

## Chapter 1

# Joy (*le* 樂)

## “Why Be Moral?”

### 1. Introduction

The question “Why be moral?” has long troubled moral philosophers. The question is puzzling, because it does not ask, Why should *we* be moral? which is relatively easy to answer. For example, we can use Thomas Hobbes’s argument: if we are not moral to each other, we will be living in the state of nature, in which everyone is at war against everyone else. The question is, Why should *I* be moral? Put more concretely, it is, Why should I be moral to others, particularly if my not being moral to others will not cause them to be equally or even more immoral to me? Obviously, this is a question raised by an egoist who is first of all concerned with his or her self-interest.<sup>1</sup> To such a question, we might be tempted to answer: If everyone, just like you, acts immorally to others, thinking that acting immorally will not cause others to be equally immoral, then everyone will act immorally to each other; as a result you will also be treated immorally by others; so you should be moral to others. However, such an answer is obviously not convincing to the person who poses the question: even if this were the case, since at least my being moral to others cannot guarantee that others will be moral to me, why should I be moral to them? It would certainly be much worse to me if I am moral to others while they are immoral to me.<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, I first examine the legitimacy of the question (section 2) and the inadequacy of some representative answers to the question in the West (section 3). I then devote the rest

of this chapter to presenting what seems to me a more adequate answer to the question provided by the Cheng brothers (sections 4–7). I conclude this chapter with a brief summary of this neo-Confucian answer.

## 2. The Question of “Why Be Moral?”

As absurd as it might appear, this question has been repeatedly posed, rather seriously, in the history of Western philosophy. In the form of “Why should I be just,” it was put most sharply by Glaucon and his brother Adimantus, as devil’s advocates, in Plato’s *Republic*. Glaucon presents his famous example of Gyges’s ring, a ring that one can use to make oneself visible or invisible at will. Suppose that there are two such rings, with one for a just person and one for an unjust person. On the one hand, the unjust person uses the ring to make himself invisible when doing unjust things and visible when doing just things. This is because, in Glaucon’s example, the unjust person is not someone who consistently does unjust things or does nothing but unjust things. Rather,

the unjust man must act as clever craftsmen do. . . . The unjust man who attempts injustice rightly must be supposed to escape detection if he is to be altogether unjust, and we must regard the man who is caught as a bungler. For the height of injustice is to seem just without being so. To the perfectly unjust man, then, we must allow him, while committing the greatest wrongs, to have secured for himself the greatest reputation for justice, and if he does happen to trip, we must concede to him the power to correct his mistakes by his ability to speak persuasively if any of his misdeeds come to light. (Plato 1963b, 361a–b)

On the other hand, the just person uses the ring to turn himself invisible when doing just things and visible when not doing just things. This is because

if he [the just man] is going to be thought just he will have honors and gifts because of that esteem. We cannot be sure in that case whether he is just for justice’ sake or for the sake of the gifts and the honors. So we must strip him bare of everything but injustice and make his state the opposite of his imagined counterpart. Though doing no wrong he must have the repute of the greatest injustice, so that he may be put to the test as regards justice through not

softening because of ill repute and the consequences thereof. But let him hold on his course unchangeable even unto death, seeming all his life to be unjust though being just. (Plato 1963b, 361c)

In short, if an unjust or immoral person can have the appearance of being just or moral, and a just or moral person can have the appearance of being unjust or immoral, an egoist will ask, “Why should I be just or moral?” Here, as Glaucon’s brother, Adimantus, points out, it seems that injustice pays much better than justice: “[T]he consequences of my being just are, unless I likewise seem so, not assets, they say, but liabilities, labor, and total loss, but if I am unjust and have procured myself a reputation for justice, a godlike life is promised” (Plato 1963b, 365b).

This same question was later raised again by Thomas Hobbes’s “irresponsible fool” and David Hume’s “sensible knave.” In Hobbes’s *Leviathan*, unsatisfied with their life in the state of nature, in which no one has security, people as rational beings will follow some general rules of reason or laws of nature. The first law is that people ought to endeavor to make peace, and the second law is that they ought to make covenants with each other, in which they mutually agree to lay down some of their natural rights or liberties. It is at this stage that the “irresponsible fool” comes to the scene. He “hath said in his heart there is no such thing as justice, and sometimes also with his tongue, seriously alleging that every man’s conservation and contentment, being committed to his own care, there could be no reason why every man might not do what he thought conduced thereunto; and therefore also to make or not make, keep or not keep, covenants was not against reason when it conduced to one’s benefit” (Hobbes 1998, 15.4). The question the fool has is whether he should honor the covenant he has made with others or whether it is irrational for him not to honor it. His answer is that it is rational for him to honor as well as break the covenant, as long as the action he takes in either case conduces to his benefit, since the “reason,” as the fool understands it, “dictates to every man his own good; and particularly then when it conduces to such a benefit as shall put a man in a condition to neglect not only the dispraise and revilings, but also the power, of other men” (Hobbes 1998, 15.4). Here the fool’s reasoning is this: since it is reasonable to seek one’s own good, what reason do I have to (why should I) keep the covenant (be moral)?

Hume argues for moral virtues from self-interest or self-love (see Baldwin 2004): virtues are beneficial to those who possess them, while vices are harmful to those who are inflicted by them. For example, Hume argues that “avarice, ambition, vanity, and all passions vulgarly, though improperly, comprised under

the denomination of *self-love* are here excluded from our theory concerning the origin of morals, not because they are too weak, but because they have not a proper direction for that purpose” (Hume 1957, 92–93). In other words, they are considered vices not because they are expressions of *self-love*, but precisely because they cannot serve the purpose of self-love. Just like such “monkish virtues” as celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, humility, silence, and solitude, which Hume thinks should be placed in the catalogues of vices, they “serve to no manner of purpose; neither advance a man’s fortune in the world, nor render him a more valuable member of society; neither qualify him for the entertainment of company, nor increase his power of self-enjoyment[.] We observe, on the contrary, that they cross all these desirable ends, stupefy the understanding and harden the heart, obscure the fancy and sour the temper” (Hume 1957, 91).

He goes on to argue that “the immediate feeling of benevolence and friendship, humanity and kindness is sweet, smooth, tender, and agreeable, independent of all fortune and accidents. . . . What other passion is there where we shall find so many advantages: an agreeable sentiment, a pleasing consciousness, a good reputation?” (Hume 1957, 102). So he thinks that it is superfluous to prove that “the virtues which are immediately *useful* or *agreeable* to the person possessed of them are desirable in a view to self-interest” (Hume 1957, 100). Hume regards such virtues as natural in contrast to justice and fidelity, which he regards as artificial. The main distinction between natural and artificial virtues is that, while one immediately feels that the former are beneficial to oneself, one does not have such a feeling of the latter. For example, a person who borrowed money from others does not feel naturally that it serves his self-interest to return the money. So in the case of artificial virtues, “’tis certain, that self-love, when it acts at its liberty, instead of engaging us to honest actions, is the source of all injustice and violence; nor can a man ever correct those vices, without correcting and restraining the *natural* movements of that appetite” (Hume 1978, 480). To make such correction and restraining, Hume argues that such artificial virtues are not only “absolutely necessary to the well-being of mankind” (Hume 1957, 121), but also to the well-being of each individual. To show this, he makes an interesting analogy: “[T]he same happiness, raised by the social virtue of justice and its subdivisions, may be compared to the building of a vault where each individual stone would, of itself, fall to the ground; nor is the whole fabric supported but by the mutual assistance and combination of its corresponding parts” (Hume 1957, 121). Here, by being part of the building, each stone not only contributes to support the vault but is also being supported by other stones making up the vault. By analogy, by being

just, an individual not only contributes to the well-being of mankind but also serves his or her own well-being. It is in this sense that Hume thinks that the artificial virtues ultimately can also be justified by self-love.

It is also here, however, that Hume conceives the possibility of a sensible knave, who, “in particular incidents, may think that an act of iniquity or infidelity will make a considerable addition to his fortune, without causing any considerable breach in the social union and confederacy. That *honesty is the best possible policy* may be a good general rule, but is liable to many exceptions; and he, it may perhaps be thought, conducts himself with most wisdom, who observes the general rule, and takes advantage of all the exceptions” (Hume 1957, 102). In other words, the sensible knave agrees that acts of justice and fidelity generally contribute to both the well-being of mankind and that of himself. However, there are exceptions. On the one hand, as Hume himself acknowledges, sometimes justice does not contribute to the well-being of mankind. For example, “riches inherited from a parent are in a bad man’s hand the instrument of mischief. The right of succession may, in one instance, be hurtful” (Hume 1957, 121). On the other hand, similarly, sometimes violation of justice may better contribute to one’s fortune, especially when such violations are done wisely so that they will not be found out. So the sensible knave will be just only when it serves his self-interest but will take all opportunities of injustice when such injustices better serve his self-interest.

Understood this way, the question “Why be moral?” has often been regarded as absurd and can be safely ignored. Stephen Toulmin, for example, thinks that this question reaches “the limits of ethical reasoning—that is, the kind of occasion on which questions and considerations of an ethical kind can no longer arise” (Toulmin 1964, 160). In his view, “ethical reasoning may be able to show why we ought to do this action as opposed to that, or advocate this social practice as opposed to that,” but “there is no room *within* ethics for” the question “why ought one to do what is right.” To be moral is to do what I should do; and to ask, “Why should I be moral?” is to ask, “Why should I do what I should do?” which is “on a level with the question ‘Why are all scarlet things red?’” (Toulmin 1964, 162). In other words, for Toulmin, the question “Why should I be moral?” just like the question “Why are all scarlet things red?” is a tautological question. To answer this question, we can only ask a rhetorical question, “What else ‘ought’ one to do?” (Toulmin 1964, 162), just like the answer to the question “Why are scarlet things red?” can only be a rhetorical question: “[W]hat else can scarlet things be?”<sup>3</sup>

While Toulmin regards this question as illegitimate because it is tautological, F. H. Bradley considers it unreasonable because it is self-contradictory:

morality asks us to be not self-interested, but the person who asks the question “Why should I be moral?” is apparently looking for some self-interested reasons for being not self-interested. In his view, when we ask the question of why be moral, we are regarding morality as a means to some further end, but morality is the end in itself. He argues that “to take virtue as a mere means to an ulterior end is in direct antagonism to the voice of the moral consciousness. That consciousness, when unwarped by selfishness and not blinded by sophistry, is convinced that to ask for the Why? is simply immorality; to do good for its own sake is virtue, to do it for some ulterior end or object, not itself good, is never virtue; and never to act but for the sake of an end, other than doing well and right, is the mark of vice” (Bradley 1935, 61–62).<sup>4</sup>

Is then the question “Why should I be moral?” indeed an unreasonable one? Here, morality tells one what one should do. When we ask people to be moral, we are essentially saying that “you should follow morality”; in other words, we are saying that “you should do what you should do.” So when someone asks the question “Why should I be moral?” the person is indeed asking “Why should I do what I should do?” However, this is not a tautological question. Kai Nielsen makes an important distinction between the moral and nonmoral uses of the word “should.” While the second “should” is indeed used in the moral sense, the first is used in a nonmoral sense. Thus, Nielsen points out:

When I ask, “Why should I be moral?” I am not asking . . . “What moral reason or reasons have I for being moral?” That indeed is like asking “Why are all scarlet things red?” Rather I am asking, can I, everything considered, give a reason sufficiently strong—a non-moral reason clearly—for my always giving an overriding weight to moral considerations, when they conflict with other considerations, such that I could be shown to be acting irrationally, or at least less rationally than I otherwise would be acting, if I did not give such pride of place to moral considerations? (Nielsen 1989, 286–87)

In other words, the question “Why should I be moral?” asks “whether it is rational for me to be moral,” assuming it is a good thing to be moral. However, if this is the case, does this mean that the question “Why should I be moral?” is indeed a self-contradictory question? In appearance it is. Bill Shaw and John Corvino agree with Nielsen’s distinction between moral and nonmoral uses of the word “should.” In their view,

when people ask, “Why should I be moral?” they are not asking “Why (morally) ought I to do what I (morally) ought to do?” Such a question clearly would be circular. Rather, they are asking, “Why is it in my interest to do what I (morally) ought to do?,” “What (non-moral) reasons are there for acting morally?” or “Why should moral claims have any purchase on me in the first place?” (“should” is used here in a non-moral sense). Put in these ways, the question is quite intelligible. (Shaw and Corvino 1996, 374)

According to Shaw and Corvino, the first “should” asks what *self-interested* reasons I have to do what I ought to do. Since what I ought to do is something not self-interested, the question “Why should I be moral?,” that is, “What self-interested reasons do I have to be not self-interested?” becomes a self-contradictory question. David Copp, however, disagrees. In his view, to ask, “What self-interested reasons do I have to be moral (to be not self-interested)?” is to ask, “Does morality override self-interest? Or does self-interest override morality?” Here, Copp assumes that “there are possible cases in which the overall verdicts of morality and self-interest conflict” and claims that “the conflict between morality and self-interest in conflict cases is therefore a normative conflict; it is conflict between the overall verdicts of different normative standpoints. I take it that the question of whether morality overrides self-interest is the question of whether the verdicts of morality are *normatively more important* than the verdict of self-interest” (Copp 1997, 86). I agree with Nielsen and Copp that the question “Why should I be moral” is neither tautological nor self-contradictory. It is a legitimate question. However, given the simple fact that whoever asks the question does not have the inclination to be moral, I shall emphasize the distinction between moral justification and moral motivation. In its extended form, “Why should I do what I should do (follow a moral principle)?” the first “should” is not intended to provide a justification for the second “should” (the moral principle). Otherwise, the moral principle would become something merely instrumental. Instead, the question “Why should I be moral?” or the first “should” in its extended form, really concerns the issue of moral motivation. The person who asks the question is not a moral skeptic. She knows clearly that she should be moral but lacks the motivation to be so. A person who is motivated to be moral will never ask the question “Why should I be moral?” Understood this way, the question really asks, “What motivation(s) do or can I have to be moral?” and this seems to me a perfectly legitimate question.

### 3. Representative Answers in Western Philosophy and Their Inadequacies

In the history of Western philosophy, many attempts have been made to provide a satisfactory answer to the question of why be moral. As the question was raised in Plato, Hobbes, and Hume by their respective antagonists, it is most fruitful to see how they, as protagonists, try to answer this question respectively.

First, let us take a look at the answer Plato provides to Glaucon's question in his *Republic*. From our above discussion, it is clear that, in posing the question "Why should I be just?" Glaucon knows that a person should be just; what he is concerned with is that the person is not necessarily motivated to be just. In response, Plato argues that it pays to be moral or just. This response starts with a definition of justice in a person, which is based on his analogy with justice in a state. Just as a state has three classes—economic, military, and governing—one's soul also has three parts—appetitive, spirited, and rational. Here to the appetitive belongs the desire for the pleasures of nutrition and generation (Plato 1963b, 436a). Sometimes one desires something and yet refuses to have the desire satisfied, which shows that our soul has something that masters such desires. This is its rational part, by which the soul reckons and reasons (Plato 1963b, 439d). To the spirited belongs one's feeling of anger, which becomes an ally of reason when reason is in conflict with desires (Plato 1963b, 440b). Now, just as justice in a state means that each class does and does only its respective job, Plato argues that "each of us also in whom the several parts within him perform each their own work—he will be a just man" (Plato 1963b, 441e).

With such a conception of justice in hand, Plato continues to argue why justice pays or in what sense a just person is happier than an unjust person. In relation to the three aspects of the soul, Plato mentions that there are three kinds of pleasure: (1) when the appetitive part controls the soul (which is injustice, as it should obey the rational part), there is a pleasure of profit, in comparison with which "the pleasures of the honor or of learning are of no value except in so far as they produce money" (Plato 1963b, 581d); (2) when the spirited part controls the soul (which is also injustice, as it should assist reason to control desires), there is only the pleasure of honor, in comparison with which the pleasure of profit is vulgar and low, while "that of learning, save in so far as the knowledge confers honor, [is] mere fume and moonshine" (Plato 1963b, 581d); (3) when the rational part controls the soul (which is justice, as this is its proper job), "the other pleasures compared with the delight of knowing the truth and the reality" are regarded as "far removed from true

pleasure” and are called “literally the pleasures of necessity” (Plato 1963b, 581e). Now among these three pleasures, Plato argues that the last pleasure, the pleasure from a just person, is the genuine pleasure, because

all our actions and words should tend to give the man [reason] within us complete domination over the entire man and make him take charge of the many-headed beast [the other parts of the soul]—like a farmer who cherishes and trains the cultivated plants but checks the growth of the wild—and he will make an ally of the lion’s nature, and caring for all beasts alike will first make them friendly to one another and to himself, and so foster their growth. (Plato 1963b, 589a–b)

However, pleasures of injustice are not genuine pleasure, as by accepting such pleasures, one “enslaves the best part of himself to the worst . . . the most divine part of himself to the most despicable and godless part” (Plato 1963b, 589d–e).

David Sachs argues that there is a serious problem with Plato’s argument. In his view, even if a just person in Plato’s sense is indeed a happy person, it is not clear whether such a just person, a person the several parts of whose soul perform their respective tasks, is a just person in the common or vulgar sense, which Glaucon has in mind (Plato 1963b, 442d–443b): a person who does not perform such acts as temple robbing, kidnapping, swindling, embezzling, stealing, betraying, behaving sacrilegiously, breaking promises, committing adultery, neglecting parents. For this reason, Sachs claims that Plato’s argument commits a fallacy of irrelevance. In his view, in order to establish his thesis that justice pays to counter Glaucon’s thesis that injustice pays, first, Plato “has to prove that his conception of the just man precludes behavior commonly judged immoral or criminal; that is, he must prove that the conduct of his just man also conforms to the ordinary or vulgar canons of justice. Second, he has to prove that his conception of the just man applies to—is exemplified by—every man who is just according to vulgar conception” (Sachs 1963, 12–153). Sachs argues that Plato “met neither requirement; nor is it plausible to suppose that he could have met either of them” (Sachs 1963, 153).<sup>5</sup>

Here I agree with many other Plato scholars (see Vlastos, Mahoney, Dahl, and Demos) that Plato does argue that a just person in his sense must also be a just person in the vulgar sense, although he does not provide a watertight proof for it. For example, immediately after he presents his conception of justice as harmonious function of the tripartite soul in book 4, Plato relates it to its “commonplace and vulgar” definition and argues that a

just person in his sense would not, when entrusted with a deposit of gold or silver, “withhold it and embezzle it,” would “be far removed from sacrilege and theft and betrayal of comrades in private life or of the state in public,” “would not be in any way faithless either in the keeping of his oaths or in other agreements,” and would have nothing to do with “adultery . . . and neglect of parents and of the due service of the gods” (Plato 1963b, 442e–443a). At the end of this list, Plato makes it clear that the cause of all these is “to be found in the fact that each of the principles within him does its own work in the matter of ruling and being ruled” (Plato 1963b, 443b). In other words, one’s being just in the vulgar sense is due to one’s being just in the Platonic sense.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, at the end of book 9, Plato has a more direct counterargument to Glaucon’s claim that injustice pays. He argues that it does not pay for a person to escape detection in wrongdoing as “he who evades detection becomes a still worse man, while in the one who is discovered and chastened the brutish part is lulled and tamed and the gentle part liberated, and the entire soul, returning to its nature at the best, attains to a much more precious condition in acquiring sobriety and righteousness together with wisdom” (Plato 1963b, 591B).

The problem with Plato’s answer lies elsewhere. Assume that it is true that Plato thinks that a just person in his sense is also a just person in the common sense; also assume that Plato has provided a convincing argument for this. We are left with the question: How can one be a just person in Plato’s sense, that is, how can one achieve a harmonious soul? Richard Kraut argues that this right psychological condition “consists in a receptivity to the valuable objects that exists independently of oneself” (Kraut 1992, 329). By such valuable objects Kraut means “forms—those eternal, changeless, imperceptible, and bodiless objects the understanding of which is the goal of the philosopher’s education . . . [I]t is precisely because of the philosopher’s connection with these abstract objects that the philosophical life is superior to any other” (Kraut 1992, 317). In other words, philosopher is “the paradigm of the just person” (Kraut 1992, 332). If this is the case, then to be just requires one to be a philosopher. The question is then whether everyone can become a philosopher, as we expect everyone to be just. It is here that we have a problem with Plato. As Vlastos points out, “if Plato thought psychic harmony a necessary condition of a morally just disposition, he must have thought the latter attainable only by the people of his ideal state and, in the present world, by Platonic philosophers and their moral dependents; and this would cut out the vast majority of our fellow-men, all of whom are expected to be justly” (Vlastos 1987, 138). This is precisely what Plato has repeatedly argued for. For example, he claims

that a nature “for the perfect philosopher is a rare growth among men and is found in only a few” (Plato, 491a–b) and that “philosophy, then, as the love of wisdom, is impossible for the multitude” (Plato 1963b, 494a). Moreover, in Plato’s view, this is not a problem to which education or environment alone can provide a solution, for philosophers must not only be well bred but also well born (Plato 1963b, 496b). If this is the case, then Plato cannot be thought as having provided an appropriate answer to Glaucon’s question “Why should I be just?” as the person who asks the question is obviously not a philosopher and is unlikely to become one and therefore can never enjoy the pleasure the Platonic just person can.

Next, let us take a look at Hobbes’s response to the irresponsible fool. At the end of the paragraph of his description of the fool’s argument, Hobbes says that the fool’s “specious reasoning is nevertheless false” (Hobbes 1998, 15.4). While the fool thinks it is reasonable for him to break the covenant as long as doing so is to his benefit, Hobbes thinks that it is against reason. As a matter of fact, Hobbes discusses the fool’s argument in his attempt to establish the third natural law, “men perform their covenants made” (Hobbes 1998, 15.1). Since his natural law is the law that humans will naturally follow in light of their reason, if it is the light of reason to perform the covenants made, it must be against reason to break it. In Rosamond Rhodes’s view, Hobbes here makes a distinction between “reason” and “Reason.” When the fool argues that it is reasonable to break the covenants, it is the lowercase “reason”; while when Hobbes argues that it is Reasonable to perform the covenants, it is the uppercase “Reason.” I think this is an important distinction, similar to the one between “rational” (“reason”) and “reasonable” (“Reason”) made by John Rawls (see Rawls 1996, 48–54). It is rational (in the sense of a means adequate for an end) for the fool to break the covenant, but it is reasonable (in the sense of considering others’ interests) for people to perform the covenants. However, Hobbes tries to argue that the fool’s not performing the covenants made is not only unreasonable (against Reason) but also irrational (against reason). While Rhodes thinks that Hobbes succeeds in making this argument (see Rhodes 1992), I shall argue that he fails to do so.

First, Hobbes argues that “when a man doth a thing which notwithstanding anything can be foreseen and reckoned on tends to his destruction, howsoever some accident which he could not expect, arriving may turn to his benefit, yet such events do not make it reasonably or wisely done” (Hobbes 1998, 15.5). Here Hobbes thinks that the fool, in breaking the covenants made, is knowingly doing something that can be foreseen to tend to his own destruction, although by accident it may bring him benefits. For this reason, the fool

is not reasonable or wise. This argument is certainly weak, for not only does the fool not think that, by not performing the covenants made, he is doing something that tends to his destruction, but as a matter of fact, as Bernard Boxill has powerfully argued, one's immoral action more often than not does bring him benefits (see Boxill 1980). Second, Hobbes argues,

in a condition of war, wherein every man to every man, for want of a common power to keep them all in awe, is an enemy there is no man who can hope by his own strength or wit to defend himself from destruction without the help of confederates; where every one expects the same defence by the confederation that any one else also does; and therefore he which declares he thinks it reason to deceive those that help him can in reason expect no other means of safety than what can be had from his own single power. (Hobbes 1998, 15.5)

Here, Hobbes's argument fails too. Apparently, Hobbes argues that the fool is "unReasonable" in the sense that he only expects help from others but does not want to help others; instead he wants to cause harm to them. However, the fool holds an instrumental conception of rationality and so it is "reasonable" (with lower "r") or rational (in Rawls's sense) for him to get help from those whom he deceives, as long as he can (i.e., his means serve his ends).

Hobbes provides another reason to argue that the fool is not only "unReasonable" but also "unreasonable" or "irrational" in his not performing covenants made:

He therefore that breaks his covenant, and consequently declares that he thinks he may with reason do so, cannot be received into any society that unite themselves for peace and defence but by the error of them that receive him; nor, when he is received, be retained in it without seeing the danger of their error; which errors a man cannot reasonably reckon upon as the means of his security; and therefore, if he be left or cast out of society, he perishes, and if he lives in society, it is by the errors of other men which he could not foresee nor reckon upon, and consequently against the reason of his preservation; and so, as all men that contribute not to his destruction, forbear him only out of ignorance of what is good for themselves. (Hobbes 1998, 15.5)

Hobbes's main argument here is that the fool's success (that his means [breaking the covenants] can serve his goal [conducing to his benefits]) entirely relies upon his not being found breaking the covenants. In Hobbes's view, here the fool overestimates his ability to deceive others and underestimates others' ability to detect his deception, and this is irrational: They are

prone to all such Crimes, as consist in Craft, and in deceiving of their neighbors; because they think their designs are too subtle to be perceived. These I say are effects of a false presumption of their own wisdom. . . . Those that deceive upon hope of not being observed, do commonly deceive themselves (the darkness in which they believe they lye hidden, being nothing else but their own blindness) and are no wiser than Children, that think all hid, by hiding their own eyes. (Hobbes 1998, 27.16)

Of course, if the fool will do nothing but immoral things and still hope that they will not be found, he is indeed not only unReasonable but also irrational. However, the fool obviously does not always break the covenants he made. He does so only when he is quite sure that he will not be found.

Let us now examine Hume's answer to the sensible knave. At the beginning, Hume seems to think that the question raised by the sensible knave is not worthy of responding: "[I]f a man think that this reasoning much requires an answer, it would be a little difficult to find any which will to him appear satisfactory and convincing. If his heart rebel not against such pernicious maxims, if he feel no reluctance to the thoughts of villainy or baseness, he has indeed lost a considerable motive to virtue" (Hume 1957, 102–03). However, he does provide several answers. First, Hume argues that knaves, "with all their pretended cunning and abilities, [are] betrayed by their own maxims; and while they purpose to cheat with moderation and secrecy, a tempting incident occurs, nature is frail, and they give into the snare; hence they can never extricate themselves, without a total loss of reputation, and the forfeiture of all future trust and confidence with mankind" (Hume 1957, 103). This answer is weak, to say the least. As we have seen, sensible knaves follow moral principles in general cases and only take exceptions when they are doing immoral things. These exceptions are obviously the occasions where the sensible knave finds it safe to be immoral, so it will not cause "any considerable breach in the social union and confederacy." It is thus unlikely that he will lose reputation or trust

by others. Hume's reply assumes that whenever one does something unjust, one will be found out, but this is obviously not the case.<sup>7</sup>

What we say here also applies to Hume's second criticism of sensible knaves. In Hume's view, sensible knaves

themselves are, in the end, the greatest dupes, and have sacrificed the invaluable enjoyment of a character, with themselves at least, for the acquisition of worthless toys and gewgaws. How little is requisite to supply the necessities of nature? And in a view to pleasure, what comparison between the unbought satisfaction of conversation, society, study, even health and the common beauties of nature, but above all the peaceful reflection on one's own conduct; what comparison, I say, between these and the feverish, empty amusements of luxury and expense? These natural pleasures, indeed, are really without price; both because they are below all price in their attainment, and above it in their enjoyment. (Hume 1957, 103)

Here, Hume tries to argue that, in comparison with satisfaction of conversation, society, study, even health and the common beauties of nature, and peaceful reflection on one's own conduct, what the sensible knave can get by being immoral are simply worthless toys and gewgaws and feverish, empty amusement of luxury and expense. This argument is also problematic. On the one hand, what the sensible knave gains through his immoral actions are certainly not what Hume regards as worthless, as otherwise they would not be motivated to be immoral. On the other hand, since the sensible knave keeps his immoral actions secret and so still has an appearance of being moral, he may still be able to have all the valuable things Hume thinks a moral person can have, except perhaps the last item, the "peaceful reflection on one's own conduct," which I will discuss in relation to Hume's next criticism.

Hume sees a third problem with the sensible knave: "[I]n all ingenuous natures, the antipathy to treachery and roguery is too strong to be counter-balanced by any views of profit or pecuniary advantage. Inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of our own conduct; these are circumstances, very requisite to happiness, and will be cherished and cultivated by every honest man, who feels the importance of them" (Hume 1957, 103).<sup>8</sup> Here, Hume makes another list of good things requisite to happiness but unavailable to someone who performs immoral things: peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, satisfactory review of one's own conduct. They are indeed significantly different from the things on the list of Hume's second

criticism. As we have seen, by hiding his immoral actions and presenting an appearance of being moral, the sensible knave can still obtain things on the previous list. In contrast, the things listed here are not available to the sensible knave, since they are all related to his inner life. While the knave can hide his immoral actions from others, he cannot hide them from himself. It is in this sense that I disagree with Postema, who argues that the successful knave can also enjoy these things (Postema 1988, 34). In my view, the problem with Hume's criticism here lies rather in his assumption that the sensible knave cares about such things. A person will care about these things only if he still has some conscience. However, as Hume himself acknowledges, the sensible knave does not have a heart that rebels against pernicious maxims, so he feels no reluctance to the thoughts of villainy or baseness.

In addition to Plato, Hobbes, and Hume, of course, many other philosophers have tried to answer the same question of "Why be moral?" either directly or indirectly. Among them Aristotle and Kant are most representative. I shall discuss the Aristotelian answer in section 6. In the remainder of this section, I shall briefly examine the one provided by Kant. Moral motivation or, rather, motivation for morality, is a particularly pressing issue for Kant. He makes a clear distinction between morality and inclination, whose satisfaction happiness is (Kant 1956a, 75–76). In his view, the moral worth of an action is entirely independent of one's inclination. Thus he claims that

there are many spirits of so sympathetic a temper that . . . they find an inner pleasure in spreading happiness around them and can take delight in the contentment of others as their own work. Yet I maintain that in such a case an action of this kind, however right and however amiable it may be, has still no genuinely moral worth; suppose that the mind of this friend of man were overclouded by sorrows of his own which extinguished all sympathy with the fate of others, but that he still had power to help those in distress, though no longer stirred by the need of others because sufficiently occupied with his own; and suppose that, when no longer moved by any inclination, he tears himself out of this deadly insensibility and does the action without any inclination for the sake of duty alone; then for the first time his action has its genuine moral worth. (Kant 1956b, 66)

Kant provides two pictures of actions in consistence with duty: one is the person who acts from a natural inclination but not from a sense of duty; the

other is the person who acts from a sense of duty but not from an inclination. Since he claims that only the action from the sense of duty has moral value, it is clear that the moral value comes from one's sense of duty and not from one's inclination. Of course Kant also allows an action both from one's inclination and one's duty to have moral value, although, even in this case, the moral value still comes from the sense of duty and not from the inclination. What the coincidental inclination adds is merely the delight one may have in performing the moral action.<sup>9</sup>

So, in Kant's case, for those spirits of sympathetic temper, the issue of moral motivation does not exist: whatever they are inclined to do is precisely what they morally ought to do. However, for most people, what they morally ought to do is often not what they are inclined to do, and what they are inclined to do is often not what they morally ought to do. For such people, "Why should I be moral" becomes a very natural question. If this question is not answered, even if people know what they ought to do, they will not be motivated to do what is moral. For this reason, Kant developed the idea of the highest good (*summum bonum*), which includes both morality and happiness (satisfaction of inclination). However, since morality does not imply happiness, nor does happiness imply morality, either synthetically or analytically, Kant has to postulate the existence of God to cause the harmony between happiness and morality and an immortal soul through which such harmony can be maintained. About this, Kant says very clearly that "without a God and without a world invisible to us now but hoped for, the glorious ideas of morality are indeed objects of approval and admiration, but not springs of purpose and action" (Kant 1965, 640).<sup>10</sup>

Kant's answer is unsatisfactory. As many philosophers have seen, one problem lies in his problematic postulation of God. In this respect, Kai Nielsen makes the most vehement criticism:

It is increasingly difficult for an educated modern even to believe in God, to say nothing of making him such a *deau ex machine*. . . . Yet for the sake of the argument let us assume . . . that we have an appropriate sense of "God" and let us assume that we have some evidence that there is an X such that X is God. Even making these assumptions, it does take the utmost vanity and the epitome of self-delusion to believe that such a Being could be so concerned with our weal and woe. And to postulate God *because* of his practical necessity or to postulate immortality to try to insure a justification of morality is just too convenient. (Nielsen 1989, 177)<sup>11</sup>

However, it seems to me that a more serious problem with Kant's answer is that, even in his idea of "highest good," happiness and morality are still two separate things: a person who does moral things may still feel unhappy and may still have to overcome his contrary inclination. Here it remains a question whether, for a person who does not have the inclination to be moral, a future reward of happiness is a strong enough motivation to be moral.

In the above, we have examined some representative answers to the question "Why be moral?" Having seen that none of them is adequate, it is tempting to claim that the question, while a legitimate one, is simply unanswerable. Meldon, for example, argues that "for a thoroughly amoral intelligence, nothing in principle can serve as a reason for *inducing* him to accept any moral responsibilities. Metaphysical elaborations, logical arguments, empirical generalizations and data and, finally, all moral discourse with its lavish, complex, and ingenious devices of persuasion are wholly inadequate. No reasons are possible" (Meldon 1948, 455). Copp agrees on this. As we have seen, in Copp's view, the question "Why be moral?" is really a question about self-interest and morality. However, he points out, "neither morality nor self-interest overrides the other. . . . There is no standpoint that can claim normative priority over all other normative standpoints and render a definitive verdict on the relative significance of moral and self-interested reason" (Copp 1997, 86–87). Although Nielsen tries very hard to show that the question "Why be moral?" is a legitimate one, at the end, he is also pessimistic about an adequate answer to it: "We have not been able to show that reason requires the moral point of view or that all rational persons, unhoodwinked by myth or ideology, not be individual egoists or classist amorality. Reason doesn't decide here" (Nielsen 1989, 299). Instead, he claims that it all depends upon one's existential decision. In the remainder of this chapter, however, I shall present the Cheng Brothers' neo-Confucian answer, which I believe is more promising.

#### 4. The Chengs' Neo-Confucian Answer: Joy in Being Moral

Confucianism is a learning of moral self-cultivation. However, the highest goal of such self-cultivation is joy (*le* 樂). The very first two sentences of Confucius's *Analects* are related to it: "What a joy it is to learn and practice what one learns from time to time! What a joy it is to have a friend coming from afar!" (*Analects* 1.1). The neo-Confucianism initiated by the Cheng brothers is sometimes also called the learning of *dao* (*daoxue* 道學). FENG Youlan 馮友蘭, a renowned historian of Chinese philosophy, is right in saying that "the

learning of *dao* is not merely a kind of knowledge; it is also an enjoyment” (Feng 1995, 131). For example, a superior person (*junzi* 君子) is an exemplary person in the Confucian tradition. However, for CHENG Yi, the younger brother, “[W]ithout joy, one is not qualified as a superior person” (Cheng and Cheng 2004, *Yishu* 17; 181). Similarly, the goal of Confucian self-cultivation is to become a sage, and one of the Chengs says that “when one’s learning reaches the level of cultivating what one gets so that one finds joy in it, it becomes clear, bright, lofty, and far-reaching” (*Cuiyan* 1; 1189). Thus CHENG Hao claims that “learning is complete only when one feels joy. A person with firm belief and love for learning still does not have the joy of self-getting. The person who loves something is like one who visits someone else’s garden, while the person who feels joy in something does not make distinction between oneself and the other” (*Yishu* 11; 127). The question then is how to find joy. The Cheng brothers relate to us that they “once studied under ZHOU Maoshu 周茂叔, who asked us to look for things in which Yanzi and Confucius found joy” (*Yishu* 2a; 16). Thus, the Chengs make a special effort to understand, through their own inner experiences, what is meant by such sayings as “he does not allow his joy to be affected [by hardship] (*bu gai qi le* 不改其樂)” and “joy also lies in them (*le zai qizhong* 樂在其中)” in the *Analects*, as well as “there is no greater joy (*le mo da yi* 樂莫大亦)” in the *Mencius*.

“He does not allow his joy to be affected” appears in a passage in which Confucius praises Yanzi: “How virtuous is YAN Hui! With a single bamboo dish of food, a single gourd dish of unboiled water, and living on a shabby lane, while all others cannot endure the hardship, only he does not allow his joy to be affected. YAN Hui, how virtuous he is indeed!” (*Analects* 6.11). To live a poor life on a shabby lane is normally considered painful. Why does Yanzi feel joy in it, and why does Confucius praise Yanzi for finding joy in it? According to CHENG Yi: “Yanzi’s joy is not caused by his eating a single bamboo dish of food, drinking a single gourd dish of unboiled water, and living on a shabby lane. The reason that Confucius regards him as virtuous is that he does not allow his poverty to burden his heart/mind and affect his joy” (*Jingshuo* 6; 1141). In another place, Cheng says that “Yanzi does not find the poverty joyful; he simply forgets it in joy” (*Yishu* 6; 88). This shows that Yanzi is no different from anyone else as poverty cannot make him, or anyone else, feel joy. Yanzi is joyful for some other reason, and what is praiseworthy is that his living in poverty does not diminish the joy he has found elsewhere. CHENG Hao agrees: poverty “has nothing to make Yanzi joyful, but he has reason for his joy. Here ‘his reason’ has profound meaning and we should try to understand it” (*Yishu* 12; 135). Then exactly what is the reason for Yanzi’s joy? In Cheng’s view, it

is *ren* (humanity), the highest Confucian virtue: “realizing *ren* within oneself, what do you have to worry about?” So, living in poverty, “while other people would be worried, only Yanzi can find joy. This is because of his *ren*” (*Waishu* 1; 352). The Chengs’ understanding of this *Analects* passage is confirmed by the other passage in which “joy also lies in them” appears.

“Joy also lies in them” refers to an *Analects* passage in which Confucius talks about his own joy: “[W]ith coarse grain to eat, with unboiled water to drink, and with my bended arm as pillow—my joy lies right in them. Riches and honors not acquired in the right way seem to me a floating cloud” (*Analects* 7.16). In this passage, Confucius makes a clear connection between joy and moral rightness. The meaning of this passage can be better understood in connection with another *Analects* passage: “Riches and honor are what every person desires. However, if they are obtained in violation of moral principles, they cannot be kept. Poverty and humble station are what every person dislikes. However, if they can be avoided only in violation of moral principles, they should not be avoided” (*Analects* 4.5). Obviously, Confucius feels joy in his poverty because, by not avoiding it, he is able to abide by moral principles. In his *Interpretation of the Analects*, CHENG Yi states that Confucius is still joyful “even though he has only coarse grain to eat and unboiled water to drink. This is what he means by ‘joy also lies in them.’ It does not mean that he has joy because he eats coarse grain and drinks unboiled water” (*Jingshuo* 6; 1145). In Cheng’s view, what gives Confucius joy is his being in accord with morality. Although Confucius says that his joy lies in eating coarse grain and drinking unboiled water, it does not mean that coarse grain and unboiled water themselves are good things. The real source of one’s joy comes from one’s being in accord with morality, which will be violated if he wants to avoid poverty in this particular case. As long as one is in accord with morality, one can find joy in anything one encounters. In his reply to a student’s question about Mencius’s statement that “there is a better way to nurture one’s heart/mind than having fewer desires” (*Mencius* 7b35), CHENG Yi tells us that “this is easy to understand, but what most deserves our appreciation is his statement that ‘the principle and rightness pleases (*yue* 悅) my heart/mind just as meat pleases my palate.’ However, what is important is [for the heart/mind] to really experience the pleasure in being in accord with moral principle and rightness as for the palate to be so in tasting meat” (*Waishu* 12; 425). Immediately before the quoted sentence from the *Mencius*, it is also claimed that “all palates have the same preference in taste, all ears have the same preference in sound, and all eyes have the same preferences in beauty. How can heart/minds alone be different? In what are all heart/minds the same? It is principle and rightness”

(*Mencius* 6a7). Here CHENG Yi emphasizes that Confucian joy comes from one's heart/mind nurtured by moral principle and not from our sense organs affected by their preferred objects. Thus, in another place commenting on the same passage of Mencius, he states that "in investigating the principle, one should know how to apply one's heart/mind according to greater or lesser urgency. If one exerts force on it hard without finding joy, how can he nourish the heart/mind?" (*Yishu* 3; 67). So what is important is not only to do things according to moral principles, but to find joy in doing so.

In addition to the joy of Confucius and Yanzi (the so-called *kong yan zhi le* 孔顏之樂), the Chengs were fascinated by Mencius's saying, "There is no greater joy," which appears in the following passage: "Ten thousand things are all here in me. There is no greater joy than finding that I have realized myself through self-reflection (*fan shen er cheng* 反身而誠)" (*Mencius* 7a4). About this, in his famous passage later recognized as "Discourse on Humanity (*ren shuo* 仁說)," which starts with the claim that "a learner should first understand *ren*, as a person of *ren* is in one body with all things," CHENG Hao explains that

if one cannot realize oneself in self-reflection, then some opposition exists between oneself and others. In this case, one tries to suit oneself to the other but can never get unified with the other. If so, how can one have joy? . . . "Never do things with expectation. Let the mind not forget its objective, but let there be no artificial effort to help it grow" [*Mencius* 2a2]. The way to preserve *ren* is not to exert slightest effort. When *ren* is preserved, the harmony between oneself and others is obtained. This is because our original *ren* and our ability to know *ren* have never been lost. . . . If we practice it and feel joy in it, we do not need to worry about losing it. (*Yishu* 2a; 17)

Here I translate the Chinese character *cheng* 誠 as "realization," in its double meaning in English. On the one hand, through self-examination, one realizes (knows) oneself or, rather, the nature (*xing* 性) or principle (*li* 理) within oneself; on the other hand, one realizes (fulfills or completes) one's self-nature. Since in Cheng's view, the nature or principle within oneself is the same nature or principle within the ten thousand things, to realize oneself is at the same time to realize (bring to completion) the ten thousand things. In contrast, CHENG Hao claims, "if one cannot realize oneself, one is in opposition to all things and feels uneasy with everything" (*Yishu* 11; 129). In his view, it is in this sense