

“Reading Marc D. Hauser’s *Moral Minds*”

Session 10: the former half of chapter 5 (pp. 272-303)

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In session 10, we read the latter half of chapter 5 (pp. 272-303). In this section, Hauser discusses the innate ability of detecting violators of social norms (Pinocchio’s Nose), the role of emotion in cooperative behavior and its limit (Compassionate Cooperation) and the ability to distinguish and comprehend various types of social norms (Navigating Norms) as well as three types of distinguishing related nativism (Going Native).

Hauser’s consistent concern in this section is whether an individual’s moral is innate and how the individual obtains the moral ability. Here I introduce Hauser’s three types of Rawlsian design. Hauser characterizes the nativist position as “Weak” Rawlsian, “Temperate” Rawlsian and “Staunch” Rawlsian. Hauser explains each Rawlsian design as follows:

It [The Weak Rawlsian] has the capacity to acquire morally relevant norms, but nature hasn’t provided any of the relevant details. . . . The Temperate Rawlsian is equipped with a suite of principles and parameters for building moral systems. These principles lack specific content, but operate over the causes and consequences of action. . . . The Staunch Rawlsian is equipped with specific moral principles about helping and harming, genetically built into the brain and unalterable by culture. (pp. 298-299)

Which Rawlsian design fits recent empirical evidence? According to Hauser, there is no one who supports the Staunch Rawlsian. A proponent of the Weak Rawlsian is Jesse Prinz. Prinz says that the universal norms are obtained by learning and that they are not innate. Then Hauser claims that if they are learned by experience, one can advance the date of obtaining such abilities. Thus he supports the Temperate Rawlsian owing to observations of the moral ability which have seen in this chapter.

In this part (Part II), Hauser provides a sketch of how we should think about the growth of our moral capacity. Hauser argued that humans are born with a moral acquisition device. Babies are born with parts of moral faculty which enable them to understand causes and effects, and thus they can do moral judgment. Also, babies have innate, unconscious and automatic emotions which drive their actions. Hauser argued

that babies are set up with two moral systems. The parameters which are set to a moral system are affected by a local culture.