EMOTION, REASON AND DREAMS

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The title: "Emotion, Reason and Dreams" has brought together concepts that are difficult to reconcile and it is exactly this fact that makes the topic both interesting and important. The dichotomy of reason and emotion is well-established in philosophical literature though this is being challenged now by new neurophysiological findings. The inclusion of dreams in this dichotomous relation has made the topic more interesting. The so-called bizarre and irrational nature of dreams made me think whether the topic could be a kind of debate between rationality and irrationality.

Aristotle defined human beings as rational animals and gave us the three fundamental laws of thought: The law of identity (P is P), the law of Contradiction or sometimes called the law of non-contradiction (P cannot be both P and not-P at the same time) and the law of Excluded Middle (P or not-P). Human thinking is supposed to be guided by these fundamental laws. This indicates the uniform and universal nature of human thinking process or reasoning process. It also provided human reasoning with an objectivity so essential in philosophical and scientific investigation.

Emotion is as universal a component of human psyche as reason, but its role has traditionally been considered as disruptive and divisive. It is uncontrolled, unable to guide humans in their pursuance of good life and is generally considered to have a disruptive effect. It is not that the philosophers have denied the existence of emotions, but have denied that it could play any role in the acquisition of knowledge or in guiding our actions towards a morally acceptable goal.

The story begins much earlier. The division and opposition between reason and emotion have been pointed out by Plato in his various dialogues. We are familiar with his theory of Forms, and how the knowledge of Forms can be obtained by reason alone. In his Republic he argues that the only persons fit to rule are philosophers because they alone have the knowledge of Forms and hence possess the wisdom required to bring about a just society. In his famous analogy of charioteer in *Phaedrus* he says:

> … we divided each soul in the three parts, two being like steeds, and the third like a charioteer. .. Now of the steeds… one is good and the other is not…He that is on the more honorable side is upright and clean-limbed…in color he is white… the other is crooked of frame, a massive jumble of creature…hot-blooded, consorting with wantonness and vainglory; shaggy of ear, deaf, and hard to control with whip and goad. (Phaedrus, P. 500,253 d, e)

The wicked steed is the passion or emotion which is difficult to control and which drives human beings away from the path of knowledge. In Symposium where he deals with the nature of love which is accepted as a primary emotion in modern psychology, he identifies it with the Form of Beauty and the only way to attain this Form is through reason. Those who embark on this journey have to ascend a ladder

step by step – a journey in which all their passions and emotions are transformed to intellect and reason. It is only then that one can attain the 'Beauty' or Love. As he says in symposium:

> Starting from individual beauties, the quest for the universal beauty must find him ever mounting the heavenly ladder, stepping from rung to rung – that is, from one to two, and from two to every lovely body, from bodily beauty to the beauty of institutions, from institution to learning, and from learning in general to the special lore that pertains to nothing but the beautiful itself until at last he comes to know what beauty is. (211c)

However, all the commentators on Plato have asserted that love, in its upward journey is transformed. The transformation proceeds from bodily pleasures to intellectual pleasure. In the gradual process of progression, can we say, that love has changed into reason? Or it was reason from the beginning, warped or disguised? A difficult question to answer. Among the modern philosophers it was Descartes who established the supremacy of reason with his 'Cogito ergo sum' – the identity of humans as a thinking being. His cogito also resulted in a separation of body and mind with mind or soul reigning supreme.

We have a long list of philosophers who belong to the rationalist tradition of epistemology. But it was not merely in the area of epistemology, but in the area of ethics and moral philosophy also that reason reigned supreme. Kant's deontologic ethic, his concept of good will which is identical with rational will, needs no special mention. Even Mill's utilitarianism, in contemporary parlance, took the form of rational choice. Though utilitarianism and deontologic ethics differ in spirit regarding what constitutes a moral action, one cannot deny the element of reason and its superior position in utilitarianism. Even when Mill asserts "It is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than to be a pig satisfied", he is upholding the supremacy of reason in pursuits of pleasures worthy of human beings.

In the contemporary formulation of utilitarianism, the theory of rational choice, utility values are assigned to various choices which decide the course the right course of action. The alternative with highest score of utility value is the rational choice and people ought to act accordingly. It is true that in providing utility values one takes into account the emotional satisfaction factor also as one of the components, but the

fact remains that a rational choice, a choice governed by reason is considered the right choice leading to the greatest good of the greatest number.

The impact of this supremacy of reason in philosophical discourse did not leave psychology untouched. During its early period psychology was almost exclusively concerned with cognition. This primacy of cognition was inherited from its philosophical roots, namely, Descartes' contention that reason is the distinctive faculty of human beings. In its initial stages psychology was primarily concerned with sensations, perception, psychophysical experiments of Weber and Fechner etc. It hardly gave any importance to emotions with the exception of Cannon and Bard. It was the experiment of Cannon and Bard that brought the study of emotion to focus. Their experiments gave us the idea of 'flight or fight' in case of strong emotion of fear. But the cognitivist emphasis continued. Experiments on learning, memory, attention and language remained of primary importance.

The essence of this cognitivist approach is that people's behavior, their response to the representation of the stimulus, is mediated through the cognitive state of knowledge and belief. These are acquired through perception, stored in memory and retrieved at the appropriate moment for appropriate responses. This last stage involves decision making and judgement. The culmination of this approach is in the theory of rational choice which we have mentioned earlier.

It is of interest to note that the cognitive approach considered emotions as cognitive constructs. Emotions depend on the cognitive value of a situation; i. e. emotions depend on how we perceive a situation. We can teach ourselves to perceive a situation differently and thus can teach ourselves to control emotions. The cognitive revolution gave rise to numerous experimental studies in memory - short and long-term, nature of attention, learning etc. The trend is continuing. Even in the area of psychopathology, CBT or Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy is the treatment of choice in most hospitals.

The spontaneous and autonomic nature of emotion over which consciousness has no control was gradually relegated to background. Yet it is this autonomic nature of emotion which is important for the survival of human beings. You do not think or what course of action you should take, when suddenly you confront a snake or a tiger,

or a car coming fast towards you. Your survival depends on how quickly you react. Nature has not left these decisions to the cerebral cortex - the area of brain related to thinking and deliberation. It is the autonomic nervous system that reacts spontaneously even before one has fully cognized the situation. Even the excesses, the uncontrolled nature of emotion which is so decried by the philosophers aim towards maintaining the homeostatis of the organism without which the integrity of the organism will be lost.

The cognitivist approach also influenced moral psychology. Piaget and Kohlberg clearly were on the side of Kant and Rawls. Kohlberg's classification of moral stages was based on Piaget's theory of moral development which was essentially rational. The ability to reason and establish one's moral judgment on reasoning was the touchstone that decided the hierarchy in his stages of moral development. Kohlberg gave us a theory of moral development which he developed based on the responses of moral dilemmas presented to children - only boys.

The first two stages of this moral development are pre-conventional. These two stages are based on physical consequences of an action, i.e., people decide to base their actions on reward or punishment. The third and fourth stages are called conventional. They emphasize the rule of law. The third stage emphasizes complying with the rule and other people's expectation while the fourth stage emphasizes the importance of maintaining the rules. Last two stages are called post conventional. These involve developing one's own standards, different from the standards of society.

These stages of development are clearly based on development of reasoning faculty. The child's moral development is dependent on the development of his reasoning faculty. The last stage particularly brings out the importance of reasoning in moral development. To develop one's own moral standards requires a critical application of one's reasoning to the existing moral code and then accept or reject them. Also, reason is required to justify the standard one has developed for oneself. The methodology employed by Kohlberg in arriving at these stages is also a cognitive methodology, based on reasoning. He would provide moral dilemmas to boys and they were required to come up with a solution to the moral dilemma. The ability of

the child to bring deductive logic to solve the moral problem, his ability to distinguish between law and morality and his ability to conceive justice as a principle – are features that decided the progress of the stages of moral development. This methodology consistently showed girls to be inferior to boys in moral development. They could reach only stage three, namely pleasing others, whereas boys reached stage 4 which emphasizes rules of law, duty or stage 5 which emphasizes principled sense of justice. This hegemony of reason was challenged in the 1980s. Khilstrom points out:

> Beginning 1980s, the hegemony of cognition was challenged by what I have come to think of as an *affective counterrevolution*, exemplified by the Zajonc-Lazarus dabate…The general thrust of this affective counterrevolution was that emotion was at least independent of cognition, if not actually primary. Thus, Zajonk himself argued that "preferences need no inferences" because they could be shaped by "subliminal" stimuli processed outside of conscious awareness. Paul Ekman proposed a set of reflex-like *basic emotions* that were part of our phylogenetic heritage. (*Reason and Emotion in Moral Judgment*, P.3)

Paul Ekman's work on basic emotions gave a major boost to the study of emotions. Based upon the works of Cannon and Bard, Paul Ekman showed that there are six basic emotions – happiness, anger, disgust, surprise, sadness and fear. These basic emotions are universal and experienced by men and women in the same way. Three factors called into question this supremacy of reason in the area of cognition: the work of Sigmund Freud in psychology, the feminist movement and the work of Antonio Damasio in the recent times.

Sigmund Freud extended the boundaries of the mind from conscious to unconscious thus challenging Descartes' equation of mind with consciousness. This discovery was to have a far-reaching effect in every sphere of human life – be it epistemology or moral psychology/philosophy. Modern technology has helped us to know that we make generous use of information in our decision making that is not even consciously accessible to us. Thus, utilization of rational deliberation for many of our judgments is effectively curtailed. This was a revolutionary change and helped in weakening the grip of rationalist framing on our decision making process as well as our learning process.

However, Freud's contribution paved one more important path. His work with psychopathology was essentially a work related to emotions, affects, feelings – the so-called irrational. Freud's case-studies, especially the case-studies of his female patients, brought out the importance of emotions (the irrational) in mental health. Feminists were not slow in voicing their grievance against reasonwhich they interpreted as the stronghold of males and reflection of a patriarchal attitude of mind strongly prevalent in philosophical tradition.

Virginia held in her *Feminist Transformation of Moral Theory* points out that the grip of reason over moral theory has mainly taken two forms: (i) Kantian general, abstract, deontological universal moral principle, like Kant's Categorical imperative, which suggests that all the moral problems can be solved by applying an abstract, impartial pure, rational principle to particular cases; (ii) the Utilitarian form which recognizes that people have desires and interests but recommends rules of rational choice for satisfying those desires. It also applies the same technique as the Kantian Rationalism, namely, applying a general abstract principle of maximizing utility to solve moral problems in individual cases. As she says:

> And it holds that although emotion is, in fact, the source of our desires for certain objectives, the task of morality should be to instruct us on how to pursue those objectives most rationally. Emotional attitudes towards moral issues themselves interfere with rationality and should be disregarded. (*Feminist Transformation of Moral Theory*, Virginia Held, p. 687).

She emphasizes that in a genuinely gender-neutral moral theory the experience and concerns of women would be as much taken into account as the concerns of men. Hence, ethics should take into account the relational concerns of women, especially the caring aspect of relations as comprising moral problems of women. The final blow to the supremacy of reason came from the experimental studies of Antonio Damatio.

Descartes' cogito had made a sharp division between body and mind, between mind and matter, between thought and extension. In the second meditation Descartes says that he exists as a thinking being only. And that is the indubitable truth about him. The existence of body and external world was established much later in the sixth meditation. Damatio's experimental findings disproved that one could think without the body, especially without emotions which Descartes had neglected. The story

begins with a number of case studies that alerted Damatio regarding the importance of emotion in human decision making process.

The Case of Phineas Gage:

In 1848, Phineas Gage, a 24 year old construction foreman, considered to be a 'very efficient and capable man' by his bosses met with a horrifying accident while trying to put explosive in the hole of a rock which also needed to be pounded by an iron rod. Something went wrong and when Gage put fire in the rock, the charge blew upward in his face. I quote from Damatio:

> The iron enters Gage's left cheek, pierces the base of the skull, traverses the front of his brain, and exists at high speed through the top of the head. The iron had landed more than hundred feet away, covered in blood and brain. Phineas Gage had been thrown on the ground. He is stunned, in the afternoon glow, silent but awake. (*Descartes' Error, Damatio,* . 4)

Gage survived but he no longer was Gage. His bodily capacities remained intact except loss of vision in his left eye, but his personality changed completely. He was

> '… fitful, irreverent, indulging at times in the grossest profanity which was not previously his custom, manifesting but little deference for his fellows, impatient of restraints and advice when it conflicts with his desires, at times pertinaciously obstinate, yet capricious and vacillating, …. A child in his intellectual capacity and manifestations, He has the animal passions of a strong man."

The foul language he used was so gross that women were advised to stay away from him. Gage could not hold onto a job. At the age of 38, he died of epileptic seizures.

Gage's case was studied thoroughly by his doctors and later on by Hanna Damatio. The changes in his character were not subtle. It was clear that he could not make choices and the choices he made were not simply neutral. It seemed that his old value system either was annihilated or they could not influence his decision making process. Yet several of his intellectual faculties were in tact – like attention, memory, language, intelligence. This kind of discrepancy in neurophysiology is known as dissociation. Much later Hanna Damatio's work, with the help of most modern technology was able to specify that it was the selective damage to the prefrontal cortices of the brain that were responsible for his inability to plan for the future, to make good choices, to observe the social rules he had previously learned, and to decide on the course of actions that would be most beneficial for his survival.

Damation studied similar other cases one of which he fictitiously called the case of Elliot. A similar area in his brain also was damaged because a tumor had to be removed. He too manifested changes similar to the changes in Gage's personality except that he never used any foul language or was never abusive to anyone. Elliot passed all intellectual tests. His cognitive and reasoning abilities were in tact. Yet he was always undecided – didn't know what course of action to take. Once after elucidating a number of valid options for action in a given situation, his poignant comment was, "And after all this, I still wouldn't know what to do."

An intense investigation revealed that all his cognitive faculties were in tact, but he was unable to experience any emotions. This was the most important change that Damatio noticed in his demeanor was a total absence of emotions. After studying many more cases of the same kind, Damation came to the conclusion that though we are aware that emotion disrupts the process of rational decision making, but "reduction in emotion may constitute an equally important source of irrational behavior." (Damatio, P. 52).

These neurophysiological findings were confirmed by rigorous laboratory procedure and were supported by various similar case-studies. The circle seems to be complete. Emotion which was always derided in comparison to reason turned out to be a sine qua non for rational decisions, for making good choices, for the utilization of past knowledge so that a good life can be led. The evidence is too significant to ignore.

We can now come to dreams. What is the philosophical significance of dreams and how can we relate dreams to the first two subjects, namely, to emotion and reason? It was again Descartes who made dreams important in philosophical parlance. In his Meditations, he starts with the question, how could he be sure at any given moment that he was not dreaming. This was the gateway to Descartes methodological skepticism. We know how Descartes finally arrived at the solution, namely, by invoking the existence of a benevolent and good God who cannot deceive us.

So the problem, in essence, is: how can one distinguish waking states from dreaming states? Are there features by which one can distinguish between waking and

dreaming states? To stave off skepticism, it was important to answer this question that Descartes had raised. A number of attempts have been made to answer Descartes. Hobbes says that absence of absurd in dreams pointed to an absence of a sense of absurdity while Locke indicated the absence of physical pain by which dreams can be distinguished from waking. He asks Descartes to consider the difference between dreaming being in the fire and actually being in the fire.

Neither Hobbes, nor Locke's attempt is successful. Recent empirical studies have indicated that one can feel localized sharp pain in dreams, though such cases are rare. Malcolm suggests a principle of coherence as the distinguishing mark between dreams and waking. However, we do have dreams where we wake up to realize that the dreams connect to our waking life, sometimes they are related to our overall course of life. It is generally accepted that there is no acceptable distinguishing feature between dreams and waking life, but whether that should lead to general skepticism is controversial.

The question that first comes to our mind in this connection is what are dreams? What is their nature? Folk psychology, scientific psychology and philosophers are of the opinion that dreams are experiences during sleep. Freud has said, dreams are the life of mind during sleep. The dreamer can recall his experience after waking up. Hence, there is a relation between dreams and consciousness. Malcolm challenges this received view. He raises three objections:

1. Dream reports are not verifiable. The dreamer wakes up from sleep and reports a dream. This is his impression. Waking with this impression does not entail that such a conscious experience during sleep actually corresponds to his report. There is no criterion by which we can know the duration of a dream, the time of the occurrence of a dream. In this sense, dream is not an occurrence and do not refer to anything over and above the dream report.

2. The definition of "sleep" and "dream" are contradictory. Sleep is a state lacking in experience and dreams are supposed to be conscious experiences. Experience requires being conscious whereas sleep is a state lacking consciousness. Thus, to say that we have consciousness when we are unconscious leads to contradiction.

3. It is not possible to make judgments and communication in the state of sleep. Malcolm's famous example is that a person cannot be aware and assert "I am asleep". This will be a false statement. If he is aware then he is not asleep and if he is asleep, he cannot be aware that he is asleep. So, this leads to a contradiction and goes to support his first objection that dreams are unverifiable.

There is a lack of possibility of communication in dreams. One cannot judge what one cannot communicate. Hence, one is unable to judge that one is asleep; one is also unable to have any experience in sleep. Thus, Malcolm denies that one can assert, deny, communicate, judge, think or argue in dreams. Hence, it follows that dreams are not experiences, imaginations, hallucinations or any kind of mental acts. So, Malcolm's argument in a way answers Descartes' skeptic argument. The main point of Descartes argument was that there is no way to distinguish between dream and waking experiences. This argument can be totally undermined if dreams are not experiences at all.

However, Malcolm's view that dream states cannot be verified is no longer tenable. With the help of REM sleep, scientists can now predict when the person is dreaming and how long the dream lasted. His objection that this is a new concept of dreaming is also not tenable because, as Putnam points out, scientific advancement updates our concept, it does not replace them. So, scientists are working on the same concept of dreams, not on a new concept.

Dennett also denies that dreams are conscious experiences, though he agrees that the dreamer's report of the dream is a conscious experience. Dennett thinks that dreams are not conscious experiences. Different memories are uploaded and woven together to make a new content unconsciously. Upon waking these memories will be recalled as if they have been experienced, though it never was. Only when dreams are recalled, the person experiences the content for the first time.

But the lived experience of the person who is dreaming demands an explanation. The impact dreams have on our life requires an understanding of the dreaming process. In quite a few cases, psychotic symptoms have started after the

patient had dreamt particular dreams. Hence, we need to move to the psychology of dreaming in order to understand what dreams are about.

There are about ten psychological theories of dreaming. We shall take only three of the most influential theories. The first one is the psychoanalytic theory of dreams which claims that dreams are meaningful, purposive but hallucinatory experiences. They are the medium of expression of our repressed childhood wishes in a distorted form. The distortion is necessary to evade the censorship operating in the mind. This censorship is nothing but the social and moral sense of the individual. It will not allow any wish contrary to its moral standard even to be fulfilled in the form of hallucination. So, in contrast to Malcolm, Freud believes that dreams are both hallucinations and experiences.

The major forms of distortion in dreams are condensation, displacement, plastic word imagery (dramatization) and secondary elaboration. Dream symbolism is not done for the sake of distortion, but it does create a sort of unfamiliarity in the dream. The use of symbols and imagery in the dreams also point to a primitive process of thinking that is used to produce the dreams. Thus, the mind is active during the production of dreams. It creates distortions, retrieves symbols and images in order to present thoughts in the dreams. Thus, it also involves a primitive thinking process.

So, according to psychoanalytic theory, dreams have both meaning and a purpose. Through the hallucinatory experience the satisfaction of repressed desires helps in maintaining the homeostasis of the mind. Thus, they are not only experiences, but important and significant experiences for the dreamer. The psychoanalytic theory of dreams remained one of the most popular theories of dreams for a long time till the discovery of REM sleep in 1953. But it was not till 1990s that the full significance of this theory for the psychoanalytic theory was understood. Drs. Allen Hobson and Robert Macarley propounded a new theory of dreams that challenged almost every aspect of psycho analytic theory of dreams.

Activation Synthesis Theory

It was found that there are REM and NREM sleep patterns which each one of us, including lower animals, passes through within a night. It is during REM sleep that most dreams occur and the period of REM sleep is very precisely determined. It

lasts for 90 minutes. During a night we pass through 4/5 periods of REM. They suggested that the dream sleep is determined by a 'dream state generator' located in the brain stem. This brain stem triggers the dream state with periodic regularity. The regularity was so precise that Hobson and McCarley could mathematically process the model with a high degree of accuracy. During REM period when the "dream generator system is switched on, the following sequential development occur.

- Sensory inputs and motor out puts are blocked
- Forebrain (the cerebral cortex) is also activated;
- It is bombarded with partially random impulses generating sensory information within the system.
- The activated forebrain then synthesizes the dream out of these internally generated information;
- It tries its best to make sense out of the non-sense it is presented with."
- Dream is a mechanical process and occurs automatically at regular and constant intervals.
- It is preprogrammed and neutrally determined.
- There is no question of any psychological determination of dream phenomenon. Dreams are completely physiological.
- This is in contradiction to Freud's assertion that dreams are products of conflict and are compromise formation.
- What determines the specific stimuli for the dream imagery?
- The dream imagery is simply the product of the firing of the brain-stem. No higher brain centres and hence no cognitive processes are involved in the formation of these dream imageries.

Hence, the incoherence and the bizarre nature of dreams could simply be the product of the random firing of the brain stem and no complicated dream work is needed to explain this feature of dreams.

Condensation, displacement etc. may just be the reflection of the dreaming brain." In other words, the forebrain may be making the best of a bad job in producing even partially coherent dream imagery from the relatively noisy signals sent up to it from the brain stem. The dream process is thus seen as having its origin in sensori-motor system, with little or no primary ideational, volitional, or emotional content. This concept is markedly different from that of the 'dream thoughts or wishes seen by Freud as the primary stimulus for the dream." The forebrain performs a primarily constructive function. It's goal is not to distort but to construct and synthesize.

It tries to synthesize the random data in the best possible manner and tries to create as best an order in the chaos as possible. Hence, the name of the theory - Activation synthesis theory. Dreams, therefore, are epiphenomena of REM sleep. It was Mark Solms, a neuro-psychologist and a psychoanalyst who came up with an answer by a chance observation of patients who had lost pontine experience due to surgery and yet they were able to dream. He also came up with neurological evidence where there was cessation of dreaming though Pons was intact, but forebrain was damaged. There were also reports of dreams occurring in NREM state which were essentially same in nature as those occurring during REM sleep. So, Freudian theory was back.

Mark Solms also interviewed and tested hundreds of Schizophrenics who had undergone frontal leucotomies or pre-lobotomies. This has resulted in complete loss of dreaming in their cases. This also resulted in the cessation of psychotic symptoms as well as a massive reduction of motivational behaviour. REM triggers dreaming. It is a cholinergic state (energised by the neurotransmitter acetylcholine) and is a neutral state as far as motivations are concerned, but dream state is a dopaminergic state which is driven by our wishes. This is an evidence in favour of psychoanalytic theory.

However, nightmares, anxiety dreams were cited as counter evidence to Freud's theory of dreams. We all know that Freud did revised his theory of dreams. From claiming that all dreams are wish-fulfillment, he scaled down to all dreams are attempts at wish-fulfillment. Dreams still remain a mysterious area. We cannot do away with them. We find them intricately and intimately related to out emotional even our cognitive state. Yet, we have not yet been able to understand them fully in a scientific way. We are still grappling with the fundamental question: Are dreams meaningful or not? If they are meaningful, how come they don't appear to be so? Is Freudian theory correct? Are dreams merely mechanical neural phenomena? If so, why are we bothered so much with them?

With these theories it will be easy for us to connect dreams with emotion and reason. As the psychoanalytic theory emphasizes dreams are expressions of wishes. There is a reason behind the formation of dreams. Though the language of dreams is the primitive language of symbolism, it is still a language. If so, we can assign

cognitive elements to dreams also. Dreams are also the vehicle through which often intense emotions are expressed. When we talk about wishes, we also talk about affects associated with the wishes though in many cases the affect may not be experienced by the dreamer. However, many intense emotions are experienced by the dreamer through dreams. These emotions largely are negative emotions and dreams containing such emotions are called anxiety dreams. Thus, through Freudian theory of dreams we can connect dreams to emotions and reason.

So, the circle is now complete. From the predominance of reason in epistemology, ethics and decision making we are seeing a reversal of emphasis. It is emotion that predominating in these areas now. And this predominance is based on very solid grounds – namely, on physiological evidence – evidence that we cannot deny. What impact this could have on our philosophical and scientific discourses, in our attempt to understand the fundamental problems of life and living? Will it significantly change our epistemology, process of making moral judgment and of decision making?

The question that comes first to my mind is: how do the results of Damatio affect the various moral theories? I specifically have Kant's theory in my mind. If rational emotions cannot be taken in the absence of emotions what would become of his maxims of 'Duty for duty's sake', that our moral actions should not become affected by emotions. We know there are cogent reasons for what he says. If moral decisions are based on unreflective emotions how can we judge what is right and what wrong. My moral judgment will differ from the moral judgment of my neighbor and who is to decide which one is right and which one is wrong. Expressing such worry, Khilstrom says that this independence of affect from cognition and the dominance of affect over cognition 'constitutes a threat to the role of reason in moral psychology' and thus a threat to losing objectivity in moral decisions.

Yet can we deny the role of emotions in moral judgment? I hope this seminar will focus on this problem. What should be the role of emotions in moral judgment? How to take into account the affective factors and bring about a balance between affect and emotion? Can we accept Hume's assertion that reason is a slave to passion?

A related problem comes up with Gillian's criticism of Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Does the difference of moral orientation in males and females call for a revision of our moral theories? We know that feminists advocate care ethics and severely criticize Kantian emphasis on reason. Contextual ethics, situational ethics and care ethics – have they been able to avoid ethical relativism? Another question this seminar may try to find an answer to.

I would like to make it clear that it is not my intention to decry the present turn of emotional predominance. What I am trying to emphasize that unless we are careful this predominance may lead us to make similar mistakes which is being corrected by the present change of scenario. Just as emotions provide us with motivations, play a very important role in our day to day life, in preserving/destroying our mental health, and accepted or not, in most of our decisions, similarly they need to be regulated by reason. In our psychopathological practices also we do not ask our patients to proceed unreflectively. The difference is that we encourage them to recognize their emotions, experience them and them to reflect on them. A similar approach may be required in our other academic endeavours also - to bring about a balance between reason and emotion.