

## Editorial Note

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*Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* seeks cooperation between ethics and empirical disciplines. Already in volume 2 we published a special issue on social justice research, with contributions by philosophers and social scientists. Since then, cooperation between ethics and social sciences has increased, but mainly in the areas of medical ethics and business ethics. In the last decade, a new form of cooperation developed, now between ethicists and psychologists, even leading to a new subdiscipline: empirically informed ethics or ethical/moral theory. We welcome this development, and are proud to present our own contribution: a special issue on Empirically Informed Moral Theory, edited by Neil Levy (Universities of Melbourne and Oxford). Neil, who is himself a leading figure in this new subdiscipline, has been able to engage for this special issue a number of important scholars, active in this field. The last article, by Fritz Allhoff, does not make part of the special issue, but has been chosen by us, to complete the issue. Since Neil gives us in his introduction an excellent overview of the trends and developments in the field of empirically informed ethical theory, we restrict ourselves to introducing the contributions to this issue.

Fiery Cushman and Liane Young open this issue with an contribution about the psychology of dilemmas and the philosophy of morality. They state that, since moral judgements are accomplished by multiple psychological systems, we are likely to be stuck with multiple moral theories that sometime yield conflicting judgement. These conflicts should be expected to play out not only between individuals, but also within the minds of individuals.

Terry Horgan and Mark Timmon's paper deals with the frame problem. They argue that, in light of the morals of the frame problem, it is entirely possible—and also quite likely—human moral normativity is too complex and nuanced to be fully systematisable by exceptionless general principles. Hence it is quite likely that strong principle-based moral foundationalism is false. Nonetheless, general moral principles might still have important roles to play, both in justifying moral judgments and in the psychology of moral belief-formation.

(Meta-)ethical theories usually contain empirical claims. The plausibility of these theories will, undoubtedly, increase when such claims can be corroborated by empirical

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research. Richard Joyce undertakes the preliminary task of clarifying the two subtheses that, in conjunction, constitute minimal projectivism: 1) that we experience morality as an objective aspect of the world and 2) that this experience has its origin in an affective attitude rather than in perceptual faculties. These two subtheses, he says, lie at the core of any legitimate version of moral projectivism.

What is the real moral judgement: the fast, automatic and affectively charged intuitive moral judgement or the conscious, deliberate judgement? Jonathan Haidt's research challenges the normative conception of ourselves as agents capable of grasping and responding to reasons. In the last paper of the special issue, Jeanette Kennett and Cordelia Fine take up this challenge and argue that there can be no 'real' moral judgments in the absence of a capacity for reflective shaping and endorsement of moral judgments. They suggest that the empirical literature indicates a complex interplay between automatic and deliberative mental processes in moral judgement formation, with the latter constraining the expression and influence of moral intuitions. Therefore they conclude that the psychological literature supports a normative conception of agency.

Do naturalistic accounts of the moral sentiments, proposed by, a.o., Michael Ruse and Richard Joyce, lead us to adopt an error theory approach to morality? Fritz Allhoff finds that these accounts offer us a false dichotomy between error theory and some form of moral realism. While accepting the presuppositions of the evolutionary error theorist, he argues that contract-based approaches to morality can be sensitive to those presuppositions while still vindicating morality. Invoking Stephen Darwall's distinction between contractualism and contractarianism, he offers an evolutionary-based contractarianism.

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