
Preface

Cordula Brand

This anthology is the result of a very special form of conference, initiated and financed by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the so-called 'Klausurwoche'. Since we were not able to find a decent English translation, we named the event 'symposium' as this term bears the connotation of a banquet and, as such, of Plato's Symposium. The 'Klausurwoche' aims at bringing together young researchers as well as already established experts from several disciplines to discuss for one week a topic which deals with the ethical, legal and social aspects of modern life sciences. Our topic – recent developments in empirical moral psychology and their impact on the ethical self-image of human beings – differed from that discussed in Plato's Symposium but what was similar is the point that all participants brought in their special points of view from different disciplines as well as different theories – and furthermore, we did not only discuss and argue but we also dined, drank and celebrated together.

The Symposium 'Can Psychology Replace Ethics?' took place from 8th until 15th March 2014 at the International Centre for Ethics in the Sciences and Humanities (Internationales Zentrum für Ethik in den Wissenschaften, IZEW) of the University of Tübingen. For the keynote lecture of the public opening ceremony, we could get Neil Roughley on board. His talk was an excellent start for our discussions as he put the most interesting key issues in a nutshell. The symposium itself contained closed sessions that entailed the presentations of the invited junior researchers, several talks by international experts and special workshops, focusing on methodological and terminological questions as well as on societal implications. A distinct focus of the symposium has been the urge to communicate the results of our discussions in a way that is as readily understandable as possible. On the one hand, this is a requirement of the BMBF proposal and on the other hand, it is also the general position of the IZEW to deal with ethical questions not only from within the scientific disciplines in which those questions emerge but also in a way that researchers from various disciplines and everybody interested in the topics can understand the points made. Therefore, we produced diverse materials to demonstrate the discussed problems in the form of visualizations, and we chose a particular format for the public closing ceremony. The participants created informative as well as entertaining short versions of some questions and an-

swers that accompanied us through the whole week. Supported by members of the Harlekin-Theatre Tübingen, they presented these short sketches, stories and poems in the form of a science theatre.¹ Two examples of these contributions are included in this volume as prologue and epilogue.

In the spirit of this sort of transdisciplinarity, the present anthology addresses scientists from the diverse disciplines that are represented by the authors – philosophy, psychology, sociology, theology, educational science, law and politics – as well as students, teachers and everybody who is curious about developments in moral psychology and their possible social effects.

Focusing on recent developments in moral psychology, the anthology mainly addresses the so-called ‘dual-process theories’. Dual-process theories are a common model of explanation in various psychological disciplines and are most prominent in social psychology. All dual-process theories have in common that they suppose two different ways in which decision making is performed. The first process is quick, implicit and unconscious. The second process is slow, explicit and conscious. It was Daniel Kahneman who linked the quick and unconscious process to intuitions and the slow and conscious process to reasoning. From here, dual-process theories entered moral psychology and are now used very commonly to describe human moral behavior.

The book is organized into four sections, all of which have a special focus on one aspect of the discussion about moral psychology: the level of investigation, methodology, terminology and application. This structure mirrors a classical philosophical methodology, namely the reflective equilibrium. The sections alter between theoretical, empirical and practical considerations, making each of them fruitful for the others. This methodology makes sure that the diverse levels of investigations – theoretical and empirical, descriptive and normative as well as theory and praxis – are kept apart thoroughly and at the same time are associated with each other reasonably.

Therefore, within the first part, some foundational theoretical considerations are presented that have to be taken into account when discussing empirical insights into morality. The second part switches to some examples of those empirical insights that examine the complex processes under discussion in more detail and with a critical eye on the established dual-process theories. The third part brings us back onto the theoretical level by investigating the merits and problems of the terminology that is used in discussions on moral psychology. Finally, within the fourth part, the focus of the discussion is expanded to different fields of application, examining how and in what sense the psychological insights and philosophical considerations can be made fruitful on the societal level.

¹ These materials as well as a video of the science theatre are available on the homepage of the symposium: <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/en/43311>

Within the first part, considerations on the relationship between ethics and empirical sciences in general and within dual-process theories in particular are collected. This section starts with a reflection on how dual process theories are located in the jungle of metaethical positions and a proposal of conditions of adequacy those theories have to fulfill, presented by *Cordula Brand*, the editor of this anthology. Afterwards, *Dieter Birnbacher* asks when and where ethics in general and applied ethics in particular is in need of empirical facts. In doing so, he presents some further criteria of a proper usage of empirical studies within ethical considerations. The following two papers examine the intermixture of descriptive and normative levels of investigation in more detail within two very prominent theoretical approaches in moral psychology. *Maciej Juzaszek* analyzes the normative character of moral intuitions in the so-called ‘social intuitionist model’, presented by Jonathan Haidt. He addresses one of the main problems that intuitionists have to deal with, namely the problem of lacking objectivity. *Janett Triskiel* deals with the heuristic approach of Gerd Gigerenzer. She points out how such a heuristic approach can be reconciled with a rationalist position by differentiating between adaptive and erroneous heuristics.

The second section of the anthology presents some up-to-date empirical studies that use different methodologies, quantitative as well as qualitative ones. They all have in common that they broaden the focus of investigation so far assumed by the prominent advocates of dual-process theories. First, *Robert Hepach* presents his work within developmental psychology on the concern of very young children for the well-being of their fellow human beings. He proposes that this early form of social behavior might be a core motive for developing more complex prosocial behavior. Afterwards, *Michael von Grundherr* investigates the behavior of school children. He establishes a connection between moral argumentation skills and aggressive behavior and shows what kind of implications these studies entail for philosophical ethics. Focusing on adults, *Liz Gulliford* presents two case studies that show different ways in which psychological investigations contribute to ethical considerations – one that focusses on the way lay people really use ethical concepts and one that helps to understand how we can achieve ethically desirable behavior. *Mariola Paruzel-Czachura* investigates ratings of lay people on moral concepts as well. She deals with the question to what extent people take into account the degree of moral integrity of people if they have to judge the behavior of these persons. Finally, this section includes two contributions that remind us of several difficulties and pitfalls we have to be aware of when interpreting empirical results. *Jonas Nagel* and *Alex Wiegmann* analyze the procedure of inducing an abstract principle from a set of case-based moral intuitions. They remind us of the importance of being aware of the requirements for objective facts and argue for the criterion of intersubjectively shared concepts. *Stefan Walter* also focusses on the requirements, delivered by philosophy of science, which empirical studies have to fulfill. He criticizes a famous

study within genetics which states a causal link between a certain genetic predisposition and moral behavior by pointing out diverse methodological failures.

The third section of the anthology compiles contributions that reassess traditional philosophical terminologies in the modern debate on moral psychology. *Friedo Ricken* starts these considerations by bringing back to our mind the reflections of Aristotle and highlights the usefulness of this traditional approach. *Kristján Kristjánsson* takes up this line of argumentation and discusses the merits of an Aristotelian understanding in contrast to the modern understanding of a 'new synthesis' in moral psychology. In doing so, he especially emphasizes some of the consequences the new understanding would have on our societies. Focusing on social theory, *Nathan Emmerich* then suggests reinterpreting the findings of empirical moral psychology within the terminological framework of Pierre Bourdieu. He especially makes use of the terms *ethos*, *eidōs* and *habitus* by showing how they can be made fruitful to understand the interplay of morality and ethics within a practice-oriented approach. *Alissa MacMillan* takes up the path of pragmatism and reminds us of insights from Richard Rorty. She argues that whenever it comes to ethical considerations, we should take care to deal with the urgent ethical topics first and not make the mistake of taking metaphysical questions as more important. *Alexander Stingl* and *Sabrina Weiss* close this section by introducing the terminology of care ethics into the discussion. They analyze the discourse on morality in moral psychology by taking seriously a non-reductive understanding of embodiment, the notion of mindfulness and a practical stance that starts with the subject.

Finally, within section four, societal implications of dual-process theories are under investigation. *Jan Stets* starts by presenting a sociological perspective on how to take seriously both the conscious as well as the unconscious process underlying moral behavior and decision making. This, she argues, is the only way to understand individuals as moral actors who, on the basis of how they see themselves in moral terms, will behave in ways that attempt to verify their self-view along the moral dimension. *Ronald de Sousa* discusses the question of how we can make sense of a situation where liberal positions within ethics – supported by insights from empirical sciences – oppose more traditional concepts of morality by asking whether antimoralism can avoid moralizing. *David Hall* draws the line from moral psychology to political considerations in analyzing the political force of dual-process theories. In doing so, he criticizes some of the arguments that entered not only political philosophy but also public debates. *Alexandra Retkowski* finally investigates how dual-process theories might help to develop programs within educational organizations that serve to diminish the number of cases of abuse in childcare.

Taken together, the present anthology gives an overview of a wide range of up-to-date research within moral psychology and asks diverse questions about the impact these insights might, should and shall not have on further discussions in normative as well as in applied ethics.

Neither this anthology, nor the symposium itself would have been possible without the support of many people. First, I wish to thank all speakers, workshop supervisors and participants for an amazing week, exciting discussions, wonderful evenings and the great collaboration in preparing the anthology. It was a pleasure to work with all of them and I am already looking forward to meeting them again! My special thanks goes to Margarita Berg for her scrupulous proofreading, her excellent translations, her advice on biological contents and her constant supply of comfort food and drinks. It is indeed hard to find the right words of thanks for Julia Dietrich, head of the project as well as of the department of ethics and education. She supported me from beginning to end in every circumstance with her constant advice as well as her humor that never failed to get me back on my feet.

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I do hope that this anthology will help to create new momentums, open up new questions and broaden the social perspective of the fascinating research adventure of moral psychology.

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Interdisciplinary Approaches to Theoretical, Empirical
and Practical Considerations

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