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# Basic Income and the Concept of the *Good Life*

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# The Ethics of Liberalism

- Enlightenment Values
  - Scientific Revolution, Objectivity, Neutrality
- Freedom
  - Kantian Ethics
- Modern Liberalism
  - Rawls
    - Justice as fairness
    - *Political Liberalism*
      - Reasonable Pluralism
  - Van Parijs and Vanderborght
    - “[T]he shaping of our social institutions should not be guided by a specific conception of the good life, but by a coherent and plausible conception of justice...” (2017, p.98).



# Critique of Rationality

- Crisis of Enlightenment
- Nietzsche
  - *Birth of Tragedy*
  - *Untimely Meditations*

“[Our] schools and teachers simply abstain from an education in morality or make do with mere formalities: and virtue is a word that no longer means anything...”  
(p.132).

- Horkheimer and Adorno
  - *Dialectic of Enlightenment*





# An Alternative Ontology and Morality

## Ethics and Emotions

- Hume
  - “Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions” (p. 415).

## Social Embeddedness

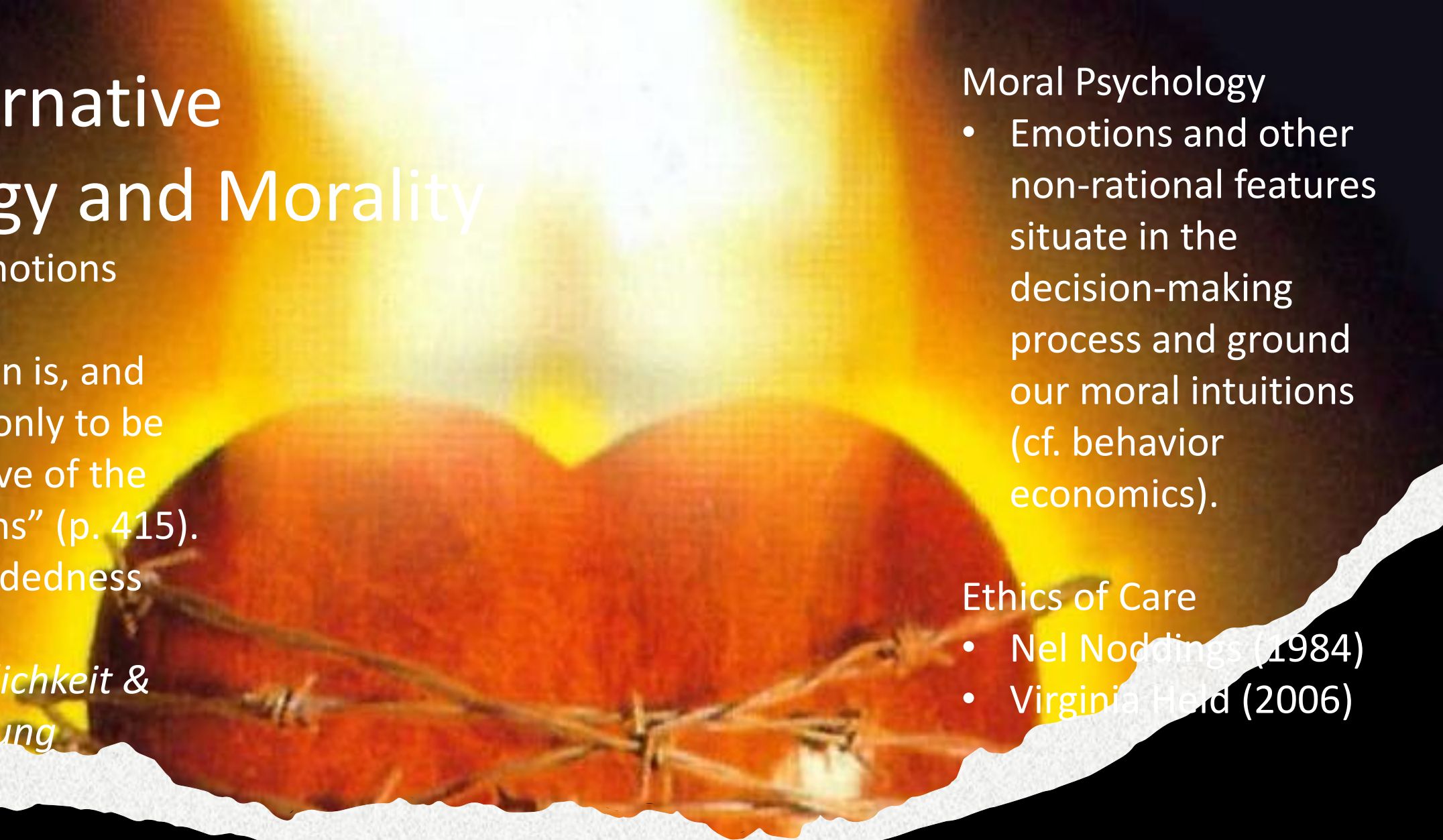
- Heidegger
  - *Befindlichkeit & Stimmung*

## Moral Psychology

- Emotions and other non-rational features situate in the decision-making process and ground our moral intuitions (cf. behavior economics).

## Ethics of Care

- Nel Noddings (1984)
- Virginia Held (2006)



# Conclusion

- If it is true that we are fundamentally constituted by social embeddedness, we cannot bound ourselves; that is, we cannot make an abstraction of the sort characteristic of the liberal tradition descending from the Enlightenment.
- *A fortiori*, scientific ideals of objectivity and neutrality are misguided, since they generate from our social ontology. i.e., the value of liberty is not neutral.
- The very same is the wellspring of our moral intuitions. Therefore, we cannot treat as confounds emotional and non-rational features of our experience.
- An impersonal, dispassionate ethic is one that will necessarily miss the most important parts of our experience. We do not discharge our moral obligations by adhering to a principle of liberty as a matter of priority or sufficiency. Therefore, we must admit of the formative influence of the emotions.
- An ethics of care or compassion can serve as a lacuna.





# Continued

- Our concept of 'the good life' is not neutral, and so liberty (pretending to neutrality) cannot be the cardinal or orienting value or principle.
- The reason why we would endorse a policy of basic income is not because it would be in accord with a principle of liberty, but because it resonates with our intuitions as *careful* and *compassionate* beings.

## Possible Problems

- Slide to tyranny
  - Pro-sociality
- Decision-making procedure
  - How to negotiate between non-discursive entities? That is, there is no way from within emotions to adjudicate between them.
- Objections to social ontology

