The 'inner world' is important – conclusions from empirical studies on judgment of other people's morality

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Introduction

The modern virtue ethics theories emphasize not only the importance of behaviour for the evaluation of other people's morality (like in the deontological and utilitarian approaches), but also on the moral condition of the agent – his virtues, which from the psychological point of view are connected with relevant values and feeling some specific emotions and motivations (Szutta, 2012). Empirical data collected in the field of psychology is helpful to understand better human functioning and at the same time is a good argument in the old ethical discussions about what ethics and morality are or should be. Virtue ethics, as a naturalistic moral theory, also depends on these psychological results.

In my paper I would like to describe the results of my last empirical studies (Paruzel-Czachura, in print; Paruzel-Czachura, under revision) and start the reflection about connections with the virtue ethics theory.

It is worth to emphasize, that psychologists don't use the words *virtue* or *character*, however I assume that emotions, values/views/believes, intentions of people are part of philosophical concepts of virtue and character.

Moral psychology

Moral psychology is a field of psychology, in which psychologists try to describe people's morality, including their behaviour, judgments and/or emotions (Paruzel-Czachura, 2011). Psychologists don't agree about the definition of morality, some of them focus only on good or bad behaviours (according to some cultural norms), the other include also intentions or emotions. It is worth to underline, that many of them don't define it at all (Zylicz, 2010). In my research I define *morality* as the *"attitude whose constituents are:* our *behaviour* (Do I help others? Have I ever stolen anything?), our *view of the world (*Which values do I subscribe to? What do I think about my friend's affair?), and our *emotions* (What do I feel when I tell a lie? What do I feel when I help someone?)" (Paruzel-Czachura, in print).

I assume this type of definition, because moral psychologist are usually focused on studies connected with moral behaviour, views or values (Zimbardo, 2007; Isen, Levin, 1972; Darley, Batson, 1973; Kohlberg, 1969; Schwartz, 1994; Milgram, 1974; Graham, Iyer, Nosek, Haidt, Koleva, Ditto, 2011). In this type of research we suppose, that being a good man is connected with positive behaviour (helping, not hurting people ect.) and accepting some universal values. However, the latest papers underline also the role of emotions and intentions for the sphere of morality (Haidt, 2001; Koenigs et al, 2007; Prinz 2007; Smilansky, 2009; Huebner, Dwyer, Hauser, 2009; Tyszka, 2010; Zylicz, 2010; Kristjánsson, 2010), that's why I included this sphere in understanding morality.

Fig 1. The model of morality.
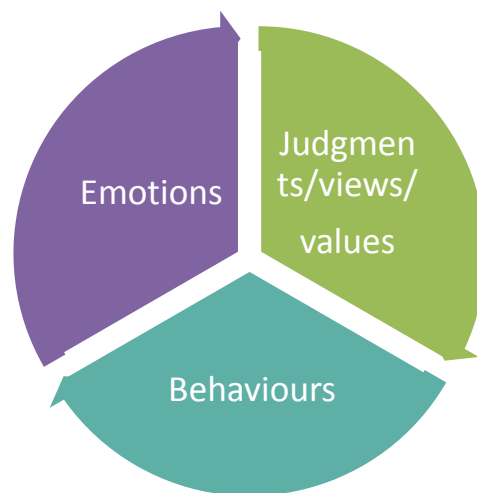
If we have three elements of morality, we can talk about their integrity or lack of integrity. *Moral integrity* can be defined as "the coherence between two or three aspects (behaviour, views and emotions)" (Paruzel-Czachura, in print). For instance, I am morally integral if:

- I help other people and I feel happy,
- I believe we shouldn't steal and at the same time I feel guilty when I steal,
- I do not obey religious principles, but I believe that we do not always have to obey them and I feel happy.

Complete moral integrity is when the coherence is between all three elements. *Lack of moral integrity* occurs when "there is lack of coherence between two or three aspects" (Paruzel-Czachura, in print), e.g. I believe that one should always be faithful to partner, and at the same time I have an affair. If there is lack of integrity between all three elements, one can speak of *complete lack of moral integrity*. Lack of moral integrity can be called *moral schizophrenia* (Paruzel-Czachura, Vecina, in preparation).

The concept of moral integrity isn't normative and my research comprises only descriptive studies of people's judgments. However, I use the words like positive or negative behaviour ect. When categorizing our behaviours, emotions and views, I refer to norms recognized by most societies (cf. Oles, Pluzek, 1990; Zalewska, 2002; Schwartz, Rubel, 2005; Brzozowski 2005).

All studies presented in this paper were conducted on a group of young adults, given that they were considered to have mature views on the sphere of morality.

The research question

In my studies I wanted to verify the hypothesis about the role of other people's emotions and views for the judgment of their morality. If the hypothesis would be confirmed, then the results would be the argument for the thesis that we should consider the sphere of *inner world* of the agent in the area of moral psychology, apart from the behavioural aspects. Also, it would be a significant argument for the relevance of the virtue ethics theories.

Research question: *How is the morality of a person judged on the basis of information concerning vertical integrity or lack thereof (within the scope of views, emotions and behaviours)?*

General results

No. of study	Participants	Method	General results	Source
1 (preliminary study)	150 first-year students at the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology of the University of Silesia. The average age of the respondents was 20.41 (SD=2.75).	Qualitative: describe in detail one most important ethical dilemma occurring in your life	Three most frequent ethical dilemmas were distinguished: I. To have or to be? II. Should I obey religious dogmas if my views are different? III. Should I tell the truth or lie? The results were helpful to create the questionnaires in the next studies.	Paruzel-Czachura, M. (in print). Moral judgments and moral integrity – three empirical studies. In: C. Brand (ed.). *Dual-process theories in moral psychology - considering practical*

				implications. Springer.
2	The sample consisted of 33 medical students from Europe, America, Asia, and Africa (not from Poland), including 7 women, the average age of the participants being 22.33 (SD=3.68). The research participants included people of various faiths (Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Jewish, Buddhist) and atheists (N=7).	Quantitative: rate the degree of morality of people (on a scale of 0 to 5, with 0 meaning immoral, and 5 very moral), after obtaining information about their behaviour, views and emotions. In total, the respondents rated four different categories of ethical dilemmas, selected on the basis of the results obtained in study no. 1: a) telling the truth or lying, b) obeying or not obeying religious principles, c) stealing or not stealing, d) being faithful or unfaithful to one's partner.	In all situations (dilemmas), the respondents found that **the most moral person** was one keeping complete moral integrity in the positive sense (positive behaviour in accordance with generally acceptable norms, positive emotions and views coherent with them). **The least moral person** was either one demonstrating complete moral integrity in the negative sense (negative behaviour vs. generally acceptable norms, and coherent emotions and views), which can be seen in the case of judgments on the situation of stealing and cheating on one's partner, **or** one whose negative behaviour was coherent with emotions, but contradicted views (e.g. I don't tell the truth and I'm happy, even though I believe that we should always tell the truth) – in the case of lying and not obeying religious principles. The conclusion may therefore be drawn that **the incoherence between behaviours and views is usually evaluated as more immoral** than the incoherence between behaviours and emotions.	Paruzel-Czachura, M. (in print). Moral judgments and moral integrity – three empirical studies. In: C. Brand (ed.). *Dual-process theories in moral psychology - considering practical implications.* Springer.

			It is interesting that **positive behaviour does not always determine whether one is judged as a moral person or not**. For example: the respondents believed that it was more moral to steal but regret it and believe one should not steal (3rd place) than not to steal, but be tempted to steal and believe that one may steal if one only wishes to (7thplace). **The data obtained confirmed that information about another person's emotions and views (and not only about behaviour) changed the respondents' judgment of morality.**	
3	The sample included students of various Polish universities, N=238 (including 129 males). The average age of the respondents was 20.47 (SD=3.32). The respondents included 190 Catholics. All the atheists also declared to have been brought up in the Catholic faith.	The same procedure and tool as in study no. 2 were used in study no. 3.	The research demonstrated that Polish respondents made very similar moral judgments, especially in relation to telling the truth/lying and being faithful or unfaithful to one's partner (exactly the same hierarchy). The data confirmed, similarly to the case of study no. 2, that information on another person's emotions and views changes the judgment of that individual's morality.	Paruzel-Czachura, M. (in print). Moral judgments and moral integrity – three empirical studies. In: C. Brand (ed.). *Dual-process theories in moral psychology - considering practical implications.* Springer.

4	N= 357 polish young adults (including 182 females). The average age of the respondents was 21,29 (SD=1,70). 51% were daily students from different Silesian universities.	Experiment: respondents were reading a story about some couple. There were 18 different versions of the story (with different information about behaviour, emotions & views). The story was about being faithful or having an affair. Every participant reads only one story and evaluates morality of the partner from the story on the scale 0 (very immoral)-7 (very moral).	**The most moral person** was one keeping complete moral integrity in the positive sense (is faithful, feels happy and believes that we should be faithful) & with integrity between positive behaviour and positive views (the same as in study no. 2).	Paruzel-Czachura, M. (under revision).
5	N=1064 polish young adults (including 536 females). The average age of the respondents was 23,11 (SD=1,84). 53% were daily students from different Silesian universities.	Experiment: The same method as in study no. 4, but the respondents were asked to evaluate morality from three perspectives: perpetrator, recipient and observer.	There were no statistical differences between the perspectives in almost all situations. It means, that respondents have general hierarchy of values (evaluation of other's morality) regardless the perspective from which they do the assessment. If we are the perpetrator we do not see ourselves as more moral than if we are the recipient or observer.	Paruzel-Czachura, M. (under revision).
6	N=1064 polish young adults (including 536 females). The average age of the respondents was 23,11	Experiment: The same method as in study no. 4, but the respondents were asked to evaluate morality of	There were no statistical differences between almost all situations. It means, that respondents have general hierarchy of values (evaluation of other's morality) regardless the perspective	Paruzel-Czachura, M. (under revision).

	(SD=1,84). 53% were daily students from different Silesian universities.	different people: a) anonymous person b) some anonymous celebrity c) a public person connected with the real, polish story called "Small Madzia", in which a mother murdered her young little daughter also from three perspectives: perpetrator, recipient and observer.	from which they do the assessment and the subject of the evaluation.	

Discussion

The studies confirmed the important influence of information about agent's emotions and views on the judgment of his morality, regardless of who the agent of the evaluation was and from which perspective we do it. According to respondents being a moral, virtuous man is not only connected with good behaviour and accepting some values, but also with feeling some specific emotions (like happiness or quilt), what is coherent with the virtue ethics theory (Ascombe, 1958; MacIntryre, 2007; Szutta, 2012). It means, that young adults have a tendency to evaluate other people from the virtue ethics perspective.

They do not use the rule of consequentialism, because the information about other people's emotions and views are relevant in the process of evaluation of their morality (so not only the good or bad behaviour). At the same time they do not think like deontologists,

because they didn't evaluate morality according to a moral rule such as "Do unto others as you would be done by". We can assume, that for example we wouldn't like to be cheated by partner, so in that case we should evaluate cheating (being unfaithful) as very immoral in every situation. The results don't show it, because sometimes young adults evaluated bad behaviour as more moral than good behaviour (e.g. the respondents believed that it was more moral to steal but regret it and believe one should not steal than not to steal, but be tempted to steal and believe that one may steal if one only wishes to).

Obviously, in ethics theories we can't rely only on the empirical data (specially, if we want to say how it should be [Moore, 1903]), however, the results might be helpful in improving virtue ethics theories, which we want to implement in everyday life.

At the end we can ask two questions: Can the results really confirm the virtues ethics theory? Can we find other explanations of the results on the philosophical background?

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