapter 3. The purified mode of thinking requires the sterilization of human instinct which is no other than the devastation of the ground of authentic awareness. Heidegger sympathizes with Nietzsche's woe

toward the prevalence of the purified mode of thinking in modern times. Heidegger repeatedly expresses the recognition of the full worth of the dominant sort of thinking. Nevertheless, he is deeply concerned with the fact that we forgot the original, the most humanistic way of thinking which should be distinguished from the commonly called thinking today, and he attempts to revitalize it.

Given the reminding of what has been discussed on thinking concerning to morality so far and the brief introduction of Heidegger's project on thinking, we seem to be ready to answer succinctly to the second doubt about the seeming contradiction between thinking and moral perception. Thinking for Heidegger is the original sort of thinking which includes a perceptual level as its defining characteristics, and this perceptual characteristic of thinking indicates the linked point between thinking and moral perception, which I will try to spotlight in this chapter.

The final doubt that could be raised concerning to the method of this chapter to draw on Heidegger is about the enigmatic language of Heidegger. Heidegger's language of philosophy in general is known as difficult to achieve the sound understanding of it, so that it might be worried that drawing on Heidegger would confuse us rather than improve our understanding. This is also a fairly reasonable doubt, since a definite characteristic of Heidegger's way of philosophizing is perplexing, which I though consider to have the educative ramification which will eventually foster awareness if we are more patiently attentive to it.

However, in the respect that the primary purpose of this research to elucidate moral perception, not to introduce Heidegger, some additional method seems necessary to avoid the considerable danger, and the Korean movie, *Poetry* by Chang-dong Lee will be used for it. It will be juxtaposed with Heidegger in the next chapter. Story including movie and literature is an effective means in that it visualizes rather than merely says. To introduce *Poetry* will be a good

way to convey what Heidegger illuminates minimizing the inevitable damage to neutralize the characteristic power of Heidegger's language when we use our own language to interpret him. There are many movies and literatures which echo Heidegger's philosophy concerning to the subject matter of this research, but Poetry seems to be most appropriate in that the interrelatedness between perception, thinking, and morality is particularly apparent in it.<sup>47</sup> We will see it later.

### **1. The perceptual level of thinking**

In Chapter 3 we have seen that for Dewey perception is not restricted to the basic sensation, such as the color sensation. Perception is the authentic way of seeing the world, which allows us to have esthetic experiences, in other words, to become active participators in the world. If perception is considered in the relation to thinking which is one of the most substantial human experiences, it is expected that perception is a prerequisite for esthetic or authentic sorts of thinking. Dewey's actual discussion on thinking meets this expectation. Dewey begins his writing, "Qualitative thought" as follows:

The world in which we immediately live, that in which we strive, succeed, and are defeated is preeminently a qualitative world. What we act for, suffer, and enjoy are things in their qualitative determinations. This world forms the field of characteristic modes of thinking, characteristic in that thought is definitely regulated by qualitative consideration.

(Dewey, 1998, p. 192)

Dewey contends that the qualitative world forms the circumstance of thinking which is usually taken to be a purely rational or propositional process based on the logic. If the realm of thinking

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<sup>47</sup> There are few movies, such as *Being In the World* by Tao Ruspoli, the directors of which explicitly announce the fact that their movies were made based on Heidegger's philosophy. In most other cases of movies seem to be related to Heidegger's philosophy there is no way to verify the influence of Heidegger on them, and "Poetry" is the latter case. However, it is not very surprising fact that there is some people says or shows something very alike even though there is no substantial communication between them because what they try to express is the truth which is accessible from everywhere.

is set up qualitatively, the perceptual capacity to see or feel the quality is crucial for sound thinking.

It seems to be not that difficult to grasp what the quality as the circumstance of thinking means thanks to what was discussed in the former chapter on Dewey's conception of perception. Dewey indicated the very initial moment of experience when a subject is included in a certain situation by perceiving the pervasive quality of the situation which has the power to seize the subject. Dewey named the qualities surplusage. Dewey also employs James' expression of buzzing or blooming to elaborate the quality in terms of thinking:

... In itself, it is the big, buzzing, blooming confusion of which James wrote. This expresses not only the state of a baby's experience but the first stage and background of all thinking on any subject. There is, however, no in articulate quality which is merely buzzing and blooming. It buzzes to some effect; it blooms toward some fruitage. That is, the quality, although dumb, has as a part of its complex quality a movement or transition in some direction. It can, therefore, be intellectually symbolized and converted into an object of thought.

(Dewey, 1998, p. 203)

The perceptual capability is crucial to thinking in that thinking is provoked and carried on by the perception of the pervasive quality of the situation. The perception takes place in the background level of thinking, in the invisible level which cannot be verified by the other, and this seems to be the reason that the indispensability of perceptual capacity in thinking is easily overlooked.

Heidegger seems to be also well aware of the importance of the perceptual level of thinking. More exactly speaking he would consider that the perceptual characteristic is the substance of thinking, so that for Heidegger any sort of thinking lacking the perceptual characteristic is not thinking. In order to discern the perceptual level of thinking it would be helpful to follow some of his explication of thinking, mainly in *What Is Called Thinking?*, the project of which is to reveal the essence of thinking.

What makes it difficult for us to follow Heidegger's discussion on thinking is that he negates most of our common conceptions of thinking. Heidegger often mentions that what is usually taken as the high level thinking, such as the scientists', is not thinking, and the other sorts of thinking, such as opining, representing, and problem-solving which we do everyday are neither. Heidegger claims that the sort of thinking that he is concerned with does not meet the demands usually made about thinking:

- i. Thinking does not bring knowledge as do the sciences.
- ii. Thinking does not produce usable practical wisdom.
- iii. Thinking solves no cosmic riddles.
- iv. Thinking does not endow us directly with the power to act.

(Heidegger, 2004, p. 159)

This claim gives the impression that there is nothing left except some kind of language game which has nothing to do with any usefulness. If it is so, it appears that thinking for Heidegger is a sort of daydreaming, and it reminds us that some people depreciate philosophy in saying that it is no other than the most luxurious daydreaming. However, Heidegger does not regard doing philosophy particularly in the modern sense as thinking. According to him many great philosophers, from Plato to Kant actually did not think. However, the significant point is that he designates Pre-Socratic philosophers as those who did think. Some sorts of philosophy are thinking, and some are not, and a plausible way to distinguish would be that the former refers to the philosophy as scholarship whereas the latter the philosophy as a way of life.

The fact that Heidegger recognizes Pre-Socratic philosophers as the real thinkers suggests that he deals with thinking in the original sense. Thinking is the distinct activity only belongs to human being, in other words, what makes human being humanlike. In the respect that thinking

for Heidegger is a primordial human phenomenon which is applicable to all human beings, the essence of thinking is hardly manifest in the professional or special intellectual activity. The original sense of thinking should be still found in our everyday experience even though it was noted that Heidegger distinguishes his conception of thinking from our more common notions.

Heidegger actually sometimes draws on some moments in our everyday life in his explication of thinking. One is the case of face to face meeting with a tree in bloom, and I consider it as one of the clearest illustration of thinking:

i.

“... We stand outside of science. Instead we stand before a tree in bloom, for example—and the tree stands before us. The tree faces us. The tree and we meet one another, as the tree stands there and we stand face to face with it. As we are in this relation of one to the other and before the other, the tree and we *are*.”

ii.

“This face to face meeting is not, then one of these “ideas” buzzing about in our heads. Let us stop here for a moment, as we would to catch our breath before and after a leap. For that is what we *are* now, men who have leapt, out of the familiar realm of science and even, as we shall see, out of the realm of philosophy. And where have we leapt? Perhaps into an abyss? No! Rather, onto some firm soil. Some? No! But on that soil upon which we live and die, if we are honest with ourselves. A curious, indeed unearthly thing that we must first leap onto the soil on which we really stand.”

iii.

“When anything so curious as this leap becomes necessary, something must have happened that gives food for thought. ...”

(Heidegger, 2004, pp. 41-42)

As it was mentioned, thinking is vividly depicted in the above situation so that to attempt to elaborate it would be an adequate way to fathom what Heidegger designates. As it might be recognized, the above situation divided into three parts is actually continuous in the original text. It was divided and numbered on purpose for convenience. The three parts will be separately elaborated, since I suppose that the substantial characteristics of thinking are depicted in each part.

## 2.1. The encounter

“...We stand outside of science. Instead we stand before a tree in bloom, for example—and the tree stands before us. The tree faces us. The tree and we meet one another, as the tree stands there and we stand face to face with it. As we are in this relation of one to the other and before the other, the tree and we *are*.”

(Heidegger, 2004, p. 41)

In the first part of the illustration, an abrupt establishment of relation with a tree is depicted. We see or meet the tree as if we see or meet a friend. We and our friend meet one another when we and our friend turn toward each other to stand face to face. This is the very moment when we and our friend *are* together. However, it appears that we do not see trees or things in general in the same manner as we see friends, and thus it is nonsense to say that we meet a tree in a strict sense. This doubt can be cleared if it is recalled that the meeting occurs between a human being and a tree in bloom, not the trees which we always pass by. It should be a general and special experience for human beings to see a tree in bloom. It is special because we see the trees in bloom in a more special way than the ordinary way in which we see the trees not in bloom, but it is general because all human beings share the experience to see the trees in bloom in the special way.

The special way of seeing is meeting. There are numerous things in our everyday life, and trees are also a sort of thing common around us. We see trees everyday, but we do not meet them. However, one day we find that a tree burst into bloom, and then we eventually see the tree as if we see a friend. We stand before the tree that stands before us. Heidegger considers that the meeting, the humanistic way of seeing is possible due to our innate capability of reason. He says, “Man is the beast endowed with reason. Reason is the perception of what is, which always means also what can be and ought to be. To perceive implies, in ascending order: to welcome and take in; to accept and take in the encounter; to take up face to face; to undertake and see through—

and this means to talk through.” (2004, p. 61) The tree which used to be overlooked is perceived as what is, can be, and ought to be when it is in bloom, and the manner of seeing is to take in the being of tree as if we welcome our friend.

Heidegger claims that what our reason does is basically the relational perception. What often lacks in science and philosophy which is usually considered to be the culminating activity of reason is this relational perception. As Heidegger emphasizes it, to be with the other in thinking should be distinguished from other cognitive activities which appear to be thinking, such as representing, analyzing, or philosophizing. Face to face meeting is not required in recognizing the distinct state of a tree from a normal state, and labeling it with the notion of bloom. It is not in botanist’s observation of a tree to analyze its vegetation. It is not in the philosophical investigation to conceive the phenomenon of blooming in the systematic manner either. In all these cognitive activities the tree is merely an object or a material for the specific activities, and the being of tree itself is out of question.

The thinking of scientists and philosophers are repeatedly referred to for the comparison between thinking and what appears thinking, but it does not implies that all botanists and all professors of philosophy departments do not think when they practice their profession even though the lack of thinking in professions is a way to characterizes modern times. There are people who actually think and get the access to the truth. They use their reason to take in plants and philosophical themes. They truly meet the subject-matter, and the meeting consequently produces some meaningful outcome for their profession.<sup>48</sup> The critical feature which enables us

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<sup>48</sup> Barbara McClintock is one of the scientists who should have devoted herself to the relational perception for her research. In her biography, *Feeling for organism*, the author writes, “What is it in an individual scientist’s relation to nature that facilitates the kind of seeing that eventually leads to productive discourse? What enabled McClintock to see further and deeper into the mysteries of genetics than her colleagues? Her answer is simple. Over and over again, she tells us one must have the time to

to discern that thinking in the original sense occurs is that the subject and object contrast is blurred in the phase of the relational perception. Heidegger characterizes the initiation of thinking as being inclined toward each other. He writes, “Man can think in the sense that he possesses the possibility to do so. This possibility alone, however, is no guarantee to us that we are capable of thinking. For we are capable of doing only what we are inclined to do. And again, we truly incline only toward something that in turn inclines toward us, toward our essential being, by appealing to our essential being as the keeper who holds us in our essential being.” (2004, pp. 3-4) The initiation of thinking is not up to us, the thinker. Thinking is not what we are capable of doing whenever we would like to do. Strictly speaking, we cannot commence thinking by our own volition to take anything in front of us as the object. Thinking is a sort of event of encounter. The encounter does not happen by one party’s willing, but it happens spontaneously by being inclined to each other. We encounter the tree in bloom when we are inclined to it, and we are inclined to it when the tree is inclined to us. The crucial feature of this mutual inclination is that the being of the tree appeals to our essential being.

It seems now that thinking in the original sense can be clearly distinguished from the usual conception of thinking by highlighting the fact that the essential being should be involved in thinking. What begets the mutual inclination is the essential being. Our essential being does not necessarily participate in the cognitive activities from the simple, such as recognizing, making sense of things or situations in front of us, to the more complex, such as analyzing and philosophizing. The fact that the essential being is involved in thinking leads to a more complicated question, what the essential being is.

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look, the patience to “hear what the material has to say to you,” the openness to “let it come to you.” Above all, one must have “a feeling for the organism.””(Evelyn Fox Keller, 1983, p.198)

## 2.2. Open up the space for the essential being

There seems to be a straightforward response to the question above if we recall that we were talking about the moment of being face to face with the tree in bloom. Repeatedly saying, we as human beings share the experience to have seen trees in bloom. In meeting trees in bloom we enter a certain state to be attracted toward something which is often expressed with the words, beauty, wonder, awe, and the like. The tree in bloom touches some part of us, namely mind, heart, spirit, or soul. In this sort of encounter we become to be aware that there is something within our existence, but cannot locate its place nor show it to others. What Heidegger encapsulates in “the essential being” should be related to the mind, heart, spirit, or soul in some sense. Some might be reminded of Dewey’s illustration of an experience of storm and his explication of perception in general. Dewey and Heidegger seem to talk about the identical phenomenon with different accents. Dewey draws it to the side of esthetic and epistemology by putting more light on the pervasive quality which can be perceived by us whereas Heidegger to the side of existentialism or ethics by focusing on what happens to us.

Even though it is a helpful way of introduction to construe the essential being to some extent by referring to the familiar concept of mind, heart, spirit or soul, it is necessary to attempt to give a more careful elaboration in order to clarify the relation between thinking and the essential being. Going back to the illustration of the encounter with a tree in bloom, in the second part, it is depicted that the tree in bloom calls upon us to the place where our essential being come into being, the soil:

“... Let us stop here for a moment, as we would to catch our breath before and after a leap. For that is what we *are* now, men who have leapt, out of the familiar realm of science and even, as we shall see, out of the realm of philosophy. And where have we leapt? Perhaps into an abyss? No! Rather, onto some firm soil. Some? No! But on that soil upon which we live and die, if we are honest with ourselves. ...”

(Heidegger, 2004, p. 41)

Through the encounter we experience a prompt transfer from the familiar place to another place where the essential being is found. However, it might be difficult to accept that we have to transfer from the familiar realm to another realm in order to find our essential being. We actually live in the familiar realm, not the realm that Heidegger designates as the place for our essential being. As it was mentioned, the encounter with the tree in bloom might be rather a special or occasional event in our life. Our life is mostly filled with the common mode of thinking which Heidegger does not regard as thinking. We spend most of time in recognizing, calculating, analyzing, and so on. It sounds bizarre if we have to find the essence of our existence out of this familiar realm as if we should find the essence of a fish out of the sea where it lives. It seems to be the case that Heidegger turns down not only the common modes of thinking but also our entire life. We feel as if we barely cling to our life where the soil has been washed away.

The immediate unfavorable feeling in hearing Heidegger's claim about our essential being actually shows that we do not deviate far from what Heidegger is talking about. We are actually getting closer to him, if it is considered that the distinct characteristic of the essential being is to turn away from us. According to Heidegger, it has turned away from us for a long time, and thus it does not belong to our familiar realm (a point to which I will return). Nevertheless, it should be noted that it does not imply that we will never get the access to our essential being. As it is manifest in the encounter with a tree in bloom, our essential being is possibly discerned at some moment in our everyday life. The fact that Heidegger is not talking about some mysterious and transcendent phenomenon gets more manifest if the leap onto the soil is clarified properly.

Considering the manner of leap, the transference from the familiar realm to the realm for the essential being should not be regarded as a sky jump. "Leaping onto the soil" is not a sharp

rise or a fall to an unknown world. It is not a drastic migration from the familiar place to an outlandish universe. It is a leap onto the soil, the original realm where our life and death are rooted. It is like a leap of a fish which has been familiar with the water of pool coming back to the sea, and this leap is not that difficult for the fish as long as it learns it because the sea is where it is from and it has the innate tendency to be inclined to it.

The way to characterize the soil also verifies that Heidegger does not find our essential being somewhere far from our everyday life, When Heidegger specifies with an emphasizing tone that the soil is not some firm soil, but that soil upon which we live and die, he stresses that the soil is the *human* space that we belong to and know of. Soil is not only for human beings but for all the living beings. That soil where human beings live and die is what distinguishes human beings from other beings. In order to deepen our understanding of that soil, the original place where we live and die, it would be appropriate to bring up Heidegger's concept of dwelling. Heidegger defines dwelling as the basic character of Being in keeping with which mortals exist. (2001, p. 158) That soil is where we as mortals exist with Being. In other words, that soil is dwelling we inhabit with Being. These points are quite complex, yet important, and I will try to elucidate them in what follows

The term of dwelling and that of soil as well give the impression that it indicates residences, and this common conception of dwelling, tends to keep interrupting our beholding of dwelling in Heidegger's sense. Dwelling should not be understood as the object or space which we buy or rent to occupy spending most of time, even though it can really become and should be the place for dwelling in Heidegger's sense. Dwelling is a sort of existence to be together with some other being and consequently with Being. As it is obvious in the illustration of the encounter with the tree in bloom, dwelling is an event of encounter, and the encounter, opens up

the space for dwelling. Dwelling thus has the dual meaning of the spatial, the place, and the temporal, the event. It does not only entail the space per se but also the relational action of encounter occurs in and for the space.

To illuminate the eventual aspect of dwelling it would be helpful to Heidegger's another crucial concept, building, which is intimately related to dwelling. Heidegger traces the origin of the term of building, in his first language, German, *Bauen*, as a way to reveal the nature of it and consequently that of dwelling. Firstly, to build implies to dwell as the connection seems plausible particularly because of their similar denotations, building as the constructed space and dwelling as the place to live. However, building also implies the distinct human existence when it serves as the origin of be. Heidegger says, "What then does *ich bin* mean? The old word *bauen*, to which the *bin* belongs, answers: *ich bin, du bist* mean: I dwell, you dwell. The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans are on the earth, is *Buan*, dwelling." (2001, p. 145) The connection between building and dwelling revealed in the linguistic origin can be summarized as follows: The essential form of human existence is dwelling, and we dwell in the sense of building.

The abridged expression of the relation between dwelling and building above is not yet sufficient for us to grasp the connection between dwelling and building, but the picture seems to get more vivid when Heidegger adds the meaning of building, He writes, "The old word *bauen*, which says that man *is* insofar as he *dwells*, this word *bauen* however also means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine. ... Shipbuilding and temple-building, on the other hand, do in a certain way make their own works. Here building, in contrast with cultivating, is a constructing." (2001, p. 145) Building is to raise either the living or things, and it is the human way in which human beings

exist. We dwell in building, and it is what makes human beings distinct. We exist revealing our essential being when we are involved in the existence of the other beings, either what is growing or what is erected. If it is considered that building originally has the meaning of cultivation, our essential being emerges when we are engaged in something, whether it is growing things or not, in the manner of cultivation. For example, our essential being would be revealed either in tending a garden or in making a doll. Both gardening and doll making is the occasions to require the manner of dwelling, the persistent and careful engagement with the other beings. In this way of engagement the garden and the doll attain being which can be compared to human beings and possibly keep engaging with human beings. The being of garden and that of doll appeal our essential being. In other words, the things and we are inclined toward each other.

There is an interesting and significant similarity between the origin of building in German and the usage of building in Korean. In Korean *jitda* which is a verb meaning making is employed in indicating both cultivating in the sense of farming and building in the sense of constructing. *nongsa jitda* means growing crops, and *jib jitda* means building a house. *jitda* is also used with the word rice and cloth. *bob jitda* means to cook rice, and *ot jitda* means to make a garment. *Jitda* is sometimes used to denote the other sorts of making, but *jitda*, denoting cultivating, constructing, cooking rice are the most typical usages of *jitda*. It seems that the intimate relation between building and dwelling is also revealed in Korean in that *jitda* is used to denote many activities for dwelling. For example, to cook rice is a very essential activity for Korean to sustain the life, and more importantly it is not a straightforward kind of cooking at all even though it is simply to boil rice with water. It requires the manner of caring because the rice cooking is easily ruined without the careful dealing with the amount of water, the state of the pot, the size flame, and the timing. The appropriate handling of all the process of rice cooking

depends on the discernment of the essential quality of rice, and rice cooking demands learning as learning is always required for all sorts of building.

To recall the summary of the relation between dwelling and building, the essential form of human existence is dwelling, and we dwell in the sense of building. Now, we can add that dwelling is caring. Put it in a more simplified statement, dwelling is building, building is caring, and thus dwelling is caring. We eventually got this simple claim, and it seems that we are ready to answer the question raised at the beginning of this section, what the essential being is. The essential being is revealed when we engage with other beings in the manner of caring, cherishing, protecting, or preserving.

Coming back to our original subject-matter, thinking, it appears that we drift somewhat from the initial task to elaborate thinking. In order to explicate the essential being which is a necessary element of thinking, dwelling and subsequently building was introduced. However, the encounter with a tree in bloom that we regard as an exemplification of thinking, is hardly taken as a case of building, since the encounter with a tree in bloom is neither cultivation nor construction. It is rather being together with the other being or seeing each other. In this respect it is necessary to go into how dwelling and building inform thinking.

Heidegger elucidates the relation between dwelling, building, and thinking, and it would be helpful for us to see the nature of thinking. He writes, “Building and thinking are, each in its own way, inescapable for dwelling. The two, however, are also insufficient for dwelling so long as each busies itself with its own affairs in separation instead of listening to one another. They are able to listen if both—building and thinking—belong to dwelling, if they remain within their limits and realize that the one as much as the other comes from the workshop of long experience and incessant practice.” (2001, *Building Dwelling Thinking*, p. 158) Building and thinking are

two integral parts of dwelling, and building and thinking assumes each other in order to retain the originality. Some essential characteristic of thinking is found in building, and the other way around is also the case as we already devoted many pages to discuss building for the sake of illuminating thinking. Because of the bound relationship between thinking and building, it is a plausible attempt to grasp what thinking means by the comparison with building. When we get a clear image of building, the image of thinking would get clearer too.

In order to see the essential characteristic it would be a useful way to imagine the case of building lost the originality first to compare it later with the original case, since we are more familiar with the former. There is a high probability of the divorce between building and thinking, so that each activity loses the essence. We find everywhere the case of building lost the originality. Any things improperly and carelessly cultivated or made, such as the factory farming and the ready-made clothing, are the cases of building insufficient for dwelling. When building does not listen to thinking, the mutual inclination, opening up the space for essential being, is missed and building is undertaken in the manner of manipulation in order to accomplish some other ends than building itself. The essence which should be revealed and preserved is not found in what was built. Its failure to appeal our essential being would be the evidence of the absence of essence. The unhealthy foods produced by factory-farming and the never well fitting manufactured garments manifests that what was built without thinking does not engage with our humanity, but just serves some other purpose.

Heidegger presents the example of the craft of cabinetmaker to illustrate relatedness, the essential characteristic of building, “If he is to become a true cabinetmaker,” Heidegger writes, “he makes himself answer and respond above all to the different kinds of wood and to the shapes slumbering within wood—to wood as it enters into man’s dwelling with all the hidden

riches of its nature... Without that relatedness, the craft will never be anything but empty busywork, any occupation with it will be determined exclusively by business concerns. Every handicraft, all human dealings are constantly in that danger. ...” (2004, p. 15) The lack of relatedness is pointed out as the core characteristic of building lost the originality, and Heidegger warns the continuous danger for building to dismiss thinking. Nowadays, building lacks the relatedness, and the drastic decrease of the number of handicraft man would be an evidence of it. All machinery takes the place of handicraft, and the material abundance is bestowed instead of the quality. Some might dispute that the quality is debased by the machinery. This argument is reasonable, since the quite high and even level of quality is actually guaranteed by machinery. However, the uniform quality of things rather serves as the evidence of the absence of essence in building. In building a man and a thing is related to each other, imbued with each other. The thing made or cultivated, from tiny petty things, such as a small potted plant, to gigantic and complicated things, such as the whole city, embodies the essential quality of man in a certain degree. In this respect it would be impossible that there are things which have the identical quality even though they possibly have some shared style. The individualized feature of thing which is yet in accordance with humanity and with other things as well is often missing in building today.

The relatedness is the essential characteristic of building. Heidegger beautifully describes what hand is, and the relatedness of building is distinct in it. He writes, “The hand does not only grasp and catch, or push and pull. The hand reaches and extends, receives and welcomes—and not just things: the hand extends itself, and receives its own welcome in the hands of others. The hand holds. The hand carries. The hand designs and signs, presumably because man is a sign. Two hands fold into one, a gesture meant to carry man into the great oneness. ...” (2004, p.16)

Through the welcoming gesture of hand, man arrives at oneness with the other being, and oneness is what makes building distinctive from building without essence. The mark of building which is dwelling is the harmony preserved in the manner of caring or a beautifully pervasive quality through consummation if Dewey's language is drawn on.

On the contrary to building, it is not easy to imagine the distinct characteristic of thinking. It is also hard to imagine the case of thinking lost the originality even though we know that all the common sorts of thinking are the case of thinking drift far away from dwelling. It has been explained so far that there is no moment of mutual inclination in those sorts of thinking, but it is still hard to delineate the distinction of it. We experience the difficulty to visualize thinking probably because thinking does not generate something physically visible comparing building. However, there may be another reason for the invisibility that we have not yet illuminated the body of thinking, memory. Thus, we will try first to elaborate memory and then to delineate the distinction between thinking and thinking missing essence.

### **2.3. Memory and thanking**

Going back to the last part of the illustration of encounter with a tree in bloom:

“When anything so curious as this leap becomes necessary, something must have happened that gives food for thought. ...”

(Heidegger, 2004, pp. 41-42)

The mutual inclination is what initiates thinking, but what forms the body of thinking is memory which is composed of thought. Through the leap, turning toward each other, the space for the essential being is opened up, and at the same time the thought-provoking circumstance is established, which is expressed as what gives food for thought in the illustration. Heidegger does not explicitly mentions the difference between thinking and thought, but it seems that he

employs the term of thinking and that of thought separately. Thinking denotes activity or event, whereas thought denotes idea. Thinking is depicted as encounter, being face to face, mutual inclination, while thought is what is provoked or engendered through the peculiar encounter.

Thought is what composes memory as Heidegger says, “Memory is the gathering of thought.” (2004, p. 3) Thought is idea means to see, face, meet, be face-to-face referring to Greek origin, and thus thought is nothing other than thinking. This fact suggests that thought is the past thinking captured in the form of idea, and memory is to recollect the idea, the past thinking, and it is in accordance with the typical conception of memory, the faculty or capacity for the storage of idea and the retrieval of it whenever it is necessary. However, this common conception of memory and thought is dismissed by Heidegger as he always does.

For Heidegger memory is a disposition before a faculty. He describes how thought gathers by memory. He writes, ““Memory” initially did not at all mean the power to recall. The word designates the whole disposition in the sense of a steadfast intimate concentration upon the things that essentially speak to us in every thoughtful meditation. Originally, “memory” means as much as devotion: a constant concentrated abiding with something—not just with something that has passed, but in the same way with what is present and with what may come. What is past, present, and to come appears in the oneness of its own *present* being.” (2004. P. 140) Two significant points are found in Heidegger’s conception of memory. One is about what memory really does, and the other is the characteristic of thought. Memory is “a constant concentrated abiding with something.” It still implies that memory is to retain something, but it is not to keep holding onto something in the manner of seizure or capture. It is “a steadfast intimate concentration upon the things that essentially speak to us” It is to attend, to let something speak to us by giving ear to it with patience. Memory is like a little girl who always waits for the song

of birds for her. We cannot hear birds' chirping if we are not ready to give our ear or mind to it even though it is certainly a sharp and loud sound. Memory is to preserve or care for the space open up by the encounter to invite thought gathering there.

The second significant point of memory is that gathering thought includes not only what is past but also the present and coming. Memory does not simply imply the recall of the past moment, but it is to sustain the past in the continuity to the present and future as well. The past is recollected not in the sense that it is preserved as it is, but that we revive its essential quality to be connected to the present and the future. For example, the presence of a tree in bloom emerges through our memory to recollect the past encounters between trees and us. The fresh shadow bestowed by the thickened green in the summer, the vivid colors beautifully contrasting to the deep sky in the fall, the striking frankness in the winter, and the enchanting blooming in the spring again gather for us to converse with the tree in front us. The gathering even involves a tree which will come to us in the future as Dewey says, "There is anticipation. Each successive event being a stage in a serial process is both expectant and commemorative" (1958, p. 101) Encounter with a tree in bloom does not appear to be the case which is a part of a serial process, but through the memory, the gathering of thought, all the past and even future encounters are vividly embraced to be revealed in the manifestation of the oneness of the present being.

Memory is gathering of thought, calling for thought to gather, but calling is not commanding. It is aspiring to receive. Thinking is receiving the oneness which emerges through steadfast caring for the thought provoking thing as a gardener takes care of the soil, seed, sprout, and so on over seasons to receive one day a gift, the oneness of a flower in full bloom. The origin of think also confirms that thinking is receiving. According to Heidegger the term of think and that of thank has the same origin, *thanc*. He says, "The *thanc*, the heart's core, is the gathering of

all that concerns us, all that we care for, all that touches us insofar as we are, as human beings. What touches us in the sense that it defines and determines our nature, what we care for, we might call contiguous or contact.” (2004, p. 144) Thinking is thanking, receiving by our heart something touches us. Through this reception we dwell as a human being with the oneness.

### **3. Poetry and Thinking**

Now, it seems that we are better prepared to distinguish thinking in Heidegger’s sense and what is not. It appears that we cannot stop thinking in that every idea always comes and goes in our mind. We always keep saying. Even when we are alone, we do in mind. However, it is not thinking, since thinking requires the distinct initiation by the mutual inclination. Only when we encounter the other appealing our essential being, and we genuinely care for it, do we begin thinking, and this is the moment when we really become ourselves. If it is not thinking to recall all the dispersing ideas, we can consider more serious and focused situation. We often come to have some concern or worry which we deeply care and ponder. This case is not thinking either in Heidegger’s sense as long as we think in order to stop thinking, in other words, we think on the purpose to make a decision or reach a conclusion. If we are able to contrive some good mean to get rid of that concern, the concern is actually not what gives food to thought. Something thought-provoking is related to essence which can never be captured by us, mortals. Thinking is almost life-long practice as Heidegger emphasized that both building and thinking comes from the workshop of long experience and incessant practice. As an apprentice become a cabinetmaker through a long practice, and more significantly a cabinetmaker keeps his essence by continuous making cabinets, we can say that we think when we keep thinking.

It seems to be clarified to some extent why most of everyday sorts of thinking are not thinking in the original sense. Now, let us explicate what is lack in thinking of today's scientists and philosophers which requires the high level of intelligence. The absence of encounter, mutual inclination, would be the decisive feature of thinking of scientists and philosophers. Furthermore, scientists and many philosophers, such as positivists, cannot acknowledge the blurred relationship between the subject and the object. The practice of science is fundamentally the objectification or the reduction of the other being or the world. In science the world is merely the object to explain and manipulate, not what we meet face-to-face. The absence of relational perception is particularly distinct when living beings are dealt with in science as many of us have experienced the inhumane treat in the medical practice even though it is amazingly effective. Patients are reduced to the body where our essential being hardly dwells.

As the handcraft of cabinetmaking helps us to visualize building more vividly, it would be helpful to try to consider a typical case of thinking. Heidegger continuously mentions poetry in discussing thinking. Poetry is of thinking, and thinking is poetic. Poetry and thinking has the relationship that one characterizes the other. Recollecting the examination of Korean usage of building, *jitda*, something interesting is found again. In Korean the verb, *jitda* is also used in saying writing a poem, *shi jitda*. There are many genres of literature, but only when Korean say, write a poem, is the verb, *jitda*, used instead of write. For Korean writing a poem may be originally conceived similar to rice farming and rice cooking. As it was explained, the Korean way to cook rice requires very steadfast perception and careful handling. The traditional way to grow rice also demands the manner of thinking in Heidegger's sense, as there is a saying in

Korean, “For the sake of a single grain of rice ninety nine times touch is needed”<sup>49</sup> It suggests that thinking is an essential part in writing poems.

The interchangeable relation between poetry and thinking is manifest in Heidegger’s elucidation of how dwelling, building, and poetry are related. Heidegger writes, “The statement, *Man dwells in that he builds*, has now been given its proper sense. Man does not dwell in that he merely establishes his stay on the earth beneath the sky, by raising growing things and simultaneously raising buildings. Man is capable of such building only if he already builds in the sense of the poetic taking of measure. Authentic building occurs so far as there are poets, such poets as take the measure for architecture, the structure of dwelling.” (2001, p. 225) We can see that poetry takes the place of thinking in the relationship between dwelling, building, and thinking which can be summed up as thinking and building belong to dwelling as long as they embody each other. Poetry is building, dwelling, and foremost thinking.

Heidegger encapsulates the essence of poetry as measuring-taking as we can see it the quote above. When we hear the term measure-taking, the quantitative gauge in science labs is recalled, but poetic measure-taking is qualitative perception. Heidegger says, “A strange measure for ordinary and in particular also for all merely scientific ideas, certainly not a palpable stick or rod but in truth simpler to handle than they, provided our hands do not abruptly grasp but are guided by gestures befitting the measure here to be taken. This is done by a taking which at no time clutches at the standard but rather takes it in a concentrated perception, a gathered taking-in,

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<sup>49</sup> Rice cooking might not always require the manner of thinking. It is particularly pertinent to Korean and probably to East Asians too because they eat a specific kind of rice short and stickier than other sort in the cooked state. It is usually called sushi rice in English. A rice cooker, an electronic device to cook rice automatically is a necessity for Korean today, and it shows how delicate the Korean way is. The cultivation of rice might not require thinking that much somewhere else either. It should depend on the climate and the kind of rice. The Korean way is paddy farming which requires heavy labor and considerable skill as well.

that remains a listening.” (2001, p. 221) For scientific measurement a standard is set forth with which the object is compared. A stick or rod is placed between the scientist and the object. But for poetic measure-taking nothing is necessary to mediate between the subject and the object. As long as they turn toward each other, listening, the concentrated perception is enough for the measure-taking. Poetic measure taking can be compared with the qualitative perception of an experienced cook who even measures the necessary quantity of salts perceptively without any measuring tool, such as using scales or weighing spoons. Because she is exactly attuned to what is before her, she clearly sees how much is necessary as if she feels it within herself.

Poetic perception is neither what we voluntarily performs nor arbitrarily happens to anyone. As it is well known that only when poetic inspiration comes to us, can we really write poetry. So, who is qualified for poetic perception can be questioned, and the clue is found in Heidegger’s elucidation of the encounter. He writes, “... And again, we truly incline only toward something that in turn inclines toward us, toward our essential being, by appealing to our essential being as the keeper who holds us only so long, however, as we for our part keep holding on to what holds us. And we keep holding on to it by not letting it out of our memory. Memory is the gathering of thought. ...” (2004, p. 3) The essential being which is the same property of the perceiver and the perceived is what makes perception, the encounter possible. Two things of the same property naturally turn toward each other, inclined to each other as we see that babies are most interested in babies, and dogs are so. Poetic measure-taking is sympathetic resonance of essential beings. However, it is required for us to keep holding on to what holds us in Heidegger’s term. In other words, we can see the essential being as long as we hold onto it, and it is nothing other than holding onto our own essential being. Memory is

gathering of thought. It is gathering of our essential being. As long as we take a good care of our essential being, poetic inspiration comes up to us.

Heidegger quotes lines of Hölderlin's poem:

... As long as Kindness,

The Pure, still stays with his heart, man

Not unhappily measures himself

Against the Godhead ....

(Heidegger, 2001, p. 226)

Through memory, the caring disposition our pure and kind essential being is revealed and ready for measure-taking. Our being becomes a channel for the gathering of essential being. The creativity of poetry does not come from our specific faculty to make up something new, but poetry emerges when we come back to our pure being to thank the gathering of what is past, present, and to come.

## **Conclusion**

We arrive at somewhat striking concluding statement: thinking is poetic. The contradictory image of poets, emotional, imaginative, implicit, and thinkers or authentic philosophers, calm, articulate, explicit still confuses us. We have to keep clear our prejudice in order to listen to what Heidegger speaks, and this is the essential procedure of learning of thinking, which does not seem to end. However, if we shed more light on the perceptive disposition, the concentration, the mindful state we enter when we come back to our essential being, it can be found that the contrast images of poets and thinker is not that distinct. Thinking is involved either in the

imaginative work of poets or in the logical articulation of philosophers as long as they are truly honest and sincere with the other being.

What possibly mediates the different images between poets and thinkers would be thinking in moral situation. Certainly Heidegger never deals with morality in detail. He has made a very brief comment about the gracious and the malice, but he never shows devotion to morality.<sup>50</sup> However, it can be supposed that his discussion on human existence also immediately informs morality which is one of the most humanistic phenomena. Heidegger might do not feel the need to discuss specifically about morality because he hitherto addresses morality through his great devotion to human essential being. As it was explicated in the former chapters, for this research morality is conceived based on Aristotle's natural excellence, Nietzsche's noble morality, and Bergson's human morality. This sort of morality is grounded in our innate capability to see what is good and to be inclined toward it contrary to the slave morality in Nietzsche's term or social morality in Bergson's which is ground in the social norms and rules to regulate the social member's behaviors. In other words, the former morality is more likely to be pertinent to Heidegger's existentialism, in that morality based on human nature can be considered to be a form of revealed human essential being.

Going back to the suggestion that thinking in moral situation could blur the contrasting images between poets and thinkers it is because we become both a poet and a thinker when we think in moral situation. In the above section, it was attempted to elaborate thinking by illuminating two core parts of thinking, encounter, mutual inclination, which was considered as the initiation of thinking, and memory, thanking, as the consummation. The two parts of thinking

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<sup>50</sup> Heidegger says, "Only after we have let ourselves become involved with the mysterious and gracious things as those which properly give food for thought, only then we take thought also of how we should regard the malice of evil" (2004, p. 31)

is actually inseparable as it is manifest in that the middle part of the illustration, titled “Open up the space for the essential being,” is put in order to illuminate the joined space where two parts of thinking occurs. However, those two parts can be distinctly highlighted. It seems that the encounter is particularly visible in poets’ experience of thinking whereas memory in thinker’s. The gaze in meeting an inspiring being would be a good portrait of poets as we can imagine it in the illustration of encounter with a tree in bloom, and the deep caring for a subject matter would that of thinkers as it is depicted succinctly in *The Thinker* by Auguste Rodin. As it was discussed in Chapter 2, moral awareness comes in the form of perception, and then we immediately become to care about the object or the situation. In moral situation, we see it and care about it. We become a moral being by becoming a poet and a thinker.

## CHAPTER 6

### Poetry, Thinking, and Moral Perception

#### Introduction

As it was stated in the introduction of Chapter 5, this chapter is set in order to convey the intimate relationship between poetry, thinking, and moral perception by introducing *Poetry*. At the end of the former chapter it was attempted to highlight that moral perception belongs to the realm of poetry and thinking, concluding with the claim, “We become a moral being by becoming a poet and a thinker.” This claim can be reduced to “We become a moral being by becoming a poet” because poetry and thinking are the interchangeable terms. This claim is vividly conveyed in *Poetry*.

*Poetry* is composed of two juxtaposed story lines. One is about the suicide of a middle school girl who had been repeatedly raped by her classmate boys at school. The other is about a poetry writing class. The movie itself is not a true story. In fact, there was a similar striking happening several years ago in Korea, a group of boys raping their classmate at school, and I believe that the director, Chang-dong Lee, who also wrote the screenplay, should draw on that true happening. Moreover, Chang-dong Lee told that the poetry writing classes in the film was drawn from actual classes given by a poet, Yong-taek Kim, who acts in the film for the first time in his life. However, Mija, the leading actress connecting two stories, is a created character. Mija gets involved in the girl’s suicide as the only one who morally perceives the occurrence, and at the same time she eventually learns how to write poetry by attending the class. Thus, Mija could be taken as the demonstration of the relation between poetry writing and moral perception. Mija embodies the claim, “We become a moral being by becoming a poet.”

The claim might be interpreted in several ways. Some might literally understand the claim and interpret it to mean that morality prerequisites the ability to write poetry. It is unlikely the case in that there are numerous morally good people around us, who cannot write poetry. Another plausible interpretation is that learning how to write poetry positively influences moral development. It seems possible to design an empirical research to investigate the correlation. Nevertheless, the claim is not made to assert the importance of poetry education for the sake of moral development. Finally, if we try to ignore the seeming educational implication which stems from the term, “become”, the claim can be interpreted to say that poets and thinkers are morally good people. It seems that poets and thinkers are more likely to be good morally, but it does neither mean that they are morally good in the sense that they have the nice and kind character nor that they are good citizens to follows the customs and rules as it is well known that many of them possess too free soul to lead the standardized lifestyle. However, if we consider the historical fact that poetry flourishes whenever humanity is threatened, such as during the wars, we can say that they are moral in the sense that they tend to be more sensitive to the moral crisis.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that to claim that poets and thinkers are morally good is merely a supposition which can never be substantiated.

Those plausible interpretations of the claim were presented in order to avoid in advance the probable readings of *Poetry* expecting to see some empirical relevance between poetry, to write poems, and morality. *Poetry* and *Mija* should not be understood to be in accordance with the seeming interpretations above. *Mija* does not serve as live evidence which shows either that the ability to write poetry provokes moral development or that the ability is always accompanied

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<sup>51</sup> Poems during the inhuman age do not necessarily say directly about the issues at that time. Poetry in general adoring the nature and humanity particularly flourishes when humanity is endangered. For example, the 35 years of Japanese Occupation of Korea is the time when numerous great poems were written, and they are still loved most by Korean.

by morality. As it is indicated in the conclusion of the former chapter, the claim, “We become a moral being by becoming a poet,” means that morality requires the acute perceptual capability and the sincere and concentrating attitude. Put differently, moral awareness is thinking in the original sense, which is particularly poetic. The character, Mija is not the factual evidence but an image, sign, disclosure, or manifestation of the intimate relation between morality and poetry, and thus between morality and thinking.

Additional to the primary purpose to provide a vivid illustration of the relation between morality and thinking, the characteristic property of essence, withdrawing, which was briefly mentioned in the former chapter, will be elaborated here. Withdrawing is significant concept particularly in terms of morality, since it is pertinent to the moral blindness of the contemporary world which Arendt rightly considers as thoughtless. Moral blindness is also vividly depicted In *Poetry*, and thus to look into *Poetry* helps us to be prepared to discuss it properly.

### **1. “To write poems is to see well”**

The film starts with a drastic scene down by a river. A dead body drifting on the river is found by a young boy who was playing with his friends on the river bank. It was Heejin, the girl who had been raped by a group of boys from her school for the past six months. The traumatic experience drove her to kill herself. Later Mija comes to know that Wook, her grandson, is one of those boys. Being ignorant of Wook’s guilt Mija registers for a poetry writing course at a local adult education center.

Yongtak, a poet and the instructor for the class, begins his first class exploring the meaning of seeing. He says, “To write poetry, you must see well.” He puts out an apple from his pocket continues, “How many times have you seen an apple? A thousand? Ten thousands? A

million times? Wrong. You haven't seen an apple before. Never even once. Up till now, you haven't seen an apple for real. To see it when you really want to know what an apple is, to understand it, to converse with it is to see it really. ...If you really see something you can naturally feel something like water gathering in a spring. You should prepare paper and a pencil and wait for the moment to come. Blank white paper, a world of pure potential, a world before creation, this is the perfect moment for a poet. ...” In this first meeting he assigns writing a poem to the students by the end of the course. Yongtak asks his students whether they have ever written poetry before. Mija does not raise her hand, and most of them neither. Mija actually has written poetry before, but she couldn't remember it when she was asked in the class. Later, when she was asked by a man why she was learning poetry, she recalled her school day. She said, “Long ago, I must've been in the third grade when we used to have a writing day in the fall. After a contest, my teacher told me, “Mija, you'll become a poet one day.””

Yongtak claims that to write poetry is authentic perception, and it is in accordance with Heidegger's definition of poetry as measure-taking. Poetic measure-taking is in other words listening, a concentrated perception, a gathered taking-in. As long as we remain with the welcoming disposition, the moment of poesy comes itself as Yongtak describes, “water gathering in a spring.” However, Mija keeps expressing her disappointment about her own experience. One day Mija asks to Yongtak “When a poetic inspiration comes? As much as I try, it won't come.” Yongtak answers, “It doesn't. You must go and beg for it. You must pray but even this guarantees nothing.” Like Heidegger Yongtak also emphasizes that poetic perception is neither what we voluntarily performs nor arbitrarily happens to anyone. It occurs to some qualified people who have passion and patience as well, not only to be able to go and beg for it but also to be able to wait until it comes up.

Mija asks a following question, “Where must I go to beg?” Yongtak answers, “It’s not in some special place, but somewhere you must wander around for. It isn’t waiting for you with a name plate saying “poetic inspiration.” The clear thing is that it is somewhere nearby, not far away. It’s there, right there you stand” He adds that poetry can be found even in a dish-washing sink. As it was reiterated in the former chapter, poetic perception and thinking is not a mystical occurrence but what we can actually experience in our everyday life, being engrossed in, being related to, and creating based on the relatedness.

As Mija expresses it in the class, to write poetry seems so hard for Mija, even though she is the most passionate student. When she found the posting of the class opening, the registration had already been closed, but she appealed to the person in charge to accept her. She tries whatever Yongtak recommends. She gives a gaze to an apple, her kitchen sink, and a tree in front of her apartment building. She always carries a pocketbook and tries to take a short note as Yongtak says that it is a good practice. She even voluntarily attends to local poetry recitals held once a week by a local club called *Poetry Love*. In spite of all these efforts she does not feel that the poetic inspiration is coming to her. However, in fact she gradually goes near to poetry without being aware of it.

While she is taking poetry course, Mija comes to know two striking facts almost simultaneously. One is that his grandson Wook is involved in Heejin’s suicide, and the other is that Mija is in the initial stage of Alzheimer’s dementia whose first symptom is forgetfulness of words. Being aware of these facts could make Mija despair, but not really. She just gets deeply engrossed in two issues, poetry writing and the girl’s death. Mija was curious about Heejin’s suicide even when she did not know yet that Wook is involved in it, but her neighbors were disinterested in it. She learned the details when she joined a lunch meeting at a restaurant where

all the fathers of the boys that had been raping Heejin gathered to find a way to settle the matter. Mija was invited because she was taking care of Wook alone instead of her divorced daughter. The thing is that after Heejin's death her mother who was raising alone the girl and a younger son found Heejin's diary stating six male students raping her for months in the science lab located in a secluded area of the school building. Heejin's mother reported the fact to the school authorities. The fact is not known yet to the community. All of the fathers agree that the guilt of boys should be concealed for their future. The teachers also do not want the fact revealed to the world. Thus, the fathers consider that the last thing to do is to suggest compensation money to Heejin's mother to conciliate her.

Shocked by the fact, in the middle of meeting Mija quietly withdraws from the room. In the front garden of the restaurant, she begins to see cockscombs, the floral meaning of which is "shield", and she takes her first note, "a flower as red as blood". This is the very first moment that Mija's poetic perception is evoked and moral perception as well.

The fathers of boys are calm and fully focused on the settlement of the present issue. However, they are completely blinded to what is essential. One of them even makes a comment on Heejin's appearance, "They said, the girl was short and plain-looking. So, I can't understand why they did it." Another father responds to his comment somewhat deplorably, but all fathers are merely united in the effort to conceal the truth. They are concerned about the boys' future, but they are actually crippling the future by disconnecting it from the past. They ruin not only their sons' future but also the whole society's future by eliminating memory without which we cannot preserve the essential being. More striking fact is that the school authorities also want to conceal the reality. The reason for them to conceal it might be to protect the school's reputation as fathers protect their boys. By protecting the boys and school, what they would fail to protect is

Heejin's humanity, the boys' humanity, and most of all their own humanity. They endanger humanity by never mourning Heejin's death.

Mija is the only one who really sees and mourns Heejin's death. When the fathers and teachers turn their face away from it, Mija by herself encounters, is inclined to, and takes in Heejin's essential being. She traces what happened to Heejin. Mija attends Requiem Mass for Heejin at a Catholic church, and she learns that her Christian name is Agnes. In the Requiem Mass Mija finds that three middle school age girls who we can guess to be Heejin's friends are attending. Mija and the girls are seeing each other face to face for a while as if something draws them to each other. This encounter makes Mija burst into tears. Mija might feel that she is seeing Heejin in them. She is unable to handle her emotion, and she gets out of the church in a hurry as if she is drawn away from the encounter. However, in the reception area she turns back to a small framed photo of Heejin which she already found when she was coming in, and she suddenly puts it in her purse as if she wants to keep holding on to Heejin's being by not letting it out of her memory.

Meanwhile Mija comes to know that her case was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, but she does not stop taking in Heejin. Mija visits their school. She looks through the window into the remote science lab where the boys raped Heejin. Mija visits the bridge where Heejin threw herself. Mija stands in the middle of the bridge and look down to the river. She comes down to the riverside and sits on a rock. She tries to take a note as she could do several times at some inspiring moment. She cannot write anything this time, but suddenly started raindrops beautifully fill the empty note.

Mija's gathering of thought of Heejin is always accompanied by taking notes. She takes note not for keeping the record of some fact discovered about Heejin but simply for the practice

of poetry writing. At the restaurant, at the school, and by the river she takes poetic notes inspired by flowers, bird's chirping, and the wind. As Mija gathers the memory of Heejin, her note gets more poetic. While Mija is gathering thought of Heejin, Mija is taking in the nature as well, the most primordial form of the essential being, which should be not different from Heejin's being. Mija leaps onto the soil with the flower, the bird, the river, and Heejin's being.

## **2. "The most beautiful moment in my life"**

To be reminded of Heidegger's conception of memory, it is devotion, a constant concentrated abiding with the past, but it is not simply to get a grip of the past, but to preserve it by connecting it to the present and the future as well. The past is recollected not in the sense that it is remembered intact but that the essential quality of the past is reintroduced to build the oneness of the present being. In this respect, in the memory time is not any longer the collective moments that keep elapsing, but it is duration which is revealed in the oneness of the present being. In the practice of memory our essential existence emerges. In other words, we animate our humanity in memory. To keep our humanity alive involves the continuous poetical perception, the continuous encounter, confrontation, face-to-face, and being related to another essential being. The practice of memory is to let one's humanity to be alive and thus able to see and welcome the essential being again.

Comparing with memory oblivion appears to be something to avoid because forgetting can be defined as the failure of memory. What we should avoid is actually not forgetting but complete forgetfulness, since memory only continues in the exchange with forgetting. Without forgetting there is no memory. Forgetfulness is a defining property of human beings just like memory. The existence without forgetting or memory, in other words, the existence with

complete memory or complete forgetfulness, is either gods or animals. Gods are immortal beings that never forget any occurrence. For them past, present, and future has no distinct existence, but time is a sheer perpetuation. On the contrary, for animals which have no ability of memory, no past and consequently no future exist. For animals, there are only present moments which keep elapsing and do not form any enduring time.<sup>52</sup> Only human beings are under the dynamics of memory and forgetting, and thus only we are temporal being.

The antithesis between memory and forgetting is usually characterized by the opposition between presence and absence which implies the opposition between the preservation of what possibly perishes and the failure to preserve it. Heidegger provides an illuminative designation by capturing the characteristics of memory and forgetting in directional terms, pointing and withdrawing, rather than the static terms, presence and absence. Heidegger elucidates the distinct human existence under the sway of memory and forgetting:

What must be thought about, turns away from man. ...But—withdrawing is not nothing. ...In fact, what withdraws may even concern and claim man more essentially than anything present that strikes and touches him. ...What withdraws from us, draws us along by its very withdrawal, whether or not we become aware of it immediately, or at all. Once we are drawn into the withdrawal, we are drawing toward what draws, attract us by its withdrawal. And once we, being so attracted, are drawing toward what draws us, our essential nature already bears the stamp of “drawing toward.” As we are drawing toward what withdraw us, we ourselves are pointers pointing toward it.

(Heidegger, 2004, p. 9)

The essential being which inclines toward us also withdraws from us, and we are also drawn by what is withdrawing, not only inclined to what inclines us. Memory, the gathering of the past in the connection to the present and the future, in other words, the oneness of the present being is an

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<sup>52</sup> Some might object that animals have memory and thus the essential being as well. It should be true that many species of animal have the considerably large capacity of memory, and thus they have some humanlike properties, such as morality. However, animal is posed against human being above not in the sense that all animals contrast with all human beings in the respect of memory, but in the sense that animality contrasts with humanity.

event which has the temporal existence, and any event is destined to be forgotten, to withdraw from us. However, even the withdrawal is an event when the essential being is revealed. It attracts us. We are inclined to it again, drawing toward the withdrawal, become a pointer pointing toward it.

The rhythm made by the continuous withdrawing and pointing is the peculiar human existence as Heidegger writes, "... drawn into what withdraws, drawing toward it and thus pointing into the withdrawal, man first *is* man. His essential nature lies in being such a pointer." (2004, p. 9) We are mortals to keep forgetting, and thus the withdrawal is not single event which can be coped with once. As long as the encounter occurs, the essential being is revealed to us, and it withdraws from us. However, as long as we can become a pointer toward the withdrawal, we can continuously follow it up. Being a pointer is the only way for us, mortals, to be with the essential being, and thus it is the way to preserve our own essential being as Heidegger succinctly elucidates, "Only man dies—and indeed continually, so long as he stays on this earth, so long as he dwells. His dwelling, however, rests in the poetic." (2001, p. 222)

Withdrawing, the distinctive feature of essential being, is particularly visualized in Heejin's death and the happenings around it. Mija is the only one that is drawing to the death of Heejin. She becomes a pointer toward a human's death and toward humanity withdrawing. Humanity turns away from the boys, their fathers, and the school authorities, but the turning away is not only these people's case. It is a culminated phenomenon of modern times in that it is observed everywhere that people are never concerned about the inhuman happenings. At the very beginning of the movie, it is delineated in a scene of hospital. Mija is watching a television running a news program with other people in the waiting area. On the television a Middle Eastern woman was weeping saying that she cannot believe the death of her teenage son, who

was maybe participating in some political demonstration. Everybody in front of the television watches it mindlessly. They were watching it, but they do not really see it. They are not drawing toward it. They do not feel the woman's sorrow, and they are not concerned about the endangered peace in the world. We, modern people, seem to reach almost the complete forgetfulness, the incapability to switch to memory.

To switch on our memory should be the key to evoke humanity, and it is also the key for poesy. In *Poetry*, in a class titled "The most beautiful moment in my life" Yongtak asks each student to recall and share their own experience. A woman describes the moment of delivery of her first child, and another tells about how she was caressing green leaves of trees. A woman shares the moment that she was trying to teach a song to her illiterate grandmother who took care of her instead of her parents. A married woman discloses her love affair with her coworker, and she tells that she is painfully missing the lover, but even the pain is beautiful. Feeling awkward a man confesses that he cannot recall any beautiful moment in his life, but in a minute he tells how he felt when he moved in a city rental apartment from a tiny basement residence.

Mija also shares her childhood, "I was too young to remember how old I was. I guess my mom was sick so my old sister was taking care of me. We're seven years apart. ... I think she dressed me in pretty clothes "Mija, come here, come here" she is saying clapping her hands. I am tottering to her. Although I was so little, I knew my sister loved me. As she told me to come to her I felt so good and so happy. "I am really pretty" was how I felt... "Mija, come here" "Hurry over here, Mija". " Mija weeps while she recalls her memory with her sister, and some others do so when they tell their memories.

Some memories are dramatic, and some others simple. Some are accompanied by lovely feeling, and others by pain. However, they are all perceived as beautiful moments. It seems

necessary to draw on again Heidegger's illustration of the encounter with a tree in bloom to compare:

“...We stand outside of science. Instead we stand before a tree in bloom, for example—and the tree stands before us. The tree faces us. The tree and we meet one another, as the tree stands there and we stand face to face with it. As we are in this relation of one to the other and before the other, the tree and we *are*.”

(Heidegger, 2004, p. 41)

All the memories shared with the class are the case of facing each other, standing before, being related to, being together in Heidegger's sense, and the beauty should be the characteristic property of the revelation of essential being.<sup>53</sup> In their memories they were undergoing poetic perception. Through the recollection of encounter with the essential being, they also perceive their own essential being which might have been forgotten for a long time. Their tears might imply that to be reminded of beautiful moment has the therapeutic effect.

Mija's memory of early childhood particularly suggests that we all have the memory of encounter and that poetical perception is our original way to see the world. We always observe that human babies bring the power to see all the beauty of the world when they were born.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> It seems that one of the memories cannot be taken to be the case of encounter in Heidegger's sense. The memory of a man who at first said that he could not recall any beautiful moment is a happy or fulfilled moment rather than a beautiful moment. The film *Poetry* seems to view masculinity in contrast to the poetic. The man's inability to recall a beautiful moment represents masculinity which is contradictory to the poetic which is represented by the female students who recall it without hesitation. The man should have had beautiful moments in his life, but he is too forgetful to recall them. I will come back to this point later.

<sup>54</sup> Some might question whether even a new born baby can perceive the world as a new born foal is able to stand and walk in a couple of hours. It should be not the case for human babies. However, it seems that human babies begin to perceive and think in a very early stage of their development. They begin to use their index finger to point something far earlier than when they begin to say some words, such as mom. They should perceive and think even earlier than when they begin to use their index finger, but to point something is an obvious evidence of perception and thinking, and it means that they begin to demonstrate their essential being as human. Some might still suspect that human babies learn it rather than naturally develop to do it. It is true that they learn to do it by seeing others' gesture as babies cannot desire and learn to walk on their own practice unless they have never seen others walking. Nevertheless, it is not learning by teaching, but learning by perceiving or taking in, in which the innate ability is decisive. The

They love flowers, grass, trees, and so on. They show the deep affection toward animals, such as puppies and kittens. They take good care of things they like. They immediately make friends with people and animals. They are incredibly creative. For example, to write poetry is not that difficult thing to do for them, as it used to be not that difficult for Mija when she was young. Any other artistic activity, such as drawing, dancing, and singing, is not difficult at all for children either. They are always with their own pure and honest being, and thus their everyday life is full of the abysmal vision of the world, the joy of encounter, and the active engagement with the world.

It seems that the importance of childhood in terms of poetic perception is also emphasized in *Poetry*. Children keep appearing in many scenes of the movie as if they form the background of the whole movie. More conspicuously Mija is characterized to be childlike. She loves flowers like little girls. She is always dressed in a blouse and a skirt florally patterned with a feminine hat and a scarf. People often compliment her fashion, but she is actually not so elegant and stylish. She is possibly viewed somewhat indecent. However, she always carry a vigorous atmosphere like a young woman even though she is 66 years old and barely making a living with her grandson by a pension and the part-time maid job to look after a wealthy retired man partially crippled from a stroke. Her distinctiveness is clearly manifested by her attitude in poetry lessons. In the class she breaks into teacher's lesson either with a frivolous comment or a sincere question.

Mija's childlike, cheerful, and innocent character can be captured in Dewey's concept of naïveté. She might have preserved her naïveté which is indispensable for the poetic perception.

Naïveté or childhood is also crucial in term of morality. Childhood is usually regarded as a

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point is that human babies begin to perceive and think in Heidegger's sense incredibly early, and it means that poetic perception is the original mode of thinking which constitutes the essence of human being.

critical period in terms of socialization to learn all the social customs and norms because children are considered as amoral beings, morally empty. In this respect moral education in childhood puts more weight on slave morality in Nietzsche's words or social morality in Bergson's. However, in term of noble morality in Nietzsche's word or human morality in Bergson's to preserve childhood intact is also crucial. As it was discussed in Chapter 3, Nietzsche claims that in noble morality the idea of good is conceived based on the self first, and then that of bad is considered as the contrast of the good. Heidegger concurs with Nietzsche as He says, "Only after we have let ourselves become involved with the mysterious and gracious things as those which properly give food for thought, only then we take thought also of how we should regard the malice of evil" (2004, p. 31) From Nietzsche's and Heidegger's perspective childhood is not morally empty. Childhood is rather morally full, since the primary morality is embodied in it, and thus to protect childhood is to establish the firm foundation of morality.

Poetic perception is the dominant mode of seeing the world in childhood. However the inevitable concomitant is that childhood is forgotten, since forgetfulness is the inherent tendency of our mortality. Poetic perception is replaced by rational, intellectual, or conceptual thinking and recognition if we recall Dewey's distinction between perception and recognition. Nevertheless, as we can see in the image of Mija, we may carry naïveté to our adulthood as Dewey claims, "We cannot achieve recovery of primitive naïveté. But there is attained a cultivated naïveté of eye, ear, and thought, one that can be acquired only through the discipline of *severe* thought." (1958, pp. 37-38)<sup>55</sup>

Naïveté can be cultivated and should be cultivated. What seems to be significant in Dewey's claim is the fact that he expresses the manner of cultivation of naïveté in "the discipline

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<sup>55</sup> The emphasis is mine

of *severe* thought.” Dewey’s discerning of the difficulty and the possibility of the cultivation of naïveté is in accordance with Heidegger’s characterization of thinking. Heidegger keeps emphasizing our inability to get back to thinking saying, “What must be thought about, turns away from man.” Thinking for us is not what we can do naturally or easily any more as we feel it very difficult to write poetry. It is so particularly for moderns who have forgotten the primitive mode of thinking. We have been thinking in a different way for a long time. The calculative, manipulative, or efficient way of thinking has been imprinted in our being, and thus learning means unlearning for us as Heidegger says, “Especially we moderns can learn only if we always unlearn at the same time.” (2004, p. 8) Unlearning is incomparably more strenuous than learning something new. Unlearning is not something to be completely achieved but something to be continuously attempted especially for moderns and for adults. In this respect Dewey characterizes the cultivation of naïveté, “the discipline of *severe* thought” and Heidegger emphasizes that thinking is the workshop of long experience and incessant practice. We can never acquire the sheer or primitive form of thinking, but we can get near it again and again whenever it withdraws from us by continuous pointing it.

To become a pointer, to hold onto thinking, and thus to preserve our essential being is to ride on the wave of forgetting and memory, withdrawing and pointing, not to fall away too far from the essential being to get back near it gain. As it was emphasized, memory is not to preserve the past as it was. It is to thank the oneness of the present being related to the past and the future. Thus, the essential being is not preserved by remembering the earliest childhood exactly. Memory should evolve through the continuous encounter, poetic perception of the present, and it entails continuous forgetting. The present becomes the past by forgetting, and only when the present is forgotten, does it serves later for another encounter, for another emerge

of oneness of the present being. Memory without forgetting is merely to imprison time, and it is nothing other than the suicide of essential being.

Our essential being which is revealed through naïveté is preserved by the cultivation of memory, persistent learning to thank the present being. In this respect, the image of memory would be fractal to keep growing, which appears at first glance to be a meaningless repetition of the similar pattern, but it actually represents the creative evolution to embody oneness by the endless gathering.<sup>56</sup>

### **3. “And meet you standing by me”**

Learning is apparently a thread of *Poetry* which is depicted not only in Yongtak’s lectures but also in Mija’s learning outside of the class as we kept following both in the former sections. In a scene a moment of learning is drastically illustrated, which involves forgetting and memory.

Mija’s last step of her trace of Heejin is visiting her home, which was actually enforced by the fathers of boys on the purpose to persuade Heejin’s mother to accept their suggestion to receive the compensation money and not to let the fact be known to the world. Mija arrives at Heejin’s empty home. While she is taking a look of lovely pictures of Heejin, the next door woman finds Mija and informs that Heejin’s mother is working in her field nearby. Mija goes to the field following the neighbor’s direction, and the way is beautifully full of murmurs of a brook, singing of birds, and bloom of flowers. Mija finds ripped apricots on the ground and took a bite of one. She puts out her small note and writes, “The apricot throws itself to the ground. It

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<sup>56</sup> The fractal image of universe is used in the movie, *The Tree of Life* by Terrence Malick, who is a philosopher influenced by Heidegger and other philosophers. It seems to me that he tries to convey our essential being in the image of fractal and of course in the story of movie which deals with childhood and memory.

is crushed and trampled for its next life.” Mija finally meets Heejin’s mother, but forgetting her aim she merely has a lovely conversation with Heejin’s mother about the beautiful weather, the scenery of the way, the crop, and life. A part of their conversation follows: Mija says, “I found apricots on my way here. Many have fallen to the ground. I took a bite and it tasted quite good.” Heejin’s mom responds, “Fallen apricots have a better taste. The one still on trees are too pucker to eat.” Mija says, “Yes, you’re right. It tasted good. When I saw the apricots on the ground, I thought they were full of yearning. Throwing themselves to the ground be crushed and trampled on, they prepare for their next life. For the first time, I realized this about apricots.” She gives an amused laugh, and Heejin’s mom responds with a huge grin.... On the way back Mija feels embarrassed because she suddenly remembers the aim of visiting.

This scene recalls to us the fact that Mija is in the initial stage of Alzheimer. However, in the light of Heidegger’s conception of forgetting and memory she was not forgetful at all. She was forgetful of the aim of visiting, but instead she vividly recollected her essential being through the encounter with the nature and consequently encountered Heejin’s mother in most human way. Since Mija brought her essential being to the field instead of the intention to appeal to Heejin’s mom, their encounter becomes a space for the essential being, and the essential being of Heejin’s mother could shine in her grin. This scene illustrates that being focused on the demands in the given moment can be a state of forgetfulness as Arendt regards Adolf Eichmann’s immorality as thoughtless. Mija became a pointer by forgetting about the demands and just being inclined to what is essential even though the essential being immediately withdraws again from her when she realized the aim of visiting. Mija was learning thinking, learning to retrieve our humanity which was imprisoned in all the demands of life.

Who suffers from dementia is the modern society which is usually represented by male characters in *Poetry*. As it is mentioned above, the fathers of the boys are fully focused on the present issue of settlement. However, they completely forget what is essential. The forgetfulness is most distinctly embodied in Mija's grandson, Wook. He spends most of time in listening to loud music, watching TV, playing computer games, and eating, which usually occur in the combinational manner. When he plays computer games, some music is put on. He does not turn off the computer nor turn down the music when he goes to school. He even sleeps with some music on. He is grossly preoccupied with the familiar rhythm, views, and mechanical cognitive activities, but he cannot really see and listen to. He should be even incapable of tasting because he always watches TV while eating.

His inability of perception is also revealed in how he treats things and others. He does not take care of things. He leaves everything as it is. He just leaves the dining table after meals. He leaves a snack bag which is not yet finished in front of TV. He puts off socks and leaves them on the floor. He does not sincerely treat his grandmother, Mija either. He answers in a half-heartedly way when Mija speaks to him. The most drastic proof of his inability to be related to others is the fact that he joined in the boys' gang raping of Heejin. He could not treat her as a human being. He could not see her humanity, since Wook imprison himself in the familiar frivolous realm, and thus he imprisons his essential being as well.

Mija wants to help him see the reality. One night, Mija makes up her mind to talk with Wook about what she heard from the fathers. She sits at the edge of Wook's bed where he was sleeping and gently awakens him. She asks him to get up saying she has something to say. He says nothing, but he just pulls up the blanket and closes his eyes again. Mija shakes him again and her voice gets louder in repeating, "Get up". Mija cries out, "Why did you do it. Why did

you do it!” Only then Wook gets up and looks at Mija for a while, but he lies again covering up his head with the blanket. Mija tries to take off the blanket forcefully, but she cannot do it.

Wook’s turning his face away from Mija and from Heejin continues. The next morning Mija puts at the dining table Heejin’s picture which she took in the reception area of church. Wook finds it to be a little surprised, but shortly he mindlessly asks Mija to give his breakfast, and he turns on the television as usual.

Wook is not an evil at all. When he plays with neighbor young girls, his humanity and kindness is vividly revealed. What lacks in him is the memory of his numerous encounters with things and others. He radically became forgetful as all human beings experience it at some point of life, mostly in adolescence.<sup>57</sup> Wook has forgotten his pure and honest being, but he has not yet had sound discernment and enough experience to control his desires. In fact, the modern world is not that horrible even though we are unable to think, and it is because we are able to think in the alternative way. Many of us do not commit evil things because we know that it foremost inflicts great damage on ourselves. There is a strong reason not to do evil things because we would eventually pay so much for the cost of it. However, this kind of moral reasoning belongs to slave morality or social morality even though it leads to the identical behavior not to harm others. In this reasoning there is no perception of what is good essentially, but only the calculation to avoid bad situation. It is not to be inclined toward something essential, but to pull back from the unfavorable position. This passive and reactive disposition eventually pulls us back from the essential further and further.

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<sup>57</sup> Sexual harass is somewhat extreme cases of moral blindness of young males, but bullying is a more common problem particularly in the second level of school. It shows that morality is at stake in adolescence, and I suppose that it comes with the alteration of seeing the world. To learn about bullying in the second level of school, see Caravita, S., & Cillessen, A. (2012), Cillessen, A., & Mayeux, L. (2004), Cillessen, A., & Borch, C. (2006).

In *Poetry* another male character represents the forgetfulness. The aged paralytic man that Mija looks after as his part-time maid makes Mija sexually humiliated. He should have been attracted to Mija. He was restless if Mija did not show up on time. He is a stingy man, but he gave her a big tip. He compared Mija's way of talking with the cheerful chirping of skylark. Most of all he did perceive and worry about Mija's heavy feeling which she brought to his place when she became to know that Wook was one of the six boys. He could have developed his feeling for Mija into a true love, but it was not the case. One day the man takes a pill with Mija's help, and it was Viagra. Being ignorant of what sort of pill it is, Mija helps him take a shower as usual. Yet, after a while she is shocked by the man's unusual bodily reaction and gets off from him. The man holding her arm saying, "Before I die, I wanna do it just for once. I don't need anything. Just for once I wanna be a man. It's my wish." Mija throws the towel and his clothe to him and saying "You go dry and dress yourself! No one else will from now on!" This affair shows that he is incapable of thinking. He is an adult, but he behaved like the naughty thoughtless boys who do not think how to deal with their sexual desire. He should have not properly learned thinking for his life. If he could have gathered the beautiful moments with Mija, he would have not reduced her to a sexual object.

Mija quit the job, but one day she returns to the elderly man without notice. She helps him take the pill and has the sexual intercourse with him. This Mija's behavior is very difficult to understood, and the reason is possibly explained to be associated with later happening. Mija has been distressed because of the father's continuous asking her to pay her share of the compensation money. There was no way for Mija, a poor old woman barely making the life, to raise the big amount of money. However, one day she finds that Heejin's mother decided to accept their suggestion. Mija immediately heads to the elder man and asks him to give her the

money. Mija says, “Please, give me 5 million won. I beg. Don’t ask why.” She adds, “I wanna say I’m borrowing the money, but I can’t because I know that I won’t be able to pay back anyway. He responds, “Why should I give you money without a reason?” At that moment the man’s daughter-in-law comes in bringing a brink to Mija, and asks what the issue that Mija brought is. Mija answers, “It’s nothing serious. I just came for the money he owes me.” ... He asks whether it is blackmail. Mija answers, “It doesn’t matter whatever you think, I won’t make any excuses.” Mija eventually hands over the money to the fathers.

Mija’s sexual intercourse with the man might be interpreted to be planned for the sake of blackmail, but it is obviously not a tactic if it is considered that Mija had been at a loss not knowing how to make the money even after the affair with him. Her honest and sincere attitude in asking him for the money also suggests that she cannot help but push him to give her money. Mija is smart enough to think up the way to ask the rich man, and she is so quick-witted to pressure him by saying to his sister-in-law in front of him that he owes some money to her. However, when she returned to him to have sex, she did not bring any other intention than mercy. It was rather a practice of her cultivated *naïveté*. When Mija returned to the man, she was coming from the river where she had an esthetic experience as it was described above. She tried to write a note, but she could not do it, but rain drops filled her empty notebook. The feeling of being fulfilled with the emptiness might lead Mija to her pure being, and thus she could dispel the insulted feeling and listen to the man’s wish in the manner of absolute hospitality. As Dewey emphasizes it, the cultivation of *naïveté* requires severe thought. Severe thought involves emptying the fixed conceptions which make us recognize rather than perceive. Heidegger also emphasized it in saying, “The matter of thinking is always confounding—all the more in proportion as we keep clear of prejudice, we must be ready and willing to listen.” (2004, p.13)

Mija's confounding behavior, the merciful response to the man's wish, demonstrates the most thankful thinking.

Mija's last choice is to report the crime of Wook to the police. When Mija handed over the money to the father, she asked, "Is it all over now totally?" She asks this question not to make sure that the boys' crime is completely concealed but to express her dubious feeling of something still remains to be dealt with. Mija begins to have Wook prepare for what will happen to him. Mija brings him to a pizzeria and order one for him. She tells him to bathe and cut nails.<sup>58</sup> She also lets him know that his mother will come to see him. At home Mija tells him to clean his face and body more carefully in clipping Wook's toenails. She adds, "You should always keep your body clean. A clean body makes a clean mind." Mija and Wook get out and play badminton in front of their apartment building, since her doctor recommends it for her stiff shoulder. At that time Sangtae, a detective and Mija's acquaintance from the poetry recital, and his coworker approach them by a car. While Mija is facing a tree to try to get back the shuttlecock hanging on it, Sangtae's coworker guided Wook to their car, and Sangtae held the racket instead. When Mija gets the shuttlecock and turns back, she finds Wook is riding their car. Santae and Mija continue to play it without saying anything<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> To bathe is traditionally considered by Korean as an essential part of preparation for some special events.

<sup>59</sup> As it was mentioned, in *Poetry* most of male characters represent masculinity posed in the contrast with the poetic which is represented by Mija. Particularly masculinity which is closely linked with sexuality is represented by the boys including Wook and the elderly man who Mija looked after. However, Sangtae is a peculiarly characterized male in *Poetry*. Mija met Sangtae at the poetry recitals, who always presented either his sexual interpretations of poetry or sexual jokes. Mija thought that he was insulting poetry. However, in fact, Sangtae is a good hearted man who was unfairly transferred from Seoul to the rural police station because of his reporting of an internal corruption. His humanity is most manifest in his poetic way of taking Wook away from Mija. It seems to be suggested by Sangtae that a person who appears to be heavily masculine can have the pure mind which enables poetic perception whenever what is essential is close.

Mija might consider that it is the last thing she can try for Wook. She has tried to call on Wook to face the reality, but he has never turned his face toward Mija and Heejin. As a responsible adult, Mija cannot let Wook remain blind and the world either. Mija becomes a pointer pointing what is withdrawing from us by writing a poem which was an assignment by the last day of the poetry class. She was absent in the last class but left her poem, “Agnes’ Song” in the classroom.<sup>60</sup> Yongtak, the teacher starts to read the poem behalf of Mija. The poem is recited in Mija’s voice switched later to Heejin’s. The camera first goes over Mija’s places, her home, the bus stop, etc, and later Heejin’s. It finally arrives at the bridge where Heejin is standing looking down the river. At the last moment, however, Heejin turns around toward us with a lovely smile in her face, and the last line of the poem is recited, “And meet you standing by me”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Heejin’s Christian name was Agnes.

<sup>61</sup> The whole poem is put here.

“Agnes’ Song”

How is it over there?  
How lonely is it?  
Is it still glowing red at sunset?  
Are the birds still singing on the way to the forest?  
Can you receive the letter I dared not send?  
Can I convey  
The confession I dared not make?  
Will time pass and rose fade?  
Now it’s time to say goodbye  
Like the wind that lingers and then goes  
Just like shadows  
To promises that never came,  
To the love sealed till the end  
To the grass kissing my weary ankles  
And to the tiny footsteps following me  
It’s time to say goodbye  
Now as darkness falls  
Will a candle be lit again?  
Here I pray Nobody shall cry

## Conclusion

In *Poetry* Yongtak laments the death of poetry. He says, “The day will come when people no longer read or write poetry anymore.” What does the death of poetry mean to us who live in the world today? As we have seen it, the death of poetry means the decline of a certain kind of human existence characterized best by poetry. The poetic human existence has been long continued even if it doesn’t flourish always. The ever present culture of poetry throughout the human world is the evidence of our poetic existence. Now, however, we confront the most severe crisis of poetry and the crisis of poetic way of human life as well as it is vividly depicted in *Poetry*.

The death of poetry is more radically addressed by a young poet. In *Poetry* a drunken young poet responds to Yongtak’s lament. He bluntly says, “Poetry deserves to die!” He should not mean that poetry and human poetic existence are not worthy to be preserved. What he said might mean that the kind of poetry still alive today is not worthy to be preserved because what is essential in poetry is lacking. Poetry deserves to die because it is not poetic. On the other hand if we consider the intimate relation between poetry and humanity, this desperate comment sounds

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And for you to know how deeply I loved you  
The long wait in the middle of a hot summer day  
An old path resembling my father’s face  
Even the lonesome wild flower shyly turning away  
How deeply I loved  
How my heart fluttered at hearing your faint song  
I bless you  
Before crossing the black river  
With my soul’s last breath  
I am beginning to dream  
A bright sunny morning  
Again I awake  
Blinded by the light  
And meet you standing by me

even more drastic because it is to declare that we deserve to die. Our poetic human existence deserves to perish.

However, if we put his comment in the light of Heidegger, his claim is not necessarily interpreted to express the utter despair. He might mean that the death of poetry is not something to regret. Rather, it is a withdrawal which provokes our thought about it. The death of poetry might be an inevitable historical event which will continue forever. What is up to us is to be drawing toward it, to become a pointer pointing the withdrawal not to fall into the complete oblivion.

Certainly we are in the phase of drastic withdrawal of humanity, but there seems to be not enough pointers pointing it. We can hear the voice concerned about the lack of humanity in modernity, but the voice is not loud enough to let modern people to turn toward it, to be inclined toward it, to devote to it, and to think about it. In this respect we should ask whether we teach and learn poetry and thinking in the way to foster poetic perception and humanity within us. If we devote to this question in a right way, we could be hopeful that many would become pointers as Mija did and that the essential being would turn around toward us someday as Heejin did.

## CHAPTER 7

### Moral blindness and Education

#### Moral perception and moral blindness

As it has been discussed so far, the relation between the perceiver and the perceived is not properly captured in the terms of subject and object because of the key characteristic of perception, being related. Perception is immediate connection between two beings in the level of essence. As Heidegger describes the object of perception as an animated being inclined to us, giving food for thought, withdrawing from us, and the like, what is perceived is not inert being grasped and controlled by the perceiver. Through the immediate mutual inclusion the perceived emerge as a meaningful being to the perceiver. Perception is to receive the other being shares something essential, and it entails a prospect of meaningful interaction. In this respect, perception itself has the moral characteristic to treat the perceived as a significant being or participant for meaningful and valuable engagement.

When what is perceived is human or a situation involving human, perception itself becomes a moral practice because of the inherent property of perception to deal with the perceived human as a meaningful partner situated in the world together. It implies that any situation where human beings should be perceived is a moral situation. However, there are many situations where the perceptive vision is required, but they are not moral situations. For example, for a good interview the interviewer and the interviewee should see each other in the manner of perception as Dewey describes it. (2005, p. 44) Perception in interviews is not primarily a moral perception, since the substance of job interview is to see the functional fitness of the interviewee. Nevertheless, any job interview should be good in terms of morality as well because there is

obviously the moral level in it as long as human beings are involved. In the widest sense, perception of human beings is a moral practice.

To suppose that perception of human beings is itself moral practice seems to be too broad conception to convey the essence of morality, but it actually suggests that perception is a core element of morality. This conception carries some implications about how we consider morally relevant phenomena. For instance, empathy is usually emphasized as a crucial element of morality because it prompts moral practice such as moral judgment and moral action.<sup>62</sup> However, if perception is considered as the essence of morality empathy per se can be taken as a moral practice rather than as an element connected to the more substantial elements of morality, since perceiving other's emotion is possible only on the moral ground of inclusion of the essential being of others. Empathy is not merely what motivates moral activity but an essential moral practice which is accompanied by other moral actions.

Another instance is to perceive human in greeting. Greeting might be considered as a trivial or irrelevant practice from the conventional perspective of morality to consider moral judgment and moral action as the substance of morality. However, greeting is a quintessential moral practice when perception is considered as the key of morality. Perception in greeting is simply to perceive the other as a human being. It is a very instantaneous occurrence, but it is a moment when two human beings are fully revealing their essence to each other to have face-to-face co-existence. Greeting is one of the most primordial human practices between human beings, so that we can greet with strangers who might be from entirely different cultures even if the languages and gestures are different. We can exchange greetings with anyone because all human

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<sup>62</sup> Veltesen's argument which was examined in Chapter 2 is an instance of research emphasizing empathy as the trigger for moral judgment and action.

beings are sharing some essence, in another word, the humanity, which enables the immediate connection to participate in the essential co-existence. Greeting is to perceive others as meaningful and valuable beings, and at the same time it is also to allow the perception of one's own being. Perception is a sort of awareness in the form of resonance. It is to see or feel the property of others within oneself. As Dewey emphasizes, the perceiver's emotional saturation enables the perceiver to see the property echoing in one's own mind. In greeting the essential existence of other is perceived, but it is an opportunity to perceive one's own essential being revealed with that of others.

It would get more plausible that perception of human itself is moral practice and that it forms the foundation of morality if the cases of failure of perception of other human beings are examined. A distinct instance is the citizens' overlooking of the sick man in one of the stories with which this research began. As it was mentioned above, we can perceive the humanity from any one including strangers. However, the citizen overlooked the sick man. They saw the man, but all of them mindlessly passed by him without giving any help, such as making a call to report his situation to the police. They were incapable to perceive the sick man, his humanity which should be cared for and preserved. If they had perceived him as a human being like themselves, they should have had some relevant emotions, distress, pity, and compassion, and tried to help him. What is overlooked by the citizens is not only the poor man but also the citizen's own humanity.

Another instance of failure of moral perception is the boy's seeing of their school bus monitor. It is the case that recognition replaces perception particularly when recognition serves purposes to use others. The failure of moral perception in the boy's seeing is distinguished from the moral blindness of the citizens. The citizens were purely blinded toward the stranger. They

actually saw the sick man, but their seeing of him is the most basic level of recognition to see that there is something, which no further consideration follows. They recognized the man as they would recognize a stone of the street. They saw the man but just went their way to go without any feeling and thinking. On the contrary, the boys saw the bus monitor with full attention, but they regarded her as an instrument to use for their fun.

The boys recognize the bus monitor, a human being, as a means to satisfy their desire. In order to label a human being as something useful, it is necessary to minimize a person to a certain aspect by looking over the humanity. The bullies recognized the lady's mild personality and full figure as good resources for their own amusement, and it also implies that they failed to perceive her respectful humanity that belongs only to the old who have had the long and challenging adventure of life. They should have overlooked her humanity everyday. If they had perceived her, if they had sincerely greeted the ladies everyday on the bus, they would not have been able to use her for their fun. Her full figure would have not been recognized as the trigger for their mockery and ridicule, but instead it would have been considered as a morally relevant fact calling for their moral response, for example, helping her get off the bus. The moral blindness coming from the recognition of the other human being is also observed in the case of rapists in the movie, *Poetry*. If the boys had exchanged sincere greetings with Heejin in their class, they would not have reduced her to their sexual toy.

The mother-in-law's negative vision of her daughter-in-law in Irish Murdoch's example does not seem to be so obvious case of moral failure comparing with the drastic cases of teenage boys' failures of moral perception<sup>63</sup>. However, it is a case of moral failure from the view to

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<sup>63</sup> See p85 in Chapter 4 to recall the story. I will use again the abbreviation of M and D for the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

consider perception as the essence of morality, and moreover it is significant in that it is related to the negative conception of morality which is contrast to the conception of morality presupposing perception.

As it was discussed in Chapter 4, perception and recognition are alternative modes to each other. M was in the situation that M welcomes D as a new family member. Welcoming is a typical practice requires perception to receive a new person sincerely. However, M was taking a negative attitude toward D to recognize her inhospitably. M measures D in a judgmental way rather than in a poetic way to listen to D's humanity. One might bring up a question whether the failure of moral perception comes from M's unfriendly attitude that she might have brought when she met D or from the vision of recognition itself. Recognition itself is not immoral. It is an amoral concept. Moreover, as it was said, without recognition we cannot lead our everyday life. It is even necessary to reduce human beings to some specific side, mostly their functions, as we see people as teachers, bus drivers, cashiers, and so on. However, if there is no particular condition demands the mode of recognition, any recognition of human beings has the possibility to fall into an immoral vision, since recognition tends to prevent perception. M's vision of D is immoral not because M recognizes D but because M recognizes D when she should perceive her. A negative attitude toward human beings cannot stand itself. It invariably goes with recognition to reduce human beings to some partial aspect. Perception of a human being in its nature cannot be a negative discernment, since what we perceive in human beings is the essential being. Considering the nature of recognition and perception to answer the question whether M's failure of moral perception comes from her unfriendly attitude or from the recognition itself prevents perception, the direct cause is the negative attitude. However, the negative attitude is

unexceptionally linked with the recognition of a human being which is no other than the ignorance of humanity.

The argument that M's negative vision of D is immoral should sound very radical or unduly strict. Nobody would be free from moral blame if any negative recognition of others is immoral. Some might maintain that the argument is tenuous in that the discernment of evils is an essential element of morality, which is definitely a sort of negative recognition. It is true that the negative recognition of evildoers is a moral awareness, and the accompanying negative attitude or emotion about bad people is moral too. However, what renders that sort of recognition and emotion moral is perception of humanity which can never be negative. For example, our indignation against Eichmann is the evidence of our morality, but we have that emotion when we perceived the victims, not Eichmann. The negative view of Eichmann and the indignation against him is a secondary cognition and emotion. At the bottom of the indignation there is the perception of humanity.

As it is reiterated, recognition is amoral conception even though there is high possibility that morality is involved when the object of recognition is human beings. What makes us conceive morality in negative terms is rather the negative moral emotion, which could be an effective response in certain moral situations. When we see that humanity is endangered, we become protective of it. Particularly, when the danger is found to be caused by a person, then we express a negative emotion in order to stop the person immediately. However, negative emotions cannot be taken as moral emotions in the original sense because it is a sort of aggression. For example, anger is attack as Spinoza's definition of anger in *Ethics* indicates it. He says, "Anger is the desire, whereby through hatred we are induced to injure one who we hate." (1949, p. 194) We express anger against a person who does something immoral. However, it is to show an

aggressive intention to control the person, and it is possible only when the person is reduced to her negative side, in other words, only when her humanity is ignored. In this respect, negative emotion is not moral in the basic sense even though it can be considered to be moral when it is associated with moral intention to protect the third party.

Nietzsche emphasizes that when what is good is perceived first, what is bad can be discerned afterward. Heidegger also says that evils can be regarded properly only after we are involved in opposite things mysterious and gracious which belong to the realm of essence. Moral perception is to enter the realm of essence with other beings, and it is accompanied by awe, love, and like gracious feelings. As the same origin of thinking and thanking manifests it, to perceive or think of other human beings itself is thankful occurrence, so that there is no place for negative considerations and emotions.

Indeed, there is always unfavorable reality which should be identified. However, when it is recognized within the realm of morality, more precisely saying, when a unfavorable thing, whether it is property or an event, found to be originated from a person, but if her humanity is perceived at the same time, the unfavorable thing will be considered to be worried about or dealt with properly rather than simply avoided or adverse to. So long as the connection between the perceiver and the perceived is established to form the moral ground, even an evildoer will be treated with the intention to preserve or revive her humanity.

Nietzsche expresses his worry about resentment which he considers as the ethos of modern morality as it has been discussed in Chapter 3. As it was argued above, certain negative emotions about people can be taken as moral only if it stems from the fundamental moral perception which is never negative. What Nietzsche is worried about is the case that the authentic ground of morality has been forgotten, and resentment, the inextinguishable negative

emotion replaces it. With the ethos of resentment, morality is conceived as negative recognition and hatred, and the priority is to discern evils on one hand and to avoid to be indicated as an evil on the other hand. In modern times moral discernment has been institutionalized in laws and norms, and morality for individuals is diminished to not doing what is prohibited and merely doing what is obliged. In this conception of morality the identification of immoral occasions is the sufficient mode of moral awareness, and moral perception which requires the essential involvement with others is not necessarily encouraged. In the morally passive milieu our inherent ability to perceive the good and to participate in doing morally good is degenerate as it is manifest in the citizens' moral blindness toward the stranger.

Moral impotence is not simply the display of our ungracefulness, which is not absolutely blamable. As it was mentioned in Chapter 1, there might be a defensive voice to protest innocuousness of non-violent moral blindness. Some might argue that the moral passivity, not to do morally bad actions should take priority over moral activity to do morally good actions, such as altruistic actions. There seems to be two ways to address this reputation. One is to consider moral impotence with regard to human nature, the other with regard to its ineffectiveness to prevent immoral events.

Moral impotence is an unwelcome phenomenon in that it indicates the degeneration of what is essential as Heidegger encapsulates it in withdrawal. What is essential tends to withdraw from us, to be forgotten by us. To be a human being is to become a pointer to keep inclined to what is essential which continuously withdraws from us. We cannot preserve our humanity by never doing inhumane things. Without the continuous participation in beautiful, graceful, lovely, and awesome encounters which is omnipresent but tends to be overlooked by the moderns, we

cannot be distinguished from other amoral being, animals which merely put all the effort to maintain their biological life.

Moral impotence also related to the issue of how to ensure the social safety. We cannot cope with all the vicious occasions which keep arising only by imposing passive morality. Immorality might never be eradicated from the human world as long as intelligence is a human nature. Most of immorality comes from the clever instrumenting of others. It should be acknowledged that there is no way to make human species stop instrumenting other human beings forever. In the cases of bullying of the bus monitor and the rape of Heejin, the boys' use of the old lady and the young girl to satisfy their desire is the manifestation of their cleverness in a certain sense. The radical increase and cunningness of immoral behavior in adolescence could be considered as a developmental feature combined with the intellectual sophistication and overwhelming desires. Considering that immorality also has the substantial ground in human nature, we cannot wish immorality to be suppressed by imposing passivity. It is not effective, and moreover it has the adverse effect to make people morally blinded not to be involved either in morally good or bad situations.

### **Moral education in the world today**

Moral impotence is particularly serious problem in the respect of education. When moral involvement between people is rarely practiced and observed, it affects adversely the next generation's moral development. As it was argued, moral perception is a natural capacity, and the evidence is childhood flourishing with perceptive activities including moral perception. However, if continuous cultivation of moral perception, devotion to perception does not follow, it is debilitated as the oblivion of childhood is natural consequence. As more experience

accumulates, recognition which is the efficient mode of awareness replaces perception, and the ground of morality is also undermined. To retain and strengthen our moral capability it is required to form moral disposition to perceive others rather than recognize, but in the contemporary environment where moral impotence is pervasive, it seems to be hopeless to expect that new generations will naturally develop moral disposition.

About the boys' bullying of the old woman, Charles Blow, a columnist of *The New York Times* writes, "Those boys are us, or at least too many of us: America at its ugliest" (2012 June 23). Blow rightly maintains that we should not make light of it as a minor problem of nasty boys. What the boys did exhibits "America at its ugliest" and our contemporary world at its ugliest as well. All the dreadful immoral behaviors by the youth are more frequently observed in the contemporary world, and it mirrors moderns' moral impotence. We are all in the position responsible for the youths' moral blindness in that we have not established more favorable environment for moral development of the next generation. The modern world has been inclined to other issues than what is essential. While moderns are obsessed with material prosperity and shallow enjoyment, what is essential withdraws further from us, and the new generations are surrounded by higher barriers against graceful encounters.

As it was argued, the essence of morality is found in good people, and it implies that the primary aim of moral education for the next generation is to help them to become good people particularly who can perceive others as human beings. There should be some view to consider that the argument about moral education focusing on moral perception is a limited approach, so that it fails to include some significant points. Some might say, "Emphasizing moral perception is a limited approach to moral education in that it does not apply to some important subject matters, such as environmental and political issues, which could be dealt with from the moral

perspective. We can educate our children to be kind and nice to others, and it is certainly important education to develop good personalities. However, it does not guarantee that they properly consider and act on the global warming issue and the like as a member of human society. There are many morally relevant issues which require our broader vision of the society and the world than seeing others as human beings. A good person could be ignorant of or even disinterested in the ecological or political problems which have enormous influence on our well-being.”

In order to respond to this pretty reasonable concern, it is necessary to recall the last situation that was introduced in Chapter 1, Jack’s failure of moral perception. Jack accepts the argument that meat factory farming is doing cruelty to animals and harmful to nature and to human who eat the meat, but he does not abstain from consuming factory farming meat. This case was introduced to highlight relevant points not included in the other definite cases of moral blindness. One is that moral perception is not restricted to the perception of human beings. The primal object of moral perception is human beings, but it can be extended to the collective existence of human beings which is usually conceived as society. As long as humanity is concerned, good people will be interested in social issues. The object of moral perception can be extended in another direction to the other kind of living beings, such as animals and even broadly the nature. Certain commonality in the substance of living beings allows our perception of animals and the nature in the same way in which we perceive human beings as we have seen the encounter between a person and a tree in Heidegger. When someone thinks that factory farming is doing cruelty to animals, it includes moral perception of animals.

Another important point manifest in Jack’s case is that thinking is urgently required in the contemporary world. Many moral issues in modern ages are like that of factory farming.

Moderns are involved in all the immoral matters which are not plainly visible. We simply buy some meat at the nearest grocery market, but it could be to promote indirectly factory farming which is doing cruelty to animals, the nature, and ourselves as well. There are many well known similar matters that merely continuing our everyday way of life is connected to immoral consequence. To use more and more convenient electronic appliances is related to global warming which threatens the earth, and to buy cheap clothes could be to take part in the exploitation of the labors of some poor countries. Most of modern people have no intention to harm others and the nature, but we are all unexceptionally involved in immoral occurrences merely by belonging to the modern world which entangles people through the complicated and extensive connections.

Some might argue that moral reasoning is required more than moral perception in the contemporary circumstance, since to be able to comprehend the invisible connections is necessary. However, as it is manifest in Jack's case, reasoning itself is not moral practice. It is true that those who have no reasoning ability will not be able to see that factory farming can be a moral issue, but even those like Jack intelligent enough to follow the logical connection cannot see it as a moral issue. What really lacks in Jack is moral perception which is the foundation of morality. When some morally relevant issue is thought about, it is actually considered as a moral matter only if thinking entails perception. In other words, thinking in Heidegger's sense is congruent with morality whereas calculative and manipulative thinking is not. Jack thinks of factory farming in the latter manner. He follows a logical process and arrives at the conclusion that factory farming is bad as if he solves a math problem, but there is no perceptive dimension in his thought. He just deals with some propositions logically, and thus he can state that factory farming is cruel. However, he is not concerned with the conclusion. He forgets about it

immediately, and it does not influence his being at all. If he were really thinking of it, he would be constantly abiding with it and deliberate it in the manner of memory. He might be involved in the real situation, for example, try to find an alternative of factory farming meat and discuss it with others.

It seems that to become a good person, more exactly saying, to maintain and cultivate our natural capability to perceive others is not an easy thing to do in the contemporary world where humanistic engagement is not encouraged. As we get more and more entangled in the worldwide net through the drastic technological advance and the economic globalization, we get more and more isolated within the net. As the physical density of human existence gets higher and higher through the urbanization and the modernization, the relational density gets lower and lower. In the highly institutionalized, technology-dependant, and individualized societies the necessity to perceive others and the world in general is relatively scarce. In the contemporary world where the simple and convenient act of recognition is sufficient for sustaining our life our perceptual ability is always exposed to the danger to degenerate into mere recognition, and moral ability inevitably degenerate as well.

Schools do not seem to be exceptional spaces. Students gather in school, but school is not the space for face-to-face encounter. As it was mentioned above, if the perceptive encounter among students were encouraged in schools, the immoral treatment, such as bullying would hardly occur. Not only the perception of others, but also perception in general is not encouraged in school. The standardized test which is the dominant mode of assessment in schooling is an indication. The standardized test is the way to objectify the students' achievement by score, which cannot assess the perceptive ability. This fact indicates that perception is not acknowledged as an important way of knowing in school today. In overemphasizing academic

achievement only measurable by score, authentic growth is neglected, and moral growth is hindered too. It seems that it is the time to ask the fundamental questions. What kind of thinking is taught today in school?

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