

One-to-One Fellow-Feeling, Universal Identification and Oneness, and Group Solidarities

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I. Introduction

I am interested in four related themes involved in compassion or other forms of fellow feeling for other human beings, and in the sense of connectedness among human beings sometimes expressed in the language of “oneness.” These are: (1) Whether compassion is seen as particularized to a specific human being vs. being seen as directed to all human beings in a more universalistic way. (2) The degree of emphasis placed on the subject of fellow feeling’s sense of a distinct identity from the target of fellow feeling. (3) Group solidarities, such as of a racial or ethnic character, and how these relate to oneness. (4) The relation between metaphysics and ethics.

II. Schopenhauer: Phenomenal compassion and noumenal oneness

I take Arthur Schopenhauer as an initial reference point, drawing on his book on ethics, *On the Basis of Morality*, from 1841. Criticizing, and contrasting his view systematically with, Kant’s, Schopenhauer said that compassion, not reason or duty, is the fundamental moral motive. He does not explore the precise psychological character of compassion, but he means by it an affective phenomenon involving taking the weal or woe of another as a direct motive of action to assist the other. In a move unusual for philosophers in the Western canon, Schopenhauer explicitly mentions Hinduism and Buddhism as sources of ancient wisdom that promote compassion as the fundamental moral stance toward the world.

Schopenhauer says that compassion as a psychological phenomenon is mysterious—“practical mysticism”—since in it we treat another’s woe as a direct motive for our will in the way we normally do only for our own woe (212). He sometimes describe this phenomenon by saying that in compassion we make less of a distinction than do the

uncompassionate between himself and others (204), or “another’s ego is treated as equal with his own” (205), while in egoistic (or malicious) action we experience a distinction between ourselves and others. “For the egoist and the malicious, there is a wide gulf, a mighty difference, between the ego that is restricted to their own persons and the non-ego embracing the rest of the world.” (204)

Schopenhauer sometimes expresses his description of compassion in a somewhat different way: That the compassionate person sees his own inner nature, his own true self, in all others, in fact in every living thing (213) “He always recognizes and loves his own inner nature and self in all others; the illusion that separated his consciousness from theirs vanishes.” (213)

The worry about the latter formulation is that it edges toward a kind of egoism, in a way that the former does not. And this is a charge that has been made against the Buddhist and neo-Confucian doctrine of “oneness.” If I love my own nature as I perceive or experience it in others, is this not a form of self-love? The metaphor of “making less of a distinction” between self and other is different. It preserves the idea that the suffering that the compassionate person responds to is perceived as in the other person, not in the self, but the agent feels that suffering in the other in the way that she normally perceives it in herself. She perceives it and is concerned about it as if it were her own but she is acutely aware that it is not.

Schopenhauer shares with Kant the view that, as he puts it, the human way of acting morally has metaphysical significance. He turns to metaphysics to explain the mystery of compassion. If we were confined to the world of appearances, where individual objects including persons are individuated by space and time, the egoist would in a sense be right—his woe is his, and yours is just yours. “The difference in space that separates me from him separates me also from his weal and woe” (205). But, Schopenhauer says, Kant has demonstrated the ideality of space and time and thus has shown that in the world of things in themselves there is no space and time, and thus no plurality or individuation. Kant himself did not draw this conclusion, but continued to individuate rational beings in the noumenal world; but Schopenhauer thought this was inconsistent of Kant (209). In the noumenal world, everything is one, a unity, so the compassionate person is in touch with

the reality of that world because he makes no distinction between himself and others. In his defense of Kant against Schopenhauer on this point, Paul Guyer, the distinguished Kant scholar, says that Schopenhauer sees compassion as flowing from a theoretical appreciation of this deep metaphysical truth.¹ But at least in his ethics book, I read Schopenhauer as saying that merely by acting compassionately, the compassionate agent thereby expresses and reveals his knowledge of the fundamental unity of all being, even if he has not been explicitly exposed to this doctrine as such.²

But Schopenhauer bolsters his metaphysical view by again adverting to Hinduism and Buddhism, which, he says, propound the doctrine that all reality is one and that individuation and plurality are illusion.³ The relationship between the noumenal and phenomenal realms is unclear in Schopenhauer. If all reality is one it is not clear that there is room for any kind of agency, especially individual agency, since there are no individuals. But perhaps agency should be conceived of as a purely phenomenal phenomenon, yet one that can manifest an understanding or *grasp* of noumenal reality, expressed in compassion.

III. Scheler: Fellow feeling requires lived sense of distinct identity

¹ Paul Guyer, "Schopenhauer, Kant, and Compassion," *Kantian Review*, 17:3 (Nov 2012): 403-429.

² "The beneficent, righteous man would express by his deed that knowledge only which is the result of the greatest intellectual depth and the most laborious investigation of the theoretical philosopher (210)." Schopenhauer's emphasis (in *On the Basis of Morality*) on the compassionate person's thereby revealing insight into the noumenal realm echoes Kant's similar view that the agent acting according to the moral law is manifesting her noumenal nature; but Kant's view does not allow for the definitive knowledge of the noumenal that Schopenhauer does.

)Guyer refers to Schopenhauer's World as Will and Representation as a source of his interpretation.

³ "This doctrine teaches that all plurality is only apparent; that in all the individuals of the world, however infinite the number in which they exhibit themselves successively and simultaneously, there is yet manifested only one and the same truly existing essence, present and identical in all of them. Such a doctrine, of course, existed long before Kant; indeed it might be said to have existed from time immemorial. In the first place it is the main and fundamental teaching of the oldest book in the world, the sacred Vedas." (207)

Let me turn now to Max Scheler, an early 20th century German phenomenologist influenced by Schopenhauer. Scheler (in *The Nature of Sympathy*) emphasizes that the subject must feel the sorrow of the other *as being the other's sorrow, not her own*. (I will construe the subject of fellow feeling as female and the target as male.) This is not contrary to Schopenhauer's understanding, but Schopenhauer does not give sufficient emphasis to it. For Scheler, the subject must have a clear, lived sense of herself as a distinct individual from the target, so that in fellow feeling for him, she is not in any way confusing her self with his. "True fellow-feeling is a genuine out-reaching and entry into the other person and his individual situation, a true and authentic transcendence of one's self" (46). This emphasis on compassion as a kind of activity and an outreaching is barely present in Schopenhauer. Scheler sees the significance of this point in light of a depth psychology influenced by Freud. (Hints of this direction are indeed present in Schopenhauer, as Freud recognized. Schopenhauer influenced Nietzsche in this regard and Nietzsche influenced Freud.) That is, Scheler sees that on deeper, lived levels, we can confuse our self with that of another. We can think that something that we would want were we to be in a situation similar to that of the other is what that other person wants; but, as Scheler says, with his particular character and temperament, the other actually wants something different.

Identity confusions of this sort are common and come in different forms. Jones may identify with Rodriguez in such a way that she in a sense loses her sense of being a distinctive self and takes Rodriguez's experiences, at least in the way she understands them, for her own. And she can do this without in any way being aware that she is doing so; indeed, it would be conceptually impossible for her to be aware of that form of self-deception. Scheler says that the fellow feeling that Jones may have for Rodriguez is not the genuine item since she lacks a clear sense of herself as a subject distinct from Rodriguez, who can then fully recognize that and how she is distinct from Rodriguez.

Schopenhauer sees the distinctness among persons as being due to their numerical, spatio-temporal distinctness. But the subjects whose defective or inadequate forms of separate identity Scheler notes do not lack Schopenhauer's form of recognition of individual difference. Jones is aware that she is a spatio-temporally distinct individual from

Rodriguez. He is over there, she is over here. Yet she lacks a lived sense of distinct identity required for genuine fellow feeling with its “authentic transcendence of one’s self.”

Scheler is explicitly critical of Schopenhauer on this very point. He sees Schopenhauer, plausibly, as saying that compassion involves an identification with the other, seeing oneself in the other, even if it is only in a noumenal realm (although we saw that Schopenhauer sometimes uses non-identificationist metaphors to express the nature of compassion).⁴ This is the view of fellow-feeling that Scheler decisively rejects. We can only have fellow-feeling with someone with whom we do not identify, someone for whom we are as clear as possible is separate and distinct from ourselves, with a temperament and character, a set of feelings and interests, and so on, that might be very different from our own. Only then can fellow feeling be grounded in an understanding of the other’s state *as other*.⁵ For Scheler, it is only when we have the fellow feeling for the other as other that our action motivated by it can have moral worth. (In a sense Schopenhauer agrees with this and says so in his description of compassion in the empirical world; Scheler is saying that he violates this view when he moves to the metaphysical realm.)

So Scheler tunes us into how the achievement of a distinctive sense of identity can be a complex matter, not something simply given with spatio-temporal differentiation/individuation. Feminist philosophers and psychologists of the early 2nd wave took up Scheler’s insight (not necessarily as such) into a feminist framework.⁶ They said that women often fail to develop the fully distinctive sense of self Scheler highlights because they are socialized and ideologized to subordinate their selves to those of particular men in their lives—partners, husbands, fathers, friends, even male children (or

⁴ Schopenhauer nevertheless often implies that each one of us possesses that noumenal nature individually, though he criticizes Kant for making that same assumption.

⁵ “Schopenhauer’s theory becomes a special case of the erroneous theory of fellow-feeling as identification, and a metaphysical version of this to boot. Now actually, as we have shown already, the sort of identification which Schopenhauer describes can only come about by way of some sort of emotional infection and identification, which would positively exclude an understanding of the other person’s state; so that his theory implies a further confusion of moral pity with susceptibility to emotional infection and identification.” (55)

⁶ Sandra Bartky is the one feminist philosopher I have run across to explicitly draw on Scheler. “Sympathy and Solidarity: On a Tightrope with Scheler,” in Diana T. Meyers, *Feminists Rethink the Self* (Westview, 1997).

female children, for that matter).⁷ Feminists of this strand recognized that a sense of a separate and distinct self was an important achievement that required countering the ideology of female subordination. These feminists were particularly attuned to the corruptions of fellow-feeling involved in lacking a distinctive sense of self. Female caring can be bound up with a female's sense that she is not worthy of having her own needs and desires counted equally or adequately, so the caring is premised on thinking the male other to be worthier of having his needs met than her own.

Finally, I note that the kind of separateness involved in Schelerian fellow-feeling is very different from the egoistical separateness that Schopenhauer characterizes in the non-compassionate (egoist or malicious). It does not involve a barrier between self and other, a sense that the other is alien. Rather it is open to a kind of connectedness that the feminist philosophers articulate more so than Scheler.

IV. Iris Murdoch: Platonist metaphysics and the challenge of seeing the other clearly

Iris Murdoch is another philosopher who has contributed to the recognition that we are subject to "identity confusions" that taint our ability to proffer appropriate help to other people and also sees metaphysics as important for ethics. She says that our own fantasies about others, often founded on particular desires for something from the other person, constantly get in the way of our seeing others clearly, and thus knowing what they really need. Her novels are full of characters who exemplify this point, one which Murdoch takes to be Freudian in character. She often projects a strong sense of pessimism about ordinary humans' ability to avoid these distortions. Scheler does not go down that path, but rather simply explains the phenomenon in question. Because feminists also have an ideological critique of the forces in society that produce these distortions, they in a way possess a greater range of resources for correcting these distortions than does Murdoch. She sees individual distortions almost as almost entirely a matter of individual pathologies and

⁷ Refs: Diana , Marilyn Friedman?

never articulates any sort of social critique.⁸ Some feminists have drawn on Murdoch's insights in this regard, especially insofar as she emphasizes personal relations as a central domain of morality, and is helpful in understanding in how personal relationships can go wrong.⁹

A noteworthy feature of Murdoch's views on these matters is an eschewing of the affective dimension involved in fellow-feeling, emphasized strongly by Scheler and generally by the second wave feminist philosophers as well. Murdoch does not talk of having empathy or compassion or care for others. She frames the moral relationship in cognitive/perceptual and "moral realist" terms. The subject "sees" the target clearly, and is responding to the "reality," as she puts it, of the other. This formulation echoes Schopenhauer's notion that for the egoist, others are not entirely "real"; they are only "phantoms" seen as candidates for serving the subject's needs. For Murdoch, the response to the reality of the other is not always an action, such as helping. As she emphasizes in her famous example of a woman and her departed daughter-in-law, an "inner" action of seeing the other justly is a moral act and can be a moral achievement in itself, independent of any behavior to which it might lead.¹⁰

Murdoch's less affective orientation to the appropriate stance we take toward others in need than Scheler and the feminists is no doubt bound up in her more Platonic ethical metaphysics. She shares with both Kant and Schopenhauer, and with Buddhism, the idea that metaphysics is deeply connected with ethics, that metaphysics informs our understanding of ethics as a phenomenon, but also informs the actions of a moral agent.¹¹ She would agree with both philosophers that ethics in some sense requires metaphysics. As we saw, Schopenhauer sees his Hindu/Buddhist-influenced metaphysics as essentially Kantian in character, although he thought that Kant failed to take the final step implied by

⁸ For this critique of Murdoch for omitting social sources of distortions of moral perception, see L. Blum, "Visual Metaphors in Murdoch's Moral Philosophy," in Justin Broackes (ed.), *Iris Murdoch, Philosopher* (Oxford 2012).

⁹ Refs. Ruddick?¹212{

¹⁰ Example is from Murdoch, "Idea of Perfection" in *Sovereignty of Good*.

¹¹ Murdoch discusses Schopenhauer extensively in her last book, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (Penguin, 1993), based on her 1982 Gifford Lectures.

his own doctrines of affirmatively denying the spatio-temporal character of ultimate reality, of noumena, and thus failing to see the Oneness of ultimate reality. But the metaphysics to which Murdoch is committed is Platonic, and so generates a cognitive/perceptual relation to a reality that is moral in character. Murdoch sometimes fully embraces something like Plato's form of the Good and speaks of Goodness in the abstract as having an attracting character; other times she describes the "moral reality" in question as individual other persons and their needs. Murdoch never quite resolves this duality in her version of Platonic metaphysics. But she her cognitivism is not of a Kantian stripe. She does not think we normally act out of a *rational principle*, nor does she frame the moral pull of the reality of others as generating a *duty* to help. But for Murdoch/Plato, the cognitive/perceptual relation to an external moral or morally infused reality is the driving metaphor, quite different from Schopenhauer's. This metaphysic does not express an idea of fundamental connectedness among human beings, or all creatures, that Schopenhauer's Buddhist-like "oneness" metaphysic does, and that the feminist, less metaphysical notion of the connected self does.

What Scheler, Murdoch, and the feminists share, and that distinguishes them from Schopenhauer, is an acute focus on the individual as both subject and target of fellow feeling or helping motivation, and a consequent sensitivity to the requirement that the agent have a clear, lived (not merely intellectual or cognitive) sense of herself as distinct from the target—that she not confuse her identity with his in a lived sense. To summarize, this identity-confusion or failure to differentiate raises two different moral concerns. One is the straightforward egoist worry that if the subject does not distinguish herself from the target, if she confuses her identity with his, then her compassionate or concerned action is egoistic in character—she is really concerned about herself, not about him. The second is more subtle. It is that in order to help the other, and to possess appropriately directed fellow feeling that would motivate such help, it is necessary to see the other clearly as the distinct individual that he is. But there are many barriers or challenges to achieving such a recognition of the other, such as confusing what she wants and needs with what I might want and need, or would want and need were I in her circumstances. The first of these two forms of identity confusion operates in one way at a more conscious, and yet metaphysical,

level. I am concerned about the other because I consciously see myself in the other and it is myself-in-the-other that is the intentional object of my concern. Thus the moral worry is that what looks like concern for the other is actually a form of self-concern—I care about myself in the other.

In the second variant, I take myself to be recognizing the other as other, but at a less conscious level I am failing fully to see her in her distinct individuality; I am letting my fantasies about her get in the way of my seeing her clearly (Murdoch's emphasis) or at a deeper level I am not fully psychically distinct from her (Scheler's and the feminists' emphasis). In this case the moral worry is not that the motive in question is self concern rather than other concern; it is that the agent has failed to see the other clearly, so as to be able to recognize what she needs, and what in particular the agent is able to provide for her.

Schopenhauer raises this issue only at a very formal level. He does not appear to recognize the kinds of self/other difficulties Scheler, the feminists, and Murdoch raise. This seems to me true of the Dalai Lama as well in *An Open Heart: Practicing Compassion in Everyday Life*, and of Jay Garfield's recent account of compassion and Buddhist ethics in *Engaging Buddhism*.

Perhaps a feature of Buddhist metaphysics, partially adopted by Schopenhauer, renders the worry about the self-other differentiation required for knowing the other less significant. That feature is the view that suffering is the human condition, permeating all aspects of our life, even if we are not explicitly feeling it at a given time. If everyone is always suffering, then it is always appropriate to feel compassion for that person, and compassion is in a sense guaranteed its appropriate object. The agent does not need to have as differentiated a sense of self-and-other as Scheler, Murdoch, and the feminists are concerned with. The other's needs are not so individualized if the salient point is that the other is suffering and thus warranting compassion. When the Dalai Lama talks about cultivating compassion for every living being, he cannot have in mind an exquisitely individualized sense of each individual person. He must mean each-individual-insofar-as-he-is-a-sufferer. "Our compassion for all sentient beings must stem from a recognition of their suffering" (Open Heart, 93). And "eventually we should be able to relate to all beings [with compassion]

seeing that their situation is always dependent upon the conditions of the vicious cycle of life” (105).¹²

V. Group solidarities

Let me now turn to group solidarities. Solidarities involve a kind of definitively non-metaphysical oneness. I will focus on ethnic or racial group solidarities. These are large groups in which no individual member can know personally every other, yet some other members are very likely to be personally known to any given individual member. One can feel solidarity with an unknown member of the group.

Earlier we noted that identifying with another person can involve a kind of identity confusion that taints the fellow feeling the identifier has with the identifye. But some forms of identification lack this distortion and can support appropriately-informed and -directed fellow feeling. For example, the agent can identify with the target because the target is going through some difficult experience that the agent has herself gone through in the past. While such a situation can blind the agent to differences between her past experience and the target’s present one, it need not. The agent can identify with the target with respect to this experience while being entirely tuned in to the ways that the experience has a different meaning and quality to the target given differing circumstances and histories, of which the agent is fully aware.

Group identities can have this “appropriate identification” feature, in which one member identifies with another based on their shared group identity but is entirely aware of other differences between them. Yet group identities also raise a different issue regarding

¹² If compassion is a general emotion-based attitude that is to be cultivated, the picture one is given of our caring relations with others is different than Murdoch’s, in which the agent is confronted with an individual moral reality consisting in a particular other person and her needs. One responds to something one is confronted with in the moment. It is not a question of a standing general attitude that one cultivates. Perhaps in the final analysis these two states of mind are reconcilable. Perhaps the cultivated attitude of compassion could be construed as a disposition to respond to others as individuals when the situation arises. Perhaps, but this is not the impression one gets from *the Dalai Lama’s* writings.

identification. Sometimes identification with the other proceeds entirely by way of the shared identity. Yvonne identifies Reggie with because she is black and he is black. The shared identity forges the identification. But sometimes the shared identity, while present, does not play such a central role in the identification. The situation could be like that described above. Suppose Delia comes to recognize that Yvonne is undergoing an experience that seems to her similar to one she herself has undergone—for example, Yvonne has been demeaned as a black woman in a way that Delia feels she has experienced also. The shared experience is the source of the identification, rather than the shared identity *per se*, although the shared identity plays a role since the experience is partly characterized in terms of that identity.

This distinction is orthogonal to the “tainted identification” issue. The identification can be either tainted or not tainted, if the identification is entirely based on shared group identity or based on something else but drawing on the shared group identity.

Solidarity seems to signal a form of concern for a group and for members of the group as members of the group; but it is not an encompassing concern for their well-being in its totality but rather in light of a particular adversity facing them at a particular time. Perhaps if the group suffers *general* adversity—for example if they are a particularly disadvantaged group in a society, or are a general target of discrimination or stigma (as Muslims are in many Western societies, for example)—then the concern is of a more standing character, rather than localized to a particular time. Even then, however, solidarity would not seem directed to the others’ overall well-being but only the relief of the adversity. In a way this does not differ so much from the Dalai Lama’s compassion, which is directed toward the suffering of the other, but not necessarily toward improving the other’s well-being apart from relieving suffering.

The African American Buddhist thinker Charles Johnson is interesting to bring in here, as a bridge between race issues and Buddhism.¹³ Johnson says that African Americans have

¹³ Johnson is best known as a novelist, having won the National Book Award, a prestigious American fiction award, for the 1990 *Middle Passage*. But he has also had training in philosophy, and this comes through in his writings. His writings on Buddhism, from which I

suffered more than many other groups. This distinctive suffering *could* be made a source or foundation of a distinctive racial solidarity that is directed toward relieving that suffering. The African American philosopher Tommie Shelby looks at black suffering, or more precisely, black injustice-based suffering, in this way; he argues that it appropriately provides a basis and justification for black solidarity.¹⁴ However Johnson does not take this path. Rather, he sees black distinctive suffering as a source of insight into the human condition generally, but one that often escapes white people who are not in touch with suffering, even if they do suffer.¹⁵

Even if not as encompassing as overall concern for the other's well-being, solidarity of the most robust kind does involve a definite kind of "oneness." To have solidarity is to see the group identity shared with others as an important mutual identification. Some particular expressions of group solidarity especially reflect this sense of oneness. The recent American film, *Selma*, about a march for voting rights led by Martin Luther King in 1965 in Alabama, vividly recreates the sense of solidarity among the marchers, all seeing themselves as part of a single entity, a movement, with which they all identify. When some marchers are beaten, others rush to help them. They do not feel a sense of separateness from one another.

This sense of oneness in solidarity is not confined to race- or ethnicity-based forms of solidarity. The film, and the real events on which it is based, involve trans-racial solidarity as well. At first all the marchers are black. Then, for both strategic and moral reasons, King puts out a "call" for whites or non-blacks of good will to come to Selma to be part of subsequent attempts to march from Selma to the capital in Montgomery. Two subsequent

am drawing, are in *Taming the Ox: Buddhist Stories and Reflections on Politics, Race, Culture, and Spiritual Practice* (Shambala, 2014).

¹⁴ T. Shelby, *We Who Are Black: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity* (Harvard, 2005).

¹⁵ Johnson approvingly cites another African American Buddhist, Jan Willis: "People of color because of our experience of the great and wrenching historical dramas of slavery, colonization, and segregation, understand suffering in a way that our white brothers and sisters do not. That understanding provides a kind of 'head start' in comprehending essential elements in Buddhist philosophy."

marches bring together people of different races, powerfully portrayed in these moments of solidarity.

Three bases of solidarity: experience, group membership, political commitment

The in-group and trans-group solidarities have different foundations. We can differentiate three bases of solidarity—experience, political commitment, and group membership. As mentioned earlier, we can feel solidarity with those who have had the same experience as we—for example the experience of being discriminated against or stigmatized. That experience can, of course, cross ethnic or racial group boundaries, since people of many different groups can share that particular experience.

Shared political commitment is a different basis. It brings together people striving for the same political goal, where this may be people who have different experiential relations to that goal, and come from different identity groups. In the first marches in Selma, the black participants are mostly people who have all had the experience of living under segregation, with generally insuperable obstacles to voting (the focus of the film) put in their way. In this case the experiential and identity bases of solidarity align. One might say that shared experiences *inform* the way the shared identity functions to create solidarity. It is black people who have experienced discrimination and segregation. The subsequent marches that involve whites as well still exemplify the sense of oneness in solidarity, but it is based only on shared political commitment, not on identity or experience.

So experience, political commitment, and identity are distinct bases for solidarity, and often generate different groupings of persons. But the marches consisting of only black people can be regarded as experience, identity, and political commitment all coming together to inform and create the grouping in question—since those who chose to march were not only those blacks who suffered from segregation but also those who chose to commit themselves to doing something about it though participating in the marches.¹⁶

¹⁶ Perhaps one needs a further distinction here. The whites who marched can indeed be seen as helping to constitute a political-commitment-based group with the blacks who are marching. But they can also be seen as expressing an “out-group” solidarity with blacks (not only the marchers, but those on behalf of whom the marchers are marching) as sufferers of injustice. Out-group solidarity does not involve a shared basis of solidarity

All three of these bases of solidarity are exclusionary, in the sense that the group so defined is confined to people who satisfy the criterion for inclusion—having certain experiences, having certain political commitments, and being in an identity-defined group, in this case a racial one. But the political commitment criterion reaches out in a somewhat more universalistic way than do the other two—because anyone no matter what their experiences or their identity group can choose to take up certain political commitments. The film attempts to capture this universality when it shows various people around the United States watching King’s call for volunteers on television, after having seen footage of marchers being beaten, and then responding to that call by choosing to come to Selma. This universality can be regarded as analogous to or exemplified in both Schopenhauer and the Dalai Lama’s implication that anyone is capable of compassion for anyone else.¹⁷ Scheler very definitively, perhaps even more than the Dalai Lama, articulates the view that the capability for fellow-feeling is universal in humans, and that it is not limited by experience. Scheler affirms that we are each capable of understanding the experience of the other and having the appropriate fellow-feeling for her, even if we have not had the same experience ourselves [ref]. As mentioned earlier, this individualized dimension of fellow feeling is absent in the Buddhist writers, including here Schopenhauer, because the object of compassion is suffering, a condition assumed to be universal to human nature. We are meant to have compassion for each individual being as-a-sufferer, but not as an individual in Scheler’s sense.

King’s universalism: the “beloved community”

A kind of universalism is expressed in Martin Luther King’s vision of what he called “the beloved community,” a vision of the future in which white, black, and other would live together in harmony, accepting one another as fellow citizens and fellow human beings in

among all members of the constituted solidarity group; it involves the out-group *standing with* members of the in-group, where the latter are defined by experience and identity. In this respect out-group solidarity has a different character than in-group solidarity, but both manifest “standing with.”

¹⁷ This universalism is somewhat compromised in Schopenhauer’s case, however, by his determinism—that people’s characters are set and unchangeable and that many and indeed most people are not compassionate.

an overarching community of care and concern. But this vision did not, in King's mind, aim to erase racial identities. It was not what came later to be called "color blind" or "post racial." One line has been lifted from King's famous speech at the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and wrongly "spun" to imply that King was invoking a world beyond racial identities entirely.¹⁸ He was invoking a world beyond racism but *not* beyond racial identities. He saw American blacks as a distinct people, who would not lose that distinctiveness in a beloved community, but would bring it as a positive element in that interracial community. This retaining of a group distinctiveness is not incompatible with the Dalai Lama's vision of a universal compassion, but the recognition and retention of group identities that are positive for their members but also can be sources of division and have historically been so, seems to me to go against both the Dalai Lama and Schopenhauer's emphasis on the suffering of humanity as the most fundamental shared feature of existence. It is us as sufferers, not as black, white, Kurd, Turk, or Chinese ethnic that really counts.

Interestingly, Charles Johnson, the African American Buddhist, says that Buddhist teachings may be the next step in spiritual evolution toward the "beloved community."¹⁹ Johnson does not refer to King's sense of retention of a black or African American identity in the beloved community that he, Johnson, envisions. He sees the Buddhist letting go of the ego as something that can be especially valuable for American blacks. There is no explicit valorizing of a distinctive black identity and solidarity that can be brought to and coexist with a wider universality in the vision of the beloved community that he articulates, but on the other hand, Johnson does not take his Buddhism in an explicitly "post-racial" dimension either, and often talks about black Americans as a distinct group that, the reader could infer, he would expect to retain their identity in the beloved community he envisions.

Finally, the notion of solidarity based on any of the three foundations mentioned—experience, identity, and political commitment—offers a partial, though only partial, buffer against the identity confusion that Scheler and Murdoch are concerned about. It does so

¹⁸ [check quote: something about being judged on the "content of their character rather than the color of their skin.']

¹⁹ Johnson, 73, 79.

because it is focused on particular concerns around which the solidarity is built. So the concern that individual members of the solidarity group have for one another is not open-ended but targeted to something on which agreement as to its character is largely assumed—for example, the achievement of civic equality, an end to racial discrimination. This is similar to the suffering-focus in Schopenhauer and Buddhism that in a sense ensures that compassion will be properly directed.

This targeting, with its consequent buffering against identity confusion, is less true, however, of the identity-based form where there is more room for disagreement as to what members of the identity group need or what is good for them. This point relates to the way the form of solidarity exemplified in the Selma marches does not capture the full significance of racial solidarity. Because solidarity involves a a sense of solidarity with members of one's group unknown to one that may permeate one's life but not in an active way. One feels a sense of connection to the racial or ethnic others and acknowledges them as a plurality of persons with their individual lives in a way that gets sidelined in a focused demonstration such as King's voting rights marches. But such whole group solidarity leaves room for significant confusion on the part of one member of the group about what another wants or needs.