Taking Seriously the Challenges of Agent-Centered Morality

행위자 중심적 관점의 도덕이론에 대한 비판적 고찰, 그리고 그 긍정적 통찰의 방법론적 수용을 위한 제안

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Contents

Abstract

Agent-centered morality has been a serious challenge to ethical theories based on agent-neutral morality in defining what is the moral point of view. In this paper, my concern is to examine whether arguments for agent-centered morality, in particular, arguments for agent-centered option, can be justified.

After critically examining three main arguments for agent-centered morality, I will contend that although there is a ring of truth in the demands of agent-centered morality, agent-centered morality is more problematic than agent-neutral morality. Nevertheless, we need to take seriously the challenges to agent-neutral morality by finding a way to reflect the insight of agent-centered morality within the framework of agent-neutral morality without collapsing it into agent-centered morality. As a way of doing so, I suggest that we need to integrate the situated (rather than transcendental), nonideal (rather than idealized), and dialogical (rather than monological) perspectives developed in feminist ethics, into agent-neutral morality.

요약

무엇이 도덕적 관점인가를 정의하는 문제에 있어서, 행위자 중심적 관점의 (agent-centered) 도덕 이론은 행위자 중립적 관점의 (agent-neutral) 전통적인 도덕 이론에 대해 심각한 도전을 제기하고 있다. 이 논문에서 필자는 행위자 중심적 관점의 도덕 이론이 제기하는 도전을 행위자 중립적 관점의 도덕이론에서 어떻게 수용할 수 있는지 논의하고 있다.

이를 위해 필자는 먼저 개인적 관점의 중요성에 입각하여 제시된 세 가지 주요 논증을 비판적으로 음미한 다음, 행위자 중심적 관점의 도덕 이론이 행위자 중립적 관점의 도

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덕이론에 비해 보다 심각한 문제를 초래할 수 있다는 것을 지적하였다. 이런 점에서 행위자 중심적 관점의 도덕이론 자체를 받아들일 필요는 없지만, 행위자 중심적 관점의 도덕 이론에 의해 제시된 긍정적 통찰을 행위자 중립적 관점의 도덕이론의 틀 안에서 보다 적극적으로 반영할 방도를 강구할 필요가 있다고 본다. 그 구체적인 방안의 하나로서, 필자는 여성주의 윤리학자들에 의해 제시된 방법론적 관점들, 즉 상황적이고 비이상적이고 담론적인 (the situated, non-ideal, and dialogical) 도덕적 관점의 적극적인 도입을 제안하고자 한다.

Ⅰ. Introduction

Agent-centered morality has been a serious challenge to ethical theories based on agent-neutral morality in defining what is the moral point of view. In this paper, my concern is to examine whether arguments for agent-centered morality, in particular, arguments for agent-centered option, can be justified. After critically examining three main arguments for agent-centered morality advanced on the basis of the importance of personal point of view, I will contend that although there is a ring of truth in the demands of agent-centered morality, agent-centered morality is more problematic than agent-neutral morality. Nevertheless, we need to take seriously the challenges to agent-neutral morality by finding a way to reflect the demands of agent-centered morality within the framework of agent-neutral morality without collapsing it into agent-centered morality. As a way of doing so, I suggest that we need to incorporate the situated, non-ideal, and dialogical moral perspectives developed in feminist ethics into agent-neutral morality.

Ⅱ. Challenges of Agent-centered Morality to Ethical Theories

Before examining arguments in support of agent-centered morality, I will sketch what is meant by agent-centered morality and why agent-centered morality matters in recent ethical theories. Various definitions and versions of agent-centered morality exist. I shall begin by taking a broad definition provided by Edward Johnson. Johnson states that morality is agent-centered "in so far as it makes appeal to moral considerations whose force is tied to the moral agent's personal projects, values, relationships, or perspectives."[1] According to this definition, the value or the right depends on some sort of agent's personal point of view. This contrasts with agent-neutral morality, in which moral considerations are neutral to agents' projects, values, relationships, or perspectives.

There are two aspects of agent-centered morality: agent-centered options, which I will call simply 'options,' and agent-centered constraints.[2]

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1) Edward Johnson, "Agent-Centered Morality," *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, ed. Lawrence C. Becker (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 28.
2) These terms are coined by Shelly Kagan. Shelly Kagan, *The Limits of Morality*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1989). Scheffler calls the former "agent-centered prerogatives" and the latter "agent-centered restrictions." Samuel Scheffler, *The Rejection of Consequentialism : A Philosophical Investigation of the Considerations Underlying Rival Moral Conceptions*, revised ed. (New York : Oxford University Press, 1994), 167-192.

Options permit the agent to pursue his own interest rather than the overall good and allow each agent to assign a certain greater weight to his own interest than to the interests of other people. For example, options allow an agent to spend $50,000 buying a new car rather than reducing a stranger's poverty, and they allow an agent to neglect famine relief for children in other lands in order to support computer facilities for children in her local area.

On the other hand, agent-centered constraints forbid an agent to take certain courses of action even when they are necessary means for achieving the overall good. For example, according to this concept, killing even one innocent person in order to minimize the total number of innocent people killed should be prohibited.

In this way, a primary target of criticism from agent-centered morality has been mainly act-consequentialism, in which the right and the good are determined from an impersonal point of view. For example, Samuel Scheffler devotes his book, *The Rejection of Consequentialism*, to an agent-centered rationale for rejecting consequentialism's concept of right, and to his alternative concept of right. To explain why agent-centered morality matters in recent ethical theories, I shall sketch briefly Scheffler's criticism of consequentialism. Scheffler defines act-consequentialism as follows: theories that "specify some principle for ranking overall states of affairs from best to worst from an impersonal point of view" and that "require that each agent in all cases act in such a way as to produce the highest-ranked state of affairs that he is in a position to produce."[3]

He points out that an objection arises in response to a "discrepancy between the way in which concerns and commitments are *naturally* generated from a person's point of view quite independently of the weight of those concerns in an impersonal ranking of overall states of affairs, and the way in which the consequentialist concept of right requires agents to treat their energy and attention as altogether dependent for their *moral* significance on their weight in such a ranking."[4] As a result, act consequentialism alienates the agent "from his actions and the source of his action in his own convictions," and thereby undermines his integrity.[5]

To address this objection, Scheffler proposes changing consequentialism's conception of the right, in such a way as to reflect the personal point of view by allowing for agents to devote energy and attention to their projects out of proportion to their weight from an impersonal standpoint of the agents' doing so.

Though Scheffler's challenge is directed only to the consequentialist's concept of right, we need to notice that the point of disagreement between agent-centered morality and agent-neutral morality is not whether the concept of right is determined by promoting the good or not. The point is whether the concept of right is determined by allowing the agent to give special weight to the agent's interest or not. Thus, the criticism from agent-centered morality is directed not only at consequentialist theories but also at nonconsequentialist theories such as Kant's and Rawls's theories, in which the concept of right is derived from the impartial point of view.

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3) Scheffler, 1.

4) Scheffler, 56.
5) Scheffler, 9.

Given this aspect, the debate between agent-centered and agent-neutral morality is related to the metal-ethical debates between the personal and the impersonal point of view, between partial and impartial consideration, and between subjective and objective reason.[6] This essay is motivated by my recognition that the challenge of agent-centered morality to recent ethical theories is serious. The reason is that its challenge has targeted not only a particular type of normative moral theories such as consequentialism but also the views of what is morally right to do, and of what is the moral point of view.

Of the two aspects of agent-centered morality, options play a more important role in criticism of agent-neutral moral considerations. As a result, my topic in this essay will be confined to raising questions about options. Are agents allowed to assign a certain proportionately greater weight to their own interest such as projects, relationships, welfare, etc.? Should the moral point of view integrate these options within the moral system?

III. Examining Arguments for Agent-centered Options

In this part, I shall examine three accounts of the justification and the rationale for options. These three arguments take several steps to show the necessity of agent-centered options. They attempt to 1) indicate the importance of the personal point of view in three ways, natural independence of the personal point of view, the second argument in the aspect of the source of motivation, and finally the third argument in the aspect of its intrinsic moral values ; 2) stress its need to be reflected in moral theory; 3) point out that demands from the personal point of view cannot be captured by the agent-neutral moral point of view such as impartiality, the impersonal point of view, or the objective point of view; and 4) conclude that there is a rationale to introduce some types of options in moral theory.

In this paper, I will not focus on critiquing steps 1) and 2). Bracketing the truth of 1) and 2), I will focus my criticism on steps 3) and 4) by showing that moral theories without options can reflect the demands of the personal point of view.

1. Argument I: The natural independence of the personal point of view

The first argument defending for agent-centered options is appealing to the facts about the nature of the persons. Scheffler's argument is focused on the importance of "the natural independence of the personal point of view."[7] In contrast, the argument reconstructed by Kagan seems to be focused on the facts about the nature of having the personal point of view.[8] I combine Sheffler's

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6) Generally, it is thought that whereas agent-neutral morality corresponds with the impersonal point of view, the impartial point of view, and the objective view, agent- centered morality is compatible with the personal point of view, the partial point of view, and subjective view. But I don't agree with this point; I will touch on this point in the last part.

7) For Scheffler's argument on the basis of the importance of "the natural independence of the personal point of view," see Scheffler, 56-79. Also, for an critical examination of the argument, see Kagan, Shelly, "Does Consequentialism Demand Too Much?" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 13 (1984): 249-54.

8) For Kagan's modified argument on the ground of the about the nature of having the personal point of view which is called the moderate's argument by Kagan., see Kagan, *The Limits of Morality*, 258-279; Shelly

original argument with Kagan's reconstructed argument as follows:

1) Each person has a personal point of view, a perspective from which projects are undertaken, and interests developed.

2) To have a personal point of view is part of the *nature* of a person.

3) Adequate moral theory must recognize or mirror people's nature.

4) The personal point of view is independent of the impersonal point of view because the impersonal point of view has no further concern with a personal project if it may not affect the size of the harm or benefit incurred by that person.

5) Moral theory with options such as agent prerogatives reflects the nature of the personal point of view because it allows agents to devote energy and attention to their projects and commitments out of proportion to their weight from the impersonal standpoint.

Conclusion: an agent-centered prerogative has to be incorporated into moral theory.

This argument tries to find the importance of the personal perspective in the fact that it reflects the nature of a person. Thus, given this concept of the importance of the natural fact of having a personal point of view, he argues that a moral point of view needs to give sufficient weight to that fact only if it reflects it by allowing agents a room in which they devote attention to their projects and concerns to a greater extent than impersonal optimality by itself would allow.

In responese to this argument, I clarify the

Kagan, "Review: Précis of The Limits of Morality," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Dec., 1991): 900.

meaning of premise 2, and examine the grounds of premises 3, 4, and 5.

First, I begin by elucidating the possible meaning of premise 2: to have such an independent point of view is part of *the nature* of a person. Here, I wonder what is meant by *nature*. Does it mean that having an independent personal point of view is unavoidable? Scheffler does not seem to mean that all people are *always unavoidably* motivated by or act in accordance with a personal point of view, but he possibly means that people tend to be motivated by or act in accordance with a personal point of view rather than an impersonal point of view.

Second, given this interpretation of premise 2 and the truth of it, Scheffler's argument is weak because he fails to explain why premise 2 can support premise 3. Thus, it is not clear why the natural fact of the personal point of view should be a factor to be reflected in moral theories, and how *moral* independence can come from *natural* independence. To fill the gap between premises 2 and 3, we have to add another premise to show why the natural fact of the personal point of view is important for our moral considerations in some ways.

Scheffler does not seem to provide any explicit answer to this. However, Scheffler's several passages make us guess what he has in mind. Scheffler stresses that the importance for morality of the independence of the personal point of view is "what it tells us about the character of personal agency and motivation." [9] Thus, he seems to think that nature plays an important role in motivation and that motivation is an essential

9) Scheffler, 62, 94.

part of moral requirements. But this implies a different type of argument, which I shall present separately in the next section, which covers the argument from harmony between motivation and justification.

In this section, I focus on examining premises 4 and 5 of this argument: the personal point of view is independent of the impersonal point of view, and morality with options reflects the nature of the personal point of view. This point is repeatedly expressed in several of Scheffler's passages on what he calls the "liberation strategy": It can be best presented in the following statement: "the permission not to produce the best states of affairs suffices to free individual agents from the demands of impersonal optimality, and thus to prevent them from becoming slaves of the impersonal standpoint." [10]

However, I raise concern about these premises for the following reason. Moral systems with agent-centered options can be self-defeating concerning the pursuit of the personal point of view. If the agent-centered option is permitted for only one or a few persons, the agent-centered option may suffice to free individual agents from the demands of impersonal optimality and help them succeed in realizing their personal interests, as in the case of a free rider. However, if we agree to accept morality with agent-centered options, we have to permit every person to pursue agent-centered options. Yet if everyone tries to pursue agent-centered options, each person's personal project or more urgent need might not be realized as well because many of our personal projects can be achieved with help from others and

cooperation between persons.

Let me give some examples. When I first arrived in the United States, without many strangers' time, attention, and energy devoted to helping me achieve stability rather than to their personal projects, I might have suffered more serious personal troubles. In addition, imagining a more desperate situation, let us suppose that a patient is at risk, and he urgently needs a particular type of blood. In this case, his life would be saved only if there is someone who devotes time and blood to this patient instead of taking the option of pursuing his or her personal projects. Finally, consider the laws of our society. Sometimes, the laws seem to interfere with our short-term personal projects such that we are tempted to take some options that will permit us to pursue our own personal projects. However, when the imagined laws with options are institutionalized and all drivers are allowed to violate the stop signs rule due to the individuals' personal projects, would the laws eventually be helpful for our long-term personal projects? Rather than having laws with options, wouldn't it more desirable for us to revise laws into well-legislated laws to best protect personal interests and rights? Similarly, it would be better for us to make well-made agent-neutral moral systems, which allow every person at the minimum to protect his or her personal point of view. A "liberation strategy" may be ultimately realized by having more systems in accord with the agent-neutral standpoint, not by having moral systems in accord with the agent-centered options.

For these reasons, I believe that contrary to their original purposes, moral systems with agent options may overall be more disadvantageous to

10) Scheffler, 94.

the personal projects of members than moral systems without options. Instead, our long-term personal projects or more urgent personal needs may be better realized within the frame of morality without options.

2. Argument II: Harmony between motivation and justification

The first argument in support of agent-centered options based on the natural independence of the personal point of view can be more plausibly modified as follows.

1) Each person has a personal point of view.

2) People tend to be motivated by or act in accordance with the personal point of view rather than the impersonal point of view.

3) Motive is an essential part of moral justification, so an adequate morality must recognize or mirror people's nature.

4) However, the impersonal point of view fails to harmonize one's motives and one's reasons.

5) Morality with options can harmonize one's motives and one's reasons.

Conclusion: consequently, options have to be incorporated into moral theory.

This modified argument is different from the first argument in its emphasis on the motivating function of the personal point of view and on the role of motivation in moral justification. A similar argument is also provided Stocker in terms of the concept of "moral schizophrenia," a split between one's motives and one's reasons and justification.[11] Stocker claims that utilitarianism

and deontological theory necessitate a moral schizophrenia because of their emphasis on impersonality.[12] As a result, disharmony between our motives and our reasons makes it impossible for us to achieve the good in an integrated way. In addition, disharmony not only puts us in a position that is psychologically uncomfortable, difficult, or even untenable but also makes our lives essentially fragmented and incoherent.[13] Furthermore, the impersonal perspective may require sacrifices by agents who performed their duties but never or rarely wanted to.

In response, I will also bracket the truth of premise 3, and will focus on examining the truth of premise 4: the impersonal point of view fails to harmonize our motives and our reasons.

It may be true that agents tend to be more easily motivated by their agent related reasons than by agent-neutral reasons. However, it also seems to be true that agents are able to be moved and strongly motivated by recognizing agent-neutral reasons under some conditions and by internalization of these reasons. Given this, taking the view of "reasons internalism" is not necessary in order to address the motivation problem. Rawls and Kagan suggest ways of addressing the motivation problem without being collapsed into agent centered morality; the specify socio-moral psychological and epistemological conditions in which agents will be inspired to do what is right in following ways.

After establishing principles of justice, Rawls deals with the problem of stability related to motivation by mentioning social and moral psy-

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11) Michael Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," *Virtue Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997),

66-78.
12) Stocker, 71.
13) Stocker, 60.

chological conditions in which our moral sense for these principles can be cultivated.[14] Thus, according to him, the sense of justice as a settled disposition to adopt and to want to act from the moral point of view is "the normal outgrowth of natural human attitudes within a well-ordered society," and "one conception of justice is more stable than another if the sense of justice that it tends to generate is stronger and more likely to override disruptive inclination."[15] According to his view, in order to address the motivation problem, forming a well-ordered society and cultivating a moral sense is required.

On the other hand, Kagan tries to address the motivation problem by indicating epistemological conditions for being motivated to act morally such as prudence, vivid beliefs, and counterfactuals. For example, if we can have sufficiently vivid beliefs about our future interest, we are capable of being sufficiently motivated by recognizing agent-neutral reason.[16] According to this account, having a good moral imagination and other such epistemological conditions may be required.

I am sympathetic with these conditions that Kagan and Rawls mention. However, these do not seem to be powerful enough to address a moral "schizophrenia" between one's motives and one's reasons as far as morality fails to reflect actual persons' interests and perspectives. It is more essential to introduce more effective methodological factors that can reduce the split between motivation and reason to act in agent-neutral moral reasoning. To reduce schizophre-

nia, I want to offer two suggestions, which moral reasoning or moral justification has to consider.

First, non-idealized method with fact sensitivity can better address the issue of motivation, rather than idealized method with idealization. The reason is that the wider the gap between non-idealized actual circumstances to which moral principles apply and idealized circumstances in which moral principles are derived, the wider the split between motivation and reason to act. In addition, when morality is established based on a priori or transcendental stipulation of what needs ought to be recognized, and fails to capture people's concrete and contextualized needs, persons will suffer a more serious split between motivation and reason to act.

This point can be explained in more detail by comparing Rawls's two different justificatory frameworks. In his first work, two principles of justice in Theories of Justice are derived by idealized agents under the veil of ignorance in the idealized "original position" to regulate idealized citizens with moral powers and full compliance in an idealized well-ordered society. Here, embodied and situated selves in the real world may feel like calling into question how the principles chosen by disembodied and idealized selves can explain plausibly the problems of embodied and actual selves in the real world and why the embodied and actual selves in non-ideal conditions have to comply those principles chosen by such hypothetical disembodied selves for the idealized world. When the principles are derived from the assumption of highly idealized human beings with capacities for fully rational choice or self-sufficiency that are not likely to be achieved by many actual human beings, and those princi-

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14) John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 453-504.
15) Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* 454.
16) Kagan, *The Limits of Morality,* 279-330.

ples are used to evaluate the misfit of actual human beings, actual human beings may be more tempted to introduce agent-centered option in ethics theories.

By contrast, in Rawls's later work, *Political Liberalism*, overlapping concepts as a public justificatory framework are newly provided: "Public justification happens when all the reasonable members of political society carry out a justification of the shared political conception by embedding it in their several reasonable comprehensive views."[17] Though I don't think this overlapping consensus fully reflects the demand of actual perspectives in non-ideal conditions,[18] the concept of overlapping consensus as a public justification provides an example to show how reasonable, actual moral perspectives can be considered in moral reasoning. Here, because the principles derived by such a public justification would be closer to actual "you and me," it would better

motivate the actual embodied and the participating selves to act according to them with less "moral schizophrenia" than the principles derived by transcendental justification frameworks.

Second, the actual moral perspective leads me to my second suggestion that moral reasoning through a dialogical deliberative process of concrete voices is more desirable, than a hypothetical or philosopher king's monological imagination.[19] Actual dialogue is needed not merely because, as Marilyn Friedman proposes, "it allows us each the opportunity to strive to correct the biases of others by expressing our own points of views."[20] Actual dialogue is also effective for motivation because in the process of dialogue and participation people can achieve the epistemological conditions that Kagan mentions, just as laws legislated by a participatory democratic process would motivate citizens to obey them rather than laws legislated by a king or a few outstanding politicians. In addition, just as participatory and communicative democratic decisions do not need agent-centered options in politics, taking the views of actual and concrete people can motivate

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17) John Rawls, "Reply to Habermas" *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 387.

18) Better examples of the contrast between idealized and non-idealized methods can be found in the following concepts; Onora O'Neill's defense of "abstraction" against "idealization", in Onora O'Neill, *Towards justice and virtue : a constructive account of practical reasoning* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Margaret Walker's defense of "expressive-collaborative" against a "theoretical-juridical model" in Margaret Urban Walker, *Moral Understandings : A Feminist Study in Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Jaggar's defense of actual consents against hypothetical consents, in Jaggar, "Taking Consent Seriously: Feminist Ethics and Actual Moral Dialogue" in *The Applied Ethics Reader*. Ed. Earl Winkler and Jerrold Coombs, (Oxford: Blackwell,1993). Young's "historically and socially contextualized" normative reflection, Justice and the Politics of Difference (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

19) For a diological approach, see Benhabib's discouse ethics. Seyla Benhabib, "In The Shadow of Aristotle and Hegel: Communicative Ethics and Current Controversies in Practical Philosophy," in *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*, (New York: Routledge, 1992); Seyla Benhabib, "Cultural Complexity, Moral Interdependence, and the Global Dialogic Community," in *Women, Culture and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities*, edited by Martha Nussbaum and Jonathan Glover, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

20) Marilyn Friedman, *What Are Friends For?: Feminist Perspectives on Personal Relationships and Moral Theory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 23-24.

persons to perform moral acts without the need for taking agent-centered options.

For these reasons, to address the discrepancy between motivation and justification, instead of choosing morality with options, we may need to take seriously a non-idealized approach rather than a idealized approach, and a diological approach, rather than a monological approach.[21]

3. Argument III: The moral value of the personal point of view

The final argument, which is mainly raised by virtue theorists, tries to find the importance of the personal point of view in the positive moral value in its own right.[22] Thus,

1) The personal point of view has intrinsical moral values or instrumental moral values to other goods.

2) These values can be maintained only by special concern with one's interests.

3) Agent-neutral considerationss such as impartial consideration cannot reflect these values.

Conclusion: consequently, options as partiality has to be incorporated in moral deliberation.

For example, Stocker argues that personal relationships such as love, friendship, and close relationships are essential for character, integrity, and flourishing in a human life. These require that the other person be an essential part of what is val-

ued. But it seems impossible to be especially loving when one is detached from one's personal concerns and loyalties, when one is disinterested, dispassionate, and attentive only to the generalized moral equality of all persons, thereby abstracting from individual particularity and uniqueness. In a word, personal relationships call for attitudes of particularity rather than impartiality.[23]

In addition, Susan Wolf argues that if we all take an agent-neutral point of view, we would have to do without much that makes life interesting and fun: opera, gourmet cooking, elegant clothes, ballet. We would also have to do without the broad diversity of interests and activities that can be part of our ideal of a good life.[24]

I will raise questions about the truth of premises 1 and 3 in this argument. Thus, I want to take issue with the view that whatever sustains any personal relationship is a moral good, that this value can be maintained only by special concern with one's interests, and that agent-neutral considerations cannot reflect it.

First, it is doubtful that all personal relationships formed through partiality have moral value because we need to ask for whose character, fulfillment, or integrity the personal relationship is essential. For example, A's partiality toward B may contribute to the cultivation of both A's and B's character, integrity, and human fulfillment. However, we need to pay attention to the flip side of this cultivation of moral worth. The flip side is that it can lead to more serious harm to C's character, integrity, and human fulfillment, who

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21) For the more detailed discussion about hypothetical consent and actual consent, Alison Jaggar, "Taking Consent Seriously" Jaggar indicates the inappropriateness of hypothetical consent for feminist working and recommends utilizing actual consent based on actual moral dialogue.

22) These arguments are examined by Kagan under the title of 'the positive argument' in detail. *The Limits of Morality*, 331-385.

23) Stocker, 66-78.

24) Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints", by Crisp and Michael Slote, 79-98.

is deprived of some opportunities and resources by not being treated impartially because of A's partiality toward B. I believe that our society has suffered more seriously from the problems caused by this flip side, which are demonstrated in sexual, racial, and cultural discrimination due to differences in sex, race, and culture. The moral system with options as partiality may be contributing to aggravating the harm done to the character, integrity, and human fulfillment of the more powerless.

Second, I want to point out that the concept of impartiality has been misunderstood, as is shown in the discussion in the next section. Impartiality should not mean indifference or blindness to concrete persons as is symbolized in the goddess of justice with the covered eyes. I claim that our contemporary diverse society requires the goddess of justice with open eyes and big ears. These uncovered eyes and big ears are not needed for partially considering personal relationships but for seeing actual differences and listening to less audible voices and considering those who have been neglected. This may be an effective way of realizing the ideal of impartiality, which Friedman interprets as the elimination of systematic biases. Indeed, this type of impartiality will contribute to the cultivation of our good character, integrity, and human fulfillment, differently from the claim of the premise 3.

IV. Taking Seriously the Challenge of Agent-centered Morality

I have examined three arguments for agent options: the one based on the independence of the personal point of view, the one based on the

harmony between motivation and justification, and the one based on the moral value of the personal point of view. I have tried to show that the demands and ideals of agent-centered options can, significantly though not completely, be integrated in morality without options. If this is the case, agent-centered options are unnecessary. It is because agent-centered options may cause more serious countervailing effects than agent-neutral morality. Though I did not deal with these countervailing effects in detail in this essay for the sake of space, we should not neglect the following. Above all, the agent-centered option approach is vague about how much and how widely agents are permitted to pursue their personal interests rather than the overall good. As a result, the agent-centered option approach fail to provide us with action guiding morality. Secondly, agent-options may permit agents not only to pursue their projects but also to *allow* harm. Furthermore, as Kagan worries, "it will also permit agents to *do* harm in the pursuit of their nonoptimal projects."[25]

On the other hand, in spite of these serious difficulties, I suggest we need to take seriously the challenge of agent-centered morality to agent-neutral morality to address problems of agent-neutral morality. I will finish this paper by giving two examples to show how to integrate the demands of agent-centered morality within the framework of agent-neutral morality.

As explained above, one of the most problematic concepts within agent-neutral morality which make people choose agent centered options is the concept of impartiality or impersonality.

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25) Kagan, *The Limits of Morality*, 251.

However, we need to note that several ways of achieving impartiality have been suggested in contemporary moral reasoning, some of which might be able to more integrate the demands of agent-centered morality, whereas some of which not. The first type of devices is the third-person perspective with God's eye such as Richard Brandt's "ideal observer"[26] and R.M. Hare's "archangel."[27] According to this, the impartial moral reasoner stands outside and above the situation about which he or she reasons, with no stake in it. These devices for impartiality would fail to integrate the ideal of the personal point of view because of the construction of a fictional self in a fictional situation. The counterfactual construct removes people from their actual contexts of making moral decisions.

The second type of impartiality is the disinterested judge perspective such as Rawls's "veil of ignorance" and Thomas Nagel's "view from nowhere."[28] In contrast with God's eye, the impartial moral reasoners in this concept have no knowledge of their individual place in society such as their race, gender, social class, personal characteristics, or conception of the good life. In this way, this also would fail to integrate the ideal of the personal point of view, because of the construction of the ideal of a self, which is abstracted from the context of any real persons.

The third type of impartiality is the universal perspective such as equal consideration of all proposed by Habermas. According to him, "true

impartiality pertains only to that standpoint from which one can generalize precisely those norms that can count on universal assent because they perceptibly embody and interest common to all affected."[29] It seems to me that Habermas's impartiality derived through discourse theory is less estranged from people's personal point of view than other concepts. It is because that this theory presupposes dialogue between all affected, though Habermas's universalizability also presupposes the ideal discourse situation, which is difficult for us to reach.

As shown in the concepts of impartiality, if we integrate the situated (rather than transcendental), non-idealized (rather than idealized), and dialogical (rather than monological) point of views into the agent-neutral morality, agent-neutral morality would be equipped with devices, which can better reflect the challenges from agent-centered options. Another example to explain how those moral perspectives can be applied to the moral theory, let me go back to consequentialism, which is Scheffler's main target. We can establish the concept of the good necessary for act-consequentialism by specifying what is good for us in this community now, not by specifying what is the transhistorical or transcultural eternal good. For example, as a basis for choice in the original position, Rawls provides the conception of primary goods, which are defined as things that any rational man wants whatever else he wants because whatever one's system of ends, they are necessary means to achieve their ends.[30]

26) Richard Brandt, *A Theory of the Good and the Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).
27) R.M Hare, *Moral Thinking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 44.
28) Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
29) Jürgen Habermas, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press), 65.
30) Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, 92-95.

However, variations among persons are so great that it would be not only unfair but also unsatisfactory to some persons' life expectations to secure everyone the same index of primary goods. By contrast, let us consider consequentialism in which capabilities have intrinsic values and goods have instrumental values contingently to the extent that it helps in achieving these capabilities. In this way, I think the capabilities approach requires us to specify contingent goods by asking what is needed for capabilities to function for a person (persons) in our specific situation rather than depending on an index of universal goods.

In this way, we may choose optional diverse goods, which reflect diverse interests between differences. This will more fully reflect people's and agents' actual perspectives. This type of consequentialism may avoid the danger caused by impersonally choosing THE good, which is the target of the agent options and the danger caused by choosing agent-centered options. This point of view would not be incompatible with the ideal of impartiality: weighing the interests of each individual equally, and permitting differentiation based on differences that can be shown to be morally relevant.

V. Concluding Remarks

Choosing agent-centered options and choosing agent-neutral morality both have their own shortcomings. As Kagan points out, a moral system with agent-centered options has a danger of including "not only options to allow harm, but also options to do harm." [31] By contrast, moral systems without agent-center options have the danger of neglecting the personal and particular point of view. To address such a dilematic situation, I have tried to show how the agent-neutral moral system has the possibility of, though minimally, reflecting the demands of the personal point of view. Trying to find a way of maximizing the integration of the ideals lying behind agent-centered options is better and less dangerous than trying to introduce the agent-centered options and trying to minimize the countervailing bad effects of the agent-centered options.

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31) Kagan, *The Limits of Morality*, 84.

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