Abstract of thesis entitled

"Moral change: towards a person-centric model"

Submitted by

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In this project, I raise three methodological issues with contemporary studies of moral change and moral progress. The first concerns how philosophers typically think about moral history. The second regards the dominant explanatory model of how people change their moral views, and the last deals with prescriptions for moral intervention. Addressing each issue, I provide three new theories to replace current ones. Finally, I propose the "person-centric" model of moral change as a new paradigm for studying the historical transformation of morality.

First, the currently dominant conception of moral history is what I call the "problem-solving conception of moral progress," which sees moral history as a process in which our ancestors apply liberal values to solve moral problems and make progress. This conception, however, neglects the conflict of the values we live by and the moral change dynamics that conflict engenders. In place of this conception, I propose the *dual character conception of moral change*. This alternative conception highlights how our exercise of some moral values entails the neglect and sacrifice of other conflicting values, which generates moral predicaments we do not usually anticipate when operating from the problem-solving conception.

Second, current accounts follow either methodological individualism or structuralism in identifying the major processes underlying moral view change. One key process is how people reason about new sorts of morally relevant information in light of given social and psychological contexts. Drawing on evidence from moral psychology, I show how current accounts only consider *first-order moral reasoning*, in which individuals process the moral information they receive, and thus fail to account for *second-order moral reasoning*, whereby people retrieve their centrally held values and concerns in order to decide whether they should endorse a moral view. Therefore, current accounts miss out on the agential experiences most crucial to people's moral view change.

Next, the prevailing conception of moral intervention assumes a top-down, elitist power structure, in which the intellectual community imposes its moral views upon the public and people only accept or resist them. One major challenge of this structure is its illiberal consequences: Carrying out top-down interventions entails the possible erosion of individual freedom and liberal-democratic rights, which leads many liberal thinkers to doubt the very idea of intervention. My response is that elitism is not the only option for moral intervention, and I provide a new conception, which is grounded in people's desire for wellbeing and their self-generated impetus to attain it. Then, I develop a new framework to show how the intellectual community can aid people to reach their desired life and society.

These three criticisms point to the same issue with contemporary studies of moral change: Instead of following a knowledge-centric model and focusing on establishing more moral claims, we should approach the study of moral change from the values and concerns crucial to one's life, and identify morally significant struggles and experiences from them. This constitutes the core of the "person-centric" model as a new paradigm for studying the historical transformation of morality.

Moral change:

towards a person-centric model

by Ying Heng

(应姮)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at The University of Hong Kong.

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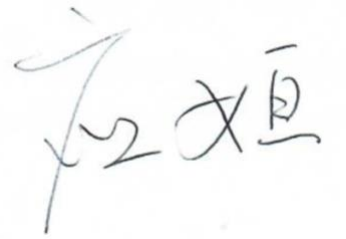
This thesis is dedicated to my grandpa

Ying Genying (应亘瑛, 1934-2016)

Declarations

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.



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Last, I want to acknowledge my life experiences and their contributions to my philosophical journey. Completing my pre-college education in local, public schools, I witnessed the life experiences of many ordinary Chinese people. The contrast between their experiences and the theories we learn at elite and prestigious institutions enables me to see how our philosophical theorizing is far from sufficient in reflecting the perspectives of ordinary people. At the same time, growing up in China, studying philosophy in the UK and US, and doing a PhD in Hong Kong, I realize questions meaningful and important to people in one society do not always have the same significance for people from other societies. This eventually leads me to this project—by expanding the questions we address in philosophy, I want to make more people's experiences and struggles seen and heard. This project is certainly the starting point of this goal.

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Introduction

In contemporary moral philosophy, an emerging trend is to study the historical transformation of morality. Influenced by the historical investigation of scientific change in the 20th century, which motivates the debates over issues like the conception of scientific progress, the nature of scientific knowledge, and the social organization of scientific inquiry, moral philosophy is now going through a similar historical turn. In this emerging field, people study the change of moral views at both the individual and societal level. For instance, individuals sometimes acquire new types of moral views when they are not endorsed by the society at large, or when they are not manifest in moral norms and social institutions. But at other times their moral activities lead directly to the new "moral attitudes, values, norms, practices" that prevail in society for a long period of time (Klenk et al. 2022, p. 354).

Among existing accounts, many try to address the shift of specific sets of moral norms, and others explore the particular psychological processes underlying people's moral view change. Less common are discussions of the research foundation for this type of moral inquiry. That is, few attempts have been made to examine methodological issues related to these sorts of moral studies. My project is therefore to fill this void: By clarifying the common features behind a range of moral change and moral progress accounts, I will raise three methodological issues. The first concerns how philosophers typically think about moral history. The second regards the dominant explanatory model of how people change their moral views, and the last deals with prescriptions for moral intervention. By addressing each of them and providing new theories, my aim is to bring attention to the research paradigm of current studies of moral change—what it achieves and what it falls

short of, and based on my arguments, I will offer a new model called the "person-centric" model of moral change as a new paradigm for studying the historical transformation of morality.

In the introduction of my project, I will start with a brief review of current studies of moral change, and move from there to explain in greater detail the focus and purpose of my project. Thus far there are two major research lines for the study of the historical transformation of morality. One is grounded in the biological and evolutionary history of morality, for which the theory of biological and cultural evolution is the main explanatory framework. The other, in contrast, relies mostly on the social history of morality, for which works from history, sociology, anthropology, and other society-related disciplines are highly relevant (see e.g. Klenk 2019).

The two lines sometimes converge, such as when people combine evolutionary theories and social studies of morality to account for some particular sets of moral norms. For instance, the Moral Foundations Theory gathers its empirical evidence from an anthropological study of people's conception of morality, but it uses innateness theory and cultural construction to explain the commonalities and differences of moral norms across societies (Haidt & Joseph 2007). Similarly, in their account of moral progress, Buchanan and Powell (2018) look into the social history of universal human rights, the abolition of slavery, and the reduction of racial and ethnic discrimination, and argue from the standpoint of evolutionary psychology that moral progress consists in overcoming our exclusivist psychology. We now extend equal moral treatments to the outgroup, rather than just the ingroup.

For my project, I will limit my focus to the social history of morality. That is, most of the accounts I look at rely heavily on the social history of morality to support their claims. Earlier works of this tradition came up around the mid- and late 20th century. In her paper "Moral Revolution," Kathryn Pyne Parsons (1979) argues that the political framework of individual rights and obligations does not accommodate women's first-person consideration of what kind of life they want to live and how that affects their decision on abortion. Therefore, with the example of the moral practice of second-wave feminism, where feminists advocate "a meaningful life" as the new paradigm for thinking about women' life and abortion, Parsons shows that proposing alternative moral paradigms is important for the empowerment and liberation of women.

With a similar historical approach, in two of his projects—*Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (1989) and *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004), Charles Taylor develops a historical explanation of how the prominent moral theories in western society give rise to the crucial features of western modernity, such as individuals' self-reflexivity, the market economy, the public sphere, and popular sovereignty. The key aspect, as he points out, is the shared understanding of good life and the shared imagination of society those moral theories cultivate. While Parsons' work encourages the innovation of moral paradigms for social reforms, Taylor's accounts shed light on the moral trajectories of western modern society, how they clash with those of other societies, and whether they are the only trajectories we should follow.

But this historical approach to morality did not grow more popular until the recent two decades. In this new period, a group of philosophers shifted to the historical study of morality to investigate the origin of moral knowledge, challenge the

dominance of many currently held moral claims, and explore ways to bring new sets of moral ideas into society. Some famous works include Kwame Anthony Appiah's (2010) *The Honor Code: How Moral Revolutions Happen*, in which he explains how the desire for honour drove the end of the duel in aristocratic England, the elimination of the footbinding practice in China, and the uprising of ordinary people against Atlantic slavery in the 19th century. Likewise, Elizabeth Anderson (2016) looks into the elimination of slavery in Latin America and challenges the view that countries like Britain and France played a leading role in it. In fact, countries like Haiti, ended slavery much earlier than many western countries. More recent works also look at the role of technology in moral change, such as the plough technology that gave rise to the gender norms that privileged men over women 2000 years ago, as well as the birth control pill that led to the liberalization of sexual morality in the 1960s and 1970s (Hopster et al. 2022).

Alongside these works on the change of specific sets of moral norms, other accounts focus more on conceptual issues, such as the defining features of moral changes and moral revolutions (see e.g. Pleasants 2018; Baker 2019/2022). For instance, Nora Hämäläinen (2017) uses three metaphors to dissect moral change into three parts—"the tipping point, the bargaining table and the strong rope" (ibid., p. 48). On this conception, moral change always involves a tipping point at which the way people perceive and conceptualize things is suddenly transformed; what used to appear "given, hard, factual" turns into "negotiable, malleable, or relative" (ibid., p. 55). Bargaining is also crucial to moral change, especially the negotiations over "good, deficient, bad and evil that go on in people's social and cultural environments, in media, in everyday conversations, in narratives, in people's choices and how they are legitimated" (ibid., p. 58). Last, "the strong rope" metaphor is to show that even

though moral changes happen throughout history, morality as a whole is an indispensable part of human life and moral knowledge always constitutes a substantial part of human knowledge.

Klenk and his colleagues see moral revolutions as a particular category of moral changes, and try to identify the features that distinguish them from moral changes in general (Klenk et al. 2022). Some of the defining features include the speed and scale of the change—for instance, moral revolutions erupt within a short period of time, involve shifts in "fairly fundamental moral beliefs, such as one's conception of justice" (Lowe 2019, p. 2), and include "reprioritization of existing values, addition or deletion of moral concepts, changes to the rules one applies to make inferences in a domain, or changes to evaluative criteria for beliefs or practices" (Klenk et al. 2022, p. 356). Other criteria include the staying impact of a revolution, the degree of institutional transformation, whether a revolution is intentional, and the like.

Last, contemporary study of the historical transformation of morality is also linked to the debate on moral progress. In this field, philosophers identify from historical cases of moral change instances of moral progress and regress, and develop means of progress to guide the improvement of society. Some examples include Michele Moody-Adams' claim that moral progress consists in the deepened grasp of the semantic depth of moral concepts (1999; 2017). In other accounts, Philip Kitcher (2021) sees progress as involving "the discovery of previously unrecognized moral truths" (p. 15), and Martha Nussbaum (2007) characterizes moral progress as a process in which we develop better moral theories to tell more accurately the right from the wrong.

The major difference of this line of research from previous ones is the normative force it has. In previous accounts, Charles Taylor explains the shift of the conception of goodness in western society, but he does not hold a clear stance on whether each conception is better than the previous ones, or whether other societies should adopt the same conception. Also, in Appiah's account, honour plays a prominent role in the end of slave trade and the foot-binding practice in China in the 19th century. Though these are usually seen as progressive, in the case of Pakistan, honour is also the reason why the honour killing of women is still legitimate, and we can hardly draw the conclusion that honour will always yield positive outcomes and that we should always encourage it (Appiah 2010). By contrast, each account of moral progress indicates a path philosophers expect human society to follow. This is in apparent contrast to those accounts that are more descriptive and explanatory in nature.

Altogether, current research on moral change falls roughly into three categories. First, people study specific sets of moral norms to explain how their changes happen. The mechanisms of change they articulate help us see how we can bring more changes to society. Second, they also focus on the conceptual difference between moral change and moral revolution, which provides us with a more refined tool-kit to grasp the nature of different episodes of moral change in human history. Last, people develop accounts of moral progress to guide the future development of society. Although each research direction has their own purpose and contribution to moral philosophy, a closer look at them would show that they share some similar features that are worthy of elaboration and examination. This sets the ground for my project.

Before moving onto the three methodological issues I raise, I will firstly explain the approach I adopt in this project. Instead of focusing on any specific account of moral change, what I do is to propose what in science is often called a "paradigm shift". In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn (1996) comes up with the ideas of revolutionary science and normal science to illustrate two types of scientific practices. Because scientists working on the same field during a period of time share the same paradigm, most of their scientific practices, on Kuhn's view, fall into the category of normal science. This type of scientific activity is "puzzle-solving," where scientists follow a paradigm and discover the puzzles their predecessors have not yet addressed. Usually their research improves the understanding of a field or displaces some misunderstandings within a paradigm, but it does not undermine or refute the paradigm that grounds the research. In contrast, revolutionary science happens when scientists turn to a new paradigm from the old one. Such replacement involves the reconstruction of a field "from new fundamentals" and the shift of "some of the field's most elementary theoretical generalizations as well as many of its paradigm methods and applications" (ibid., p. 85), and this opens up a new research direction for normal science.

In actual practice, revolutionary science typically begins by criticizing the basic assumptions, phenomena, models, and methods assumed in a field. Although these may not discredit entirely the old paradigm, they prompt researchers' reflection on the endorsed paradigm and open them to new research directions to generate a competing understanding of a field. For instance, to question the contemporary dominance of the biological approach to mental illness and to challenge the medical community's overconfidence in its success, some historians bring to the fore the neglected history of the rise of this biological model. They point out that it arose

only in the 1970s, and its so-called success is largely facilitated by extra-scientific bodies like pharmaceutical and health insurance companies (see e.g., Harrington 2019). In a different account, Wampold and Imel (2015) cast light on the "omission" in current models of psychotherapy. For instance, the medical model of psychotherapy borrows largely from the model of physical illness, whereas mental illness is not always associated with physiological defects as physical illness does. Thus, while researchers concentrate on finding physiological underpinnings of a mental disorder, they overlook how factors like cultural and social contexts shape the disorder, and therefore neglect these factors in the development of effective therapies.

Based on the distinction of normal science and revolutionary science, the approach I adopt is more akin to revolutionary science: By examining and criticizing the assumptions, methods, and models assumed in current studies of moral change and by replacing them with better ones, we will firstly see the aspects that are neglected and missing from our current understanding of human morality. Based on this, my final aim is to precipitate a paradigm shift in how we study moral change, and the person-centric model of moral change—which I will develop at the end of the project—is the new paradigm I propose for the study of moral change. Following this trajectory, the three methodological issues I raise in this project are as follows:

The first issue concerns the conception of moral history—that is, how people think about moral history. Across the moral progress accounts of Michele Moody-Adams, Elizabeth Anderson, Philip Kitcher, Martha Nussbaum, and some other philosophers, they hold a largely unacknowledged assumption, which I call the *problem-solving conception of moral progress*. As a way of thinking about moral history, this conception pictures humans as problem-solvers, who make progress by

identifying and redressing the violation of liberal values in society. The assumption, however, adopts liberal values as the sole lens for studying moral progress, and it overlooks the conflict of the values we live by and the moral change dynamics that conflict generates. As a response, I set out to develop what I call the *dual character conception of moral change*, which highlights how our exercise of some moral values entails the neglect and sacrifice of other conflicting values and how this engenders the moral predicaments we do not usually see from the problem-solving conception of moral progress.

The second issue is the explanatory model of people's moral view change. The historical transformation of morality is not only a philosophical issue, but also a type of social phenomenon just like economic crises or political revolutions. Thus, philosophers also incorporate the explanatory models of social science to explain the transformation of morality. These explanations are not just about how changes happen; they also matter for predictions and interventions. In social science, the same phenomena can be explained from different levels of analysis, such as individuals, social groups, social institutions, and so forth, and this reveals the complex dynamics running behind each social process. In this respect, it is also important to see how philosophers explain the historical transformation of morality and if there is any space for improving their explanatory models.

The third issue is moral intervention. Though it is not always explicit in moral change accounts, moral intervention is either a direct goal or an aspect for which people will draw implications from the study of moral change. Intervention is usually towards the correction of morally problematic practices or the preservation of substantial moral values in society. However, as they are always mentioned as implications rather than the major issues of the study of moral change, the

discussion of the conception and practice of moral intervention is thus far limited. Conceptual engineering, a field focused on the improvement of defective conceptual understanding and uses, is also employed by many philosophers to achieve social justice and other moral goals. The implementation of engineered concepts, as a form of intervention, has yielded many discussions on the approach of implementation and its politics. Thus, I will examine the very idea of moral intervention in use and develop a new account of how to do it.

Taken together, the layout of the project is as follows. In the first chapter, I will explain the problem-solving conception of moral progress with the accounts of Michele Moody-Adams and Elizabeth Anderson. Then, I will refer to Isaiah Berlin's idea of value pluralism and Paul Feyerabend's critique of the dominance of modern science in contemporary society to explain the flaw of the problem-solving conception of moral progress. After that, I will use Thomas Kuhn's account of scientific revolutions and Alison Wylie's critique of the co-production of knowledge and ignorance in 20th-century archaeology to develop the dual character conception of moral change. At last, I will show through the examples of human rights development and secularization the moral predicaments masked by the problem-solving conception of moral progress.

Next, in the second chapter, I will argue that current explanations of moral view change miss out on the agential experiences most crucial to change. To develop the argument, I will start by showing how current explanations of moral change reflect the models of methodological individualism and structuralism in philosophy of social science. For instance, Kwame Appiah (2010) adopts an individualist explanation and appeals to people's desire for national honor to explain the elimination of women's foot-binding in the late Qing Dynasty of China. Hopster

and his colleagues (2022), in contrast, show that the introduction of plough technology into agriculture in the ancient time led people to value men over women, and this resulted in the unequal gender norms that assigned men more privileges. In this explanation, technology does not change moral norms directly, but it changes the way people think about what gender norms should be adopted. This fits with the structuralist explanation.

Next, I will point out that regardless of the model, one key process is how people reason about new sorts of morally relevant information in light of given social and psychological contexts. After that, I will move to a range of empirical studies on moral learning and moral view change and show that *first-order moral reasoning*—in which individuals process the moral information they receive—are insufficient in producing genuine changes. Rather, *second-order moral reasoning*—in which people retrieve their centrally held values and concerns to decide whether they should endorse a moral view—is more crucial. For this reason, my conclusion is that the model for explaining moral change should incorporate second-order moral reasoning to improve future study.

At last, the prevailing conception of moral intervention assumes a top-down, elitist structure, in which the intellectual community decides what moral views are correct and enforces them upon the general public. For instance, Michele Moody-Adams emphasizes the importance of engaged moral inquirers in leading moral progress, and Philip Kitcher prescribes that different social groups should select their representatives to participate in the conversations for resolving moral problems. On their view, these people stand for a morally progressive force, and the rest of society should trust their moral contributions. Similarly, in the field of conceptual engineering where philosophers seek to improve people's conceptual repertoires to

eliminate morally problematic practices, the elitist structure leaves the idea of moral intervention with a dilemma: Carrying out top-down interventions entails the possible erosion of individual freedom and liberal-democratic rights, while not taking any action leaves many harmful moral practices untouched.

As a response, we should firstly recognize the capacity of the public to improve themselves and society, and conceive of moral intervention as grounded in people's internal desire for wellbeing. As this desire generates in themselves the impetus to adjust themselves and remove unfavorable social conditions to attain their desired state of wellbeing, moral intervention can be a process in which the general public are the major agents of intervention, intervening on themselves to bring changes into society. Since people are not always in a state of seeing their desire for wellbeing, a new framework of moral intervention should show how the intellectual community can aid people to see the limitations of their social surroundings and motivate their efforts to change them.

Based on the three critiques, I will close the project by developing what I call the person-centric model of moral change as the new paradigm for studying the historical transformation of morality. I will first argue that current studies assume a knowledge-centric model, the main purpose of which is to establish more claims of moral change and moral progress, rather than challenging the perspectives that shape current moral change studies. This makes it similar to the method of abstract theorizing in moral philosophy, even though many philosophers take the empirical turn of the historical study of moral change to be an improvement of method. In contrast, the person-centric model seeks to ground the study of moral change in all sorts of human concerns and human conditions, and bring previously neglected perspectives and moral experiences into the study of moral change. Instead of just

establishing more moral claims, to study moral change is to give recognition to the complexity of the moral values, concerns, dilemmas, and predicaments that constitute our everyday moral life. Then, we can come to see how such complexity engenders the contemporary condition of human life, and what we should do about it.

Chapter 1 Beyond "moral progress": a dual character conception of moral change

I. Introduction

In the introductory chapter, I offered a brief review of current studies on moral change and moral progress, and point out some distinctive features of this type of moral inquiry. In this chapter, I will first criticize the conception of moral history assumed by a group of moral progress accounts. In their recent book, *Better Ape: The Evolution of the Moral Mind and How it Made us*, Victor Kumar and Richard Campbell (2022) lead us through a journey where our ancestors moved from "small bands that were nomadic and relatively egalitarian" to "large tribes" with "a superstructure of relationships beyond the immediate family and local community" (ibid., p. 175). Though they acknowledge it would be naïve to think that "the world as a whole is ceaselessly and inevitably improving" (ibid., p.177), Kumar and Campbell argue that instances of progress like the development of "moral regard for Black people" (ibid., p. 185) and the "improvements in the condition of women" (ibid., p. 187) are real.

This is one example of a broader phenomenon wherein the concepts of moral progress/regress structure our thinking about the past. Consistent with this, one dominant conception of our moral history in current studies of moral progress is to equate the liberalization of society with moral progress. This conception pictures us as problem solvers, who detect the violation of liberal values in society and make progress by developing solutions that restore or advance those values. Call this the

problem-solving conception of moral progress.[1] It runs deep in the accounts of moral progress offered by Michele Moody-Adams, Elizabeth Anderson, Martha Nussbaum, Philip Kitcher, Victor Kumar, and Richard Campbell. All these philosophers ground their moral progress accounts in this conception, and what differs is how we achieve the progress.

I propose instead the *dual character conception of moral change* to replace the problem-solving conception of moral progress. This conception takes into account the plural and conflicting aspect of the values we live by, and stresses that the exercise of one value entails the neglect and sacrifice of other conflicting values. Viewing our past moral experiences in terms of moral progress and regress maintains such neglect, which mistakenly leads us to believe that we have found the right path for society, and that we can simply follow that to achieve more progress. Not only does this uphold the dominance of liberal values, it also obscures the concerns of people who live by those non-liberal values. Thus, based on the equal importance of everyone, we should stop equating the realization of liberal values with moral progress.[2] Instead, we attend to the conflict of values, ground our

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[1] The philosophers criticized in this chapter associate "moral progress" with the realization of liberal values. This paper, therefore, targets specifically this value-based type of moral progress, and excludes moral progress that is based on utility, rationality, or any other dimension. Likewise, when I claim that we should not draw too quickly the distinction of progress/regress, what I mean is that the realization of a particular value is not sufficient to warrant the claim of progress. But I do not intend to imply that moral progress is impossible on all grounds.

[2] Usually the comparison of gains and losses evokes the issue of commensurability—i.e., identifying a common ground to make the comparison, and deciding whether there is progress and regress. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the existence of a common ground, and therefore, it remains neutral whether different kinds of values are commensurable or not. This, however, should not thwart us from recognizing that we neglect many alternative values in our realization of certain values, and it is because of our cognitive limitations—that we might always be in a state of

study of moral change in the dynamics generated by the conflict, and give more attention to the flourishing and suffering that reinforce each other when we choose one value over others.[3]

Thus far, most studies of moral progress focus on a working definition of progress, or finding a "proxy property that reliably tracks moral progress" (Evans 2017, p. 75). For instance, Allen Buchanan and Rachell Powell (2018) measure moral progress in terms of an inclusivist psychology, i.e., the overcoming of our innate exclusivist tendency and the extension of equal moral standings to all human groups (p. 985). Others argue that moral progress consists in the expansion of the circle of moral concern, such as including future generations and non-human animals into our moral consideration (Singer 2011; Sauer et al. 2021).[4]

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neglecting alternative values—that we should stop seeing past moral experiences in terms of moral progress/regress.

[3] As a concept, moral progress has a descriptive aspect—a state of affairs is progressive when it shows certain improvements from past states. But it also has a normative dimension—it puts people into a position to think that we must follow certain values and act in certain ways in order to do the right things (see Reuter 2019; Knobe et al. 2013). Talk of moral progress sustains this tendency, reinforcing the neglect of the struggles of people who live by alternative values. Shifting to moral change frees us from the normative force implicated in the concept of moral progress.

[4] One worry is that in the accounts of Singer, Buchanan, and Powell, moral progress is driven by the inconsistency between existing practices (hurting animals for human pleasure, for instance) with people's moral values (do no harm anyone/anything), rather than particular moral problems. This undermines the view that the problem-solving conception of moral progress is dominant in the discussions of moral progress. Inconsistency, however, is also a sort of problem, which explains why people try to address it and restore consistency. It is against liberal values that we judge there to be an inconsistency, as well as the achievement of progress through the alignment of existing practices with those values.

Though thinking in terms of moral progress/regress dominates contemporary studies of moral progress, it fails to capture the complex dynamics of moral change. In one example, as noted by historian Christopher Lasch (1991), the return of capitalist and free market-driven forces in the 1980s and 1990s was supposed to be a progress for many economic conservatives[5], but the change is much more complicated: On one hand, the economic shift facilitates the political process that liberates individuals from the economic and political oppression of many former communist societies. This is certainly a sign of progress for the economic conservatives in many liberal societies. On the other hand, in societies like the US, supporters of economic liberalism also support the values of families and Christianity. With the predominance of individualism bolstered by the neoliberal economy, the erosion of family and religious values renders the same process not as progressive as many expect. This contrast requires us to go beyond the distinction of moral progress/regress to catch the complexity of moral change.

By critiquing the problem-solving conception of moral progress assumed by a group of influential accounts, I aim to disrupt the pattern of seeing our moral history[6] as a problem-solving process, challenge the thinking that links moral

[5] The context of this discussion is limited to post-WWII periods, in which people are divided by their views over the role of governments in economy. Socialists and communists usually support government intervention, while conservatives support a free market and an economy with the minimal role of governments. Alongside economic freedom, economic conservatives in liberal societies are usually supporters of political freedom. Many socialists and communists also support political freedom, despite their different views of economy, but the current example considers only the perspective of those economic conservatives in liberal societies.

[6] The history here should be distinguished from the "history" in historiography. The issue at stake here is not that the historical accounts used in moral progress studies are descriptively false. What I argue for, instead, is that when moral philosophers draw on historical cases to support their

progress/regress to the realization of liberal values, and bring new sorts of moral change dynamics to attention. To develop these ideas, in section II, I will begin with the accounts of Michele Moody-Adams and Elizabeth Anderson to illustrate the problem-solving conception of moral progress. Next, in section III, I will engage Isaiah Berlin's idea of value pluralism and Paul Feyerabend's critique of the dominance of modern science in contemporary society to elaborate how the conflict of values point to a flaw in the problem-solving conception of moral progress. Then, in section IV, I will address some metaethical concerns to show further why we should not just rely on liberal values to tell moral progress.

After that, in section V, I will firstly draw on Thomas Kuhn's account of scientific revolutions and Alison Wylie's critique of the co-production of knowledge and ignorance in 20th century archaeology to illustrate the moral change picture tracked by the dual character conception. In both accounts, Kuhn and Wylie reveal a picture of scientific change in which scientists' endorsement of a paradigm or a theory is accompanied by their neglect of alternative theories. Therefore, knowledge growth is at the expense of scientific claims that may describe more accurately the features of the world. This pattern of change provides the analogous point for the dual character conception of moral change. Thereafter, I will use the examples of human rights development and secularization to show how the dual character conception reveals the moral predicaments obscured by the problem-solving conception of moral progress. Last, in section VI, I will draw some final thoughts regarding our moral attitudes.

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evaluative claims of moral progress, they show a perspectival limit in their uses of the cases, which should be challenged.

II. The problem-solving conception of moral progress

As a way of looking at moral history, the problem-solving conception of moral progress describes the pattern in which philosophers present moral cases in a problem-solving structure, and make the claim of progress when liberal values are restored and realized to a greater extent. The conception, therefore, consists of two aspects: First, it pictures humans as problem solvers, who solve the moral problems that occur in our social life. Second, these moral problems usually involve the violation of liberal values, and a solution is progressive when it restores and advances the values. In Moody-Adams' account, the realization of liberal values is towards "humane regard"—i.e., a "robust respect" for one's capacity for rational agency, and a "compassionate concern" for our "vulnerability to pain and suffering" (2022, p. 96).[7] When a moral change contributes to these two aspects, it warrants the claim of progress. In Anderson's account, the liberation of humans from slavery and the greater freedom they enjoy are grounds for the claim of moral progress (2014; 2016).

There are two ways of seeing the problem-solving structure in Moody-Adams' account. The first is to look at single instances of moral change. One focal case is the development of the concept of sexual harassment during second-wave feminism. Before the concept was available, women lacked the resources to describe accurately the nature and severity of sexual harassment. Thus, they had to tolerate

[7] It may seem anachronistic here that Moody-Adams' accounts of progress come up before the notion of humane regard, which she develops in her recent book, *Making Space for Justice: Social Movements, Collective Imagination, and Political Hope* (2022a). This book can be seen as a development of her moral and political thoughts over the past decades. Thus, I take it to represent the core of her thoughts.

it, or attribute it to mere gender discrimination when they suffered from sexual intimidation and unwanted advances in workplaces (Moody-Adams 2017, p. 159; also see Fricker 2007; Brownmiller 1999). Progress was made when feminists recognized the problem and developed the concept of sexual harassment to elicit public attention to the oppression women suffer in everyday life.

Second, the problem-solving structure is also what we should follow to deal with ongoing and future moral challenges. On Moody-Adams' view, WWII, the Holocaust, and Rwanda genocides are all regressive periods in human history, but we are able to make progress by developing universal human rights to prevent racial cleansings and by promoting healthcare in post-genocidal Rwanda to improve people's life (2017, p. 166). In a more recent case, the policy of legally mandated integration of public housing in Chicago was originally designed to promote fair housing opportunities, but it ended up driving "most of the neighborhood's highly motivated residents" to "move out and 'up'" (ibid., p. 162). As this left "the once thriving neighborhood" to be "one of the least safe," it undermined "the socio-economic wellbeing of the least well-off" (ibid., p. 162), which now invites further solutions.[8] In this case, while the fair housing policy was expected to address the problem of racial segregation, it gave rise to the problems policymakers failed to foresee. Hence, instead of thinking that one solution can resolve all the problems,

[8] This case may entail the concern that the problem-solving process is not always associated with moral progress, and therefore, the problem-solving conception of moral progress is not always valid. I acknowledge that the solutions we propose do not always address problems. This usually stems from our inaccurate understandings of problems, but this does not undermine the fact that following liberal values to develop solutions is the key method of progress. The problem-solving conception of moral progress stresses that we make progress by following liberal values. This conception is valid for emphasizing the right method of progress.

we should stay open to the problems that may emerge at any time and place, and be ready to resolve them to bring more progress to society.

The value aspect of the problem-solving conception of moral progress is seen in Moody-Adams' prescription for progress. One of her central ideas is that moral progress does not result from the invention of new moral concepts, but from deepening our grasp of the semantic meanings of existing moral concepts (Moody-Adams 1999). Drawing on Mark Platts' idea that moral concepts usually possess a depth that transcends "our present practical comprehensions in trying to grapple with an independent, indefinitely complex reality" (1979, p. 286), Moody-Adams urges us to pay closer attention to the details of the world and continue to fathom our moral concepts to improve our moral beliefs and practices. Some of these concepts include freedom, equality, fairness, justice, righteousness, care, compassion, and absence of harm;[9] when we improve our understanding of the concepts and apply it to address moral problems, this process amounts to realizing the values the concepts stand for to a greater extent.

Similar to Moody-Adams, a substantial part of moral history for Elizabeth Anderson is the progress people make in combating unequal power relations. In her account, oppression constitutes an eternal moral problem, and an important part of it is the "arrogance and ignorance" of the dominant group— the attitude of always deeming the "complaints from below" to be "vicious" and not considering "the

[9] Liberal values are much more complicated than what I have described here. Though this puts into question the validity of liberalism as the target of my critique, my main intention is to challenge the thinking in which liberal values serve as the standard for judging moral progress and regress. My critique, thus, can be extended to other understandings of liberal values.

interests of others" (Anderson 2014, p. 8). Moral progress then occurs when a group of powerless people resist this unequal social structure, engage in contentious politics to attack the norms that perpetuate their inferiority and unfair treatment, and realize human freedom.

For example, in Latin America, Haiti was the first country to have a successful "slave revolt in world history" (Anderson 2016, p. 75). People in Haiti (which was still known as the French colony of St. Domingue in 1794) announced their freedom to the French National Convention, and when they crushed the attempt of Napoleon to restore slavery in 1804, Haitians acquired both independence and "the unconditional abolition of slavery" (ibid., p. 75). Later on, the British abolitionists achieved a range of breakthroughs by putting "the whole package of contentious activities together in a sustained, coordinated campaign", which culminated in the Slavery Abolition Act 1833, a bill to abolish slavery in British oversea colonies (Anderson 2014, pp. 11-12).

Here, moral progress is measured in terms of the value of human freedom. Slavery is a social institution that denies the freedom and autonomy of a large group of people; the abolition of slavery, then, is progressive in giving back people's freedom and dignity. In her account of "experiments in living," the idea that we measure the progressiveness of a change in actual practices, Anderson (2014) mentions that many British saw abolition as a mistake at first because of the country's loss of competitive advantage in international trade and the higher cost of production. However, when we consider the paramount importance of freedom, the progressiveness of the movement is undoubtable: When "those who labor to produce the characteristic goods of civilization are entitled to sufficient leisure, income, and freedom to enjoy its benefits, by this standard, the relative leisure and

prosperity of the freed people of the West Indies counted as a great success of the emancipation experiment" (ibid., p. 21).

To sum up, the problem-solving conception of moral progress positions us as problem-solvers who are in a continual process of detecting the violations of liberal values and advancing them to make progress. This puts us onto a moral path where we move towards the greater realization of values like freedom, equality, justice, care, and others. Cases like the abolition of slavery, the Holocaust, and Rwandan genocide are important for the problem-solving conception of moral progress; they lead us to think about what freedom, care, and justice should be and how we should advance them. Together, with the examples of how people in the past achieve progress, Moody-Adams and Anderson reinforce through their discussions the pattern of following liberal values to resolve moral problems, and prescribe it to be the trajectory we should follow to tackle ongoing and future moral challenges.

III. Limitations of the problem-solving conception of moral progress

The problem-solving conception of moral progress is nevertheless narrow and misleading. It is narrow for viewing moral history around just liberal values. It is misleading for highlighting only the violation and advancement of liberal values, and taking these to be the sole ground for considering what is progress and regress. Within current value landscape, not only are many non-liberal values morally significant, but many values we live by are in conflict with each other for different reasons. Neglecting this aspect, the problem-solving conception fails to reflect the moral change dynamics shaped by the conflict of values, and it obscures the moral predicaments stemming from this conflict.

One angle to see the flaw of the problem-solving conception of moral progress is the diachronic-synchronic distinction in viewing history. The problem-solving conception reflects a diachronic view, in which we use past violations of the values of care, compassion, respect, and dignity to show how we should build our future. In her recent article on the importance of coming to terms with history, Moody-Adams (2022b) expresses a deep worry about the resistance to teaching distressing history at school, such as the ban on teaching Art Spiegelman's novel *Maus* in Tennessee, which depicts vividly the torture suffered by the Holocaust victims and survivors. Based on Martha Nussbaum's idea of narrative imagination—i.e., the ability of comprehending "the motives and choices of people different from ourselves" (1997, p. 85)—learning the broader historical background is important for understanding the life experiences of individuals and social groups. As this is essential to the capacity for compassion and social change, exposing ourselves to a discomfiting history, to "human evil and the damaging effects that evil in one era may continue to have in the lives of succeeding generations," is crucial to our moral growth (Moody-Adams 2022b).

Although Moody-Adams (2022b) considers the "perspectival" nature of history—that the "accuracy and comprehensiveness" of any historical point of view is always open to challenge, the "careful scrutiny of conflicting historical accounts" she stresses serves to distinguish moral cases that are in all conditions wrong from those containing both progressive and regressive parts. What is obscured in this view of history is the relations of values—that is, within the same socio-historical background, there are always values that provide competing and alternative forms of life. Some of them are acknowledged by the liberal world; others may not be, but

they are also morally significant to many parts of the world.[10] Thus, values do not exist independently; what we do about them usually impacts values that are in some connection with them.

The current conception of moral history, accordingly, neglects the synchronic lens of viewing history: Instead of taking particular liberal moral values as the unit of historical understanding, we should attend to the competing and conflicting relations of values and see our moral past from them. One elaboration of the conflict is Isaiah Berlin's value pluralism (2013a; 2013b; 2013c).[11] On his account, we individuals sometimes hold onto values that project different perfect states of life; these states are all ideal, but they are not always compatible, and no "single overarching standard or criterion" exists "to decide between, or reconcile, these wholly opposed moralities" (Berlin 2013b, p. 33).

This pluralist view might not be fully accepted, since we can still compare moralities by comparing, for example, people's wellbeing. But it is consistent with the equal dignity of all that I endorse the view of value pluralism. In contemporary Anglo-American society, the dignity of all humans is usually manifested in the universal equalization of rights and duties. But on another influential political and

[10] This is supported by the moral foundations theory. Based on their cross-culture studies, there exist at least five themes of morality across cultures, and one of them is purity/authority (Graham et al. 2013). Authority is not usually seen as a liberal value, but it is morally important to many.

[11] It should be noted that Berlin's account of value pluralism is itself controversial. My account is not grounded in the best account of pluralism, but the methodological and epistemic implications of pluralism as a fact—that is, when we recognize the plurality of values, we should take it to be the basis of understanding moral history and evaluate our past moral experiences based on this updated understanding.

social thought, dignity is tied to the recognition of the unique ways individuals are (see e.g., Taylor 1994). This thought could trace back to the honour culture in the ancient times, where one seeks the recognition of the achievements they make but that others do not (ibid., 27). Although the idea of the equal rights and duties of all gains currency, the focus on individuals since the Enlightenment continues to highlight individuals' needs to be recognized for their uniqueness.[12]

One contemporary application of this thought is identity politics. For instance, given numerous people with mixed racial identities in the US, Alcoff (2005) challenges the policy that fits people into particular racial groups in order to "purify" their races. To accord people dignity requires instead our recognition of their unique racial backgrounds. In a similar vein, I endorse Berlin's value pluralism in virtue of this individuality-based dignity. Although Berlin limits his discussions to western society, and the values he mentions—such as Christianity, secularism, rationalism, or liberal democracy—dominate western society in different historical periods, a significant aspect we should see is that when people advocate a particular value, what they seek is to have the particular form of life and society they endorse recognized by others.

Recognizing each value, therefore, is to recognize the unique ways of thinking of those who support them. People's dignity is respected when we acknowledge the efforts they make to advocate the forms of life they envision. Value pluralism then stands on this ground: To see values as equal and incomparable is to respect each

[12] Two major thinkers that contribute to the development of the thought include Rousseau and Herder (Taylor 1994, p. 30).

individual and their endeavour to live the life they find valuable and meaningful, and it is consistent with this respect for the equal dignity of all that we do not rely on any particular value to judge moral progress, nor do we impose any common standard to adjudicate different values.

Values conflict in multiple ways. First, it can arise from the "inherently rivalrous" nature of values (Gray 2013, p. 79). For example, Machiavelli held the ideal of a country with "citizens who were adequately protected, patriotic, proud of their State, epitomes of manly, pagan virtues," and also the ideal of a Christian tradition that stressed "humility, acceptance of suffering, unworldliness, the hope of salvation in an afterlife" (Berlin 2013a, p. 8). What paganism and Christian morality emphasize—achievement and pride in life, versus the inherent sinfulness of life and the need for salvation in an afterlife—are both commendable but incompatible. Given the equality of values defended above, no simple answer can be given regarding which is more ideal.

Values can also be "internally complex and inherently pluralistic, containing conflicting elements, some of which are constitutive incommensurables" (Gray 2013, p. 79). Therefore, when we act on one element of a value, we produce an effect that undermines the other element, which renders the value self-conflicting. In one legal case, when the United States Steel Corporation's Youngstown Works plant decided to relocate the factory and fired 3500 workers, the workers sued the company with the hope of reversing the owners' decision (Bradley 2023). The values of liberty and equality were both contested: First, the liberty of the company to exercise their property rights was in conflict with the liberty of workers. When the factory owners shut down the factory and fired the workers, their liberty in exercising their property rights created the effect that the workers' life was simply

at the disposal of the factory owners; as a result, the workers had no real liberty in pursing their life, but had to deal with unemployment and serve the interests of capitalists.

Second, the equality of all of liberal society also entails a situation, where the claims of both sides make sense in a liberal society but are nevertheless in conflict with one other. To the workers, after working for the plant for decades, the company had turned into a community where they also had a responsibility for its future. Thus, workers stressed to the court the equal participation they were entitled to in the decision-making regarding the plant. While the workers invoked the principle of equality of liberal society, corporation owners also exercised their property rights as they were legally entitled. The equal right of everyone to participate in communal decision-making is then in conflict with the equality of individuals and companies in exercising their legal rights. In the end, the workers lost the lawsuit; when the court decided to protect the factory owners, the liberty of workers and their equal say over public affairs were sacrificed.

The conflicting components of the values of liberty and equality in the above case also reflect the conflicting metaphysical pictures people hold about society. In a liberal-capitalist society, what the owners of the plant see is a society organized around capital, property, individual ownership, and the legal system that protects it; it is therefore consistent with this arrangement that they exercise their property right. In contrast, what the workers see is a community they build from their company; the workers and owners are equal despite their role differences.

The conflict of values is not confined to the moral domain. In Feyerabend's critique of the dominance of Western science in the modern world, he recognizes scientific

medicine and Chinese herbal medicine to be two competing options for physical illness (1978). These different types of treatments result from the different understanding of the underlying causes of one's illness—physiological dysfunction, or the imbalance of one's whole body. Scientific medicine divides a body into individual parts and focuses on the function of single cells or organs to develop treatments. Chinese herbal medicine, in contrast, is more holistic: It looks at the "qi, blood, yin-yang, viscera (Zang-Fu), and meridian and channel" that are derived from ancient Chinese philosophy, and improves one's health by "regulating and mobilizing the whole body" (Sun et al. 2013, p. 706). Scientific and Chinese medicine, therefore, offer conflicting views about what is the best for physical wellbeing.

Feyerabend's comparison of different knowledge systems leads to his radical claim of the incommensurability of methods of knowledge (1975). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss whether different knowledge systems are really incommensurable and whether this incommensurability applies equally to science and morality. But what I want to stress again is that it is out of the respect of the equal dignity of all that we recognize the epistemic and moral achievements of different communities. Thus, what matters here is the conflict of western and Chinese medicine that results from their different understandings of human anatomy. This conflict lends support to the conflict of values, which I believe we should endorse to revise our understanding of moral history.

Together, what is missing from the historical thinking in current accounts of moral progress is a recognition of the conflict of values. Studies of moral change, as a result, are rarely grounded in the dynamics this conflict engenders. For Berlin (2013b), when we focus on a particular value, we may simply see human history

"as a single universal process of struggle towards the light, the later stages and embodiments of which are necessarily superior to the earlier, where the primitive is necessarily inferior to the sophisticated" (ibid., p. 39). The problem-solving conception of moral progress does not assume the same linear model,[13] but when we focus on a particular set of values and view our moral history from a diachronic perspective, we dissect history into progressive periods and regressive ones based on the violation and advancement of the values. By urging people to follow the progressive and avoid the regressive, we also shape the future moral trajectory of society.

My argument, in response, is that a more appropriate conception of moral history should take into account the conflict of values. Following this trajectory, I propose the *dual character conception of moral change* to be a better alternative. As I will show below, not only does this conception track our efforts to realize some values, but it also captures the loss of the values alternative to what we choose. More importantly, it highlights the moral predicaments obscured by the problem-solving conception of moral progress. In this respect, it enriches the moral experiences that deserve our moral reflection and enables us to draw moral claims from new perspectives.

[13] In Moody-Adams' account, moral history is not an "unbroken 'upward' path of permanent moral movement; violations of liberal values can occur after the earlier progress (2017, p. 155).

IV. Liberal values, realism, and pragmatism

Before moving onto the dual character conception of moral change, I will firstly address some metaethical issues that shadow the discussion of moral progress, and show further why we should not just rely on liberal values to tell moral progress. One ground for supporting the liberal notion of moral progress is the realist claim that liberal values are objective moral facts, which we can discover from a mind-independent moral reality (see e.g., Huemer 2016).[14] As "liberalism is the objectively correct moral stance" (ibid., p. 1983), it is plausible that we equate moral progress with the realization of liberal values. The second ground is pragmatism, the idea that we endorse liberal values for the practical benefits they grant to us (see e.g., Kitcher 2021; Roth 2012).[15]

Resisting the liberal notion of moral progress, therefore, requires us to address the following questions. First, are liberal values objective? Second, given the pragmatist account, if we deny the improvements liberal values bring to our lives, do we at the same time deny the progressiveness of past moral changes, such as the abolition of slavery and the achievement of equal rights for men and women?

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[14]Although not every philosopher appeals to the objectivity of liberal values to support the liberal notion of moral progress, objectivity is one important reason. By challenging this reason, this section shows from one crucial angle why we should not rely on these values to decide what is progress and regress.

[15] The two targets of this chapter, Moody-Adams and Anderson, do not assume explicitly realism or pragmatism in their accounts of moral progress. Moody-Adams (1999), in particular, denies the existence of any moral ends that exist objectively; society is not progressing towards some fixed end-state. This section is aimed at addressing more widespread metaethical intuitions behind the problem-solving conception of moral change, and tackling potential objections to my claim that we should not just rely on liberal values to view moral history.

Though it is difficult to fully address these issues within this chapter, neither of the questions should frustrate our critique of the liberal notion of moral progress and our attempt to bring different kinds of values into our understanding of moral history.

My response has three aspects. First, although realism posits the existence of a mind-independent moral reality, the realism Huemer (2016) adopts associates moral reality and objective moral facts with a particular type of cognitive structure. That is, when we rely purely on logical reasoning, the moral facts we discover are objective. In contrast, when we rely on emotions and desires, which are "inculcated by our genes and culture" (ibid., p. 1983), what we discover lacks objectivity. But logical reasoning is not as value neutral as many people assume. Per David Bloor (1991), scientists and philosophers endorse logical reasoning to prevent the absolute thought control of religions, and this idea is reflected in the rise of logical positivism and critical rationalism.[16] The logical reasoning itself, in this respect, stands for a value that resists religions like the Catholic Church of the Medieval Age.

Moreover, as Linda Alcoff (1996) contends, in western society, objectivity was tied to well-educated middle class white men from the early period of modern science. As the society believed that only these people were capable of logical and detached reasoning, they could meet the objective standard of modern science, but not women, children, non-whites, the old, or the disabled. Though we should stay critical of Alcoff's claim, this critique points out the possibility of how powerful

[16] The fear of religion/metaphysical thought could be seen in the founding paper of Vienna Circle, "The Scientific Conception of the World: the Vienna Circle" (Hanh et al. 1929).

groups shape the standard of objectivity to perpetuate unequal power relations. Thus, we do not have a well-recognized ground for discerning what is objective and what is not, and we cannot judge whether liberal values are objective.

Another way people justify the objectivity of liberalism is through the idea of "convergence." On this view, despite the divergence in the past, more people and societies come to endorse liberal values in the contemporary era, and this leads many to see the values as objective moral facts (Huemer 2016). But the "convergence" is also suspicious, when we consider how prevalent the disagreement over moral views still is. For example, according to the moral foundations theory, although more people come to see the importance of individual autonomy, the loyalty to authority is still endorsed by many as a central moral value (see e.g., Graham et al. 2009). Moreover, against the moral background of individualism, many people now stress the importance of community as the locus of moral life (see e.g., Ferguson et al. 1995; also see Taylor 1995; MacIntyre 1984). Others call for a re-evaluation of the moral significance of religion, instead of simply diminishing it to be a form of life that should be secularized and liberalized (see e.g., Mahmood 2011). The convergence view, then, does not stand to support the objectivity of liberal values.

Last, it is compatible with pragmatism that we consider value conflict and its impact on people's life situations, rather than just sticking to the moral judgments many of us already hold onto and using them to close moral debates. The main tenet of pragmatism, as a metaethical stance, is that we should focus on the ideas that improves our actual life situations, rather than just those that are logically correct

(see e.g., James 1907; Dewey 1911; Rorty 1982; Sepielli 2017).[17] As I will show in the second part of the next section, attending to the conflict of values can help us see the moral predicaments obscured by the problem-solving conception of moral change. We then can bring benefits to people by doing justice to those whose life situations are currently neglected. Thus, it is compatible with pragmatism that we adopt the conflict of values to view moral history.

Together, the current conception of realism does not provide a satisfactory ground for justifying the objectivity of liberal values, and it is coherent with pragmatism that we look into value conflict to see the limitation of the liberal notion of moral progress. As neither realism nor pragmatism can uphold liberal values as the sole proxy for tracking moral progress, we need to consider the broader landscape of human values—and their conflict, in particular—to explore the dynamics of moral change. Now I will shift to the dual character conception of moral change, which tracks the pattern of moral change resulting from the conflict of values, and which can help us see the moral predicaments obscured by the problem-solving conception of moral progress.

V. A dual character conception of moral change

The dual- character conception of moral change differs from the problem-solving conception of moral progress in two major respects: First, it points to a different

[17] One aspect in which pragmatism differs from realism is in its theory of moral truth. While realism ascribes truth to what we discover from an independent moral reality, on pragmatism, we tell what is morally true from actual practices. Here we appeal to a simple version of pragmatism, although this meta-ethical tradition is much more complex.

way of looking at our moral history, and second, it highlights the moral predicaments obscured by the problem-solving conception of moral progress. In the first aspect, the new conception requires a perspectival change in viewing moral history. Instead of focusing on the general trend like women's liberation or slavery abolition, we should look into the specific values that are proposed to address issues like gender or racial oppression, the values that are conflicting and alternative to what is chosen, and the moral change dynamics the two parts produce. When two values are conflicting and alternative to each other, choosing one brings us onto a path for building society that excludes the path projected by the other value. What the dual character conception tracks, accordingly, is the neglect and sacrifice of the alternative value[18] entailed by our exercise of one value.[19]

One good way to understand the dual character conception is by analogy with Thomas Kuhn's account of scientific revolutions and Alison Wylie's critique of the co-production of knowledge and ignorance in mid-20th century archaeology. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1996), Kuhn challenges the Enlightenment conception of scientific change, in which new theories replace old ones by addressing the problems the old theories fail to, and comes up with the notion of a "paradigm shift" to show that scientific practices are in fact paradigm-based. These

[18] For simplicity, I use 'alternative value' in the rest of the chapter.

[19] As an objection, one worry is that the dual character conception of moral change only improves the problem-solving conception of moral progress, instead of showing an entirely different way of looking at moral history. My view is that the real difference occurs when we ground the studies of moral change in the dual character conception: What we see is no longer how we should advance liberal values, but how to start recognizing and addressing the issues caused by the neglect and sacrifice of alternative values. This changes the direction of our moral discussions.

paradigms are initially “a theory and some exemplary applications to the results of experiment and observation,” and by further articulation and improvement, they turn into a set of beliefs scientific community “no longer try to rival” or “to create alternates for” (Kuhn 1963, p. 307). Paradigms therefore condition the research questions scientists pursue and the kinds of claims that might be accepted as scientific knowledge.

But the shift of paradigms is not the only peculiar feature of Kuhn’s account of scientific revolutions; another one is that the adoption of one particular paradigm also entails the neglect of alternative theories or the failure to conceive them. The growth of scientific claims, as a result, is sustained by the loss of the claims that might develop from those neglected theories, and they might actually capture more accurately the features of the world. One example is given in Kuhn’s historical project *The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought* (1957). In Kuhn’s account, Copernicus endorsed the idea of the earth in motion, which enabled astronomers in the following centuries to break from Ptolemaic astronomy and the Aristotelian two-sphere conception of the universe, and build up a new astronomical system that culminated in Newton’s infinite universe.

The shift of paradigms from Ptolemaic astronomy to Copernican astronomy, however, occurs with astronomers’ failure to consider alternative theories. As Kuhn (1957) points out, Aristotle’s theory of space—that places in a space have in themselves the force to push objects back to their “natural resting places” and therefore perform “an active and dynamic role in the motion of bodies”—is actually akin to Einstein’s general theory of relativity (ibid., p. 98). The adoption of Copernican astronomy, nevertheless, led astronomers to discard Aristotle’s theory

as wrong and outdated. In the end, while they were able to build a new astronomical system based on Copernican astronomy, they rarely go back to examine the scientific value of Aristotle's theory, and they miss out on a realm of knowledge that might actually capture more accurately the features of the universe.

In Alison Wylie's critique of archaeological studies in the mid-20th century, one of her key claims is that "the same range of factors that explain the production of knowledge are relevant for understanding the production (and maintenance) of ignorance" (2008, p. 187). That is, when archaeologists in the mid-20th century tried to overcome a paucity of conceptual resources for understanding the past, they developed "problem-oriented research" and framed meaningful research questions based on some "middle- range theory" (ibid., p. 190).

Such theories usually come from other scientific fields. For instance, when the theory of cultural evolution came out in the 19th century, it set the direction for archaeologists' search for historical records by positing "a linear progression from bands to tribes to chiefdoms to states." When the relics of the mound centres around Hopewell and Mississippian sites were unearthed, they immediately interpreted them to be "emergent proto-states" or "unstable chiefdoms," which grew gradually and continuously into regional centres during the time of occupation and collapsed precipitously later (ibid., p. 198). Knowledge was then generated by fitting the evidence into the theory of cultural evolution.

However, when new evidence showed up from the reconstruction of field notes, fragmentary records, and the reopening of previously excavated trenches (ibid., p. 195), the linear progression turned suspicious—the sites that were taken to be regional centres were actually abandoned at the time they were thought to be the

most influential; the expansion and contraction in size and configuration was common during their occupation, and their impact did not simply grow with a successive expansion of the scale of occupation (ibid., p. 198). What this reveals is that when archaeologists adhere to those middle- range theories for research, they are in a situation similar to the astronomers adhering to the Copernican paradigm: Their adoption of a particular theory entails the neglect of alternative hypotheses, and the knowledge archaeologists achieve is sustained by the loss of a more diverse understanding of the developmental trajectories of past civilizations.

Though it is for scientific reasons that scientists adopt one paradigm and neglect others and this may not directly apply to moral cases[20], the moral change picture tracked by the dual character conception is essentially an analogous one: Our exercise of some values entails the neglect and sacrifice of their alternative values, and therefore, the gain we receive from exercising the values is sustained by the loss stemming from the neglect of others; the two are inseparable from each other. In her paper "Moral Revolution," Parsons (1979) challenges the use of the political and moral paradigm of rights and obligations to frame the moral debate over abortion.[21] One key issue is that this paradigm expects women to examine abortion

[20] In Kuhn's account, the epistemic gain from endorsing a new paradigm is the major reason why scientists adopt and stick to it (1996, pp. 156-157). By contrast, in the moral example of abortion I discuss below, many scholars inherit the moral paradigm of rights and obligations simply because that is what is taught in universities (Parsons, 1979). The paradigm of women's meaningful life, in contrast, reflects the respect for women's own thinking and choice. Neither paradigm is adopted because they help people gain more moral knowledge or solve more moral problems.

[21] Parsons' target is Judith Jarvis Thomson (1971) and her paper "A Defense of Abortion". In one of her arguments, Thomson uses the case of a dying violinist to show that it is wrong to use the organs of the violinist to save other people just because he is dying. Analogously, it is unfair that mothers are not permitted to have abortion when their life is threatened by the pregnancy; the right

in the same manner as policymakers do, instead of encouraging them to think about abortion in terms of what it means to their life. In response, Parsons highly commends the practice of a group of feminists during the second-wave feminism, who promoted the idea of "a meaningful life" and set up a clinic called "Jane" to offer free abortion service to those in need (ibid., pp. 204-206). This encourages women to consider their real needs, and decide from that whether they should have an abortion.

Though women's meaningful life is a better paradigm for their liberation on Parsons' view, the issue she points out reflects the sacrifice of alternative moral values entailed by the pursuit of one value. The sets of values that are conflicting here are the rights of mothers and the autonomous choice of women. Their conflict arises when Thomson grounds her argument for abortion in the rights of mothers, which automatically confines women's life to their roles as mothers, and which implicitly continues the mother-child thinking of a patriarchal society (ibid., p. 213). Thomson's argument, therefore, fails to challenge the patriarchy that keeps women in a subordinate position, and the rights of mothers are in conflict with the autonomy of women for maintaining the patriarchy that rejects women's autonomy.

This case therefore resembles what we see in the legal case regarding Youngstown Works plant: The court's protection of the company owners' liberty to exercise their property rights upholds the capitalist social structure that undermines the liberty of

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to life of a mother is no less than that of the violinist. In a different argument, Thomson points out that society have an unfairly high moral demand for mothers— they are required to be "good Samaritans" when others only need to be minimally decent. It is unfair that mothers bear more obligations simply because they carry babies. But overall, these arguments are shaped by the moral paradigm of rights and obligations.

workers. In retrospect, though the efforts of feminists like Thomson contribute to the legalization of abortion, the moral paradigm they adopt limits people's thinking and discussions on abortion to what is sensible to a patriarchal society. The move to set up the free abortion clinic and promote women's meaningful life is to advance the alternative moral thinking, which is towards building a new social structure that is emancipatory for women.

Back to Kuhn's account, he refutes the conception of scientific progress as the discovery of new facts to approximate the ultimate truths of the world (Oberheim & Hoyningen-Huene 2018). But he does not throw away the whole idea of scientific progress. By recognizing how a new paradigm can help scientists address the puzzles they previously fail to, he acknowledges the practical benefits of paradigm shift (Kuhn 1996). Wylie, in contrast, is more explicit about the limitation of our epistemic achievements. On her view, even though the most up-to-date analysis overcomes the flaws of previous archaeological theories, we should not rest on what we have achieved (Wylie 2011). Rather, "secondary retrieval" is necessary for discovering previously neglected evidence, and new theories should be developed to recontextualize archaeological records to debilitate many currently established claims (ibid., p. 310).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the conception of scientific progress and see whether the same conception applies to moral change. What Wylie indicates is that even though we have been correcting past mistakes, we might still overlook much important evidence, and this inevitably entails the loss of knowledge. Out of the same concern, we should endorse the dual character conception of moral change and stay aware of the loss entailed by the gain we make. In the case of abortion, rather than just highlighting how much more freedom women gain over abortion

through the legal recognition of mothers' right to abort, we should also point out that many still lack the support to pursue the kind of life they want because of the social structure that limits women's autonomous choice. Rushing to draw the distinction of progress and regress mistakenly leads us to believe that we can make more progress by just following whatever that is taken to be progressive, while helping women requires us to see both parts and continue our moral reflection from the broader picture.

5.1 The previously obscured moral predicaments

Following the main idea of the dual character conception of moral change, this conception also reveals the moral predicaments obscured by the problem-solving conception of moral progress. As one example, Moody-Adams (2017), Anderson (2014), Buchanan and Powell (2018) all highly commend the development of universal human rights for protecting humans against genocides and war crimes, giving freedom to all people regardless of their backgrounds, and extending equal moral standings from one's in-group to out-group. But the human rights movements from the 1970s are much more complicated than this. The theories of material sufficiency and material equality—as two competing human rights ideas—project two conflicting trajectories for the development of the Global South: While material sufficiency stresses the satisfaction of basic human needs, such as "work, education, social assistance, health, housing, food, and water", material equality gives more weight to the fair distribution of goods (Moyn 2018, p. xi). Material sufficiency was finally endorsed to be the main idea of human rights, but it is now blamed for contributing to the enlarging global inequality of this day (Moyn 2018).

Based on the problem-solving conception of moral progress, the current inequality should be seen as a problem that results from the economic and political situations of past decades (see Kumar & Campbell 2022, p. 183). But when we shift to the dual character conception of moral change, the complexity of human rights movements questions the sufficiency of merely finding solutions for reducing inequality. On the dual character conception, inequality does not simply arise from a policy that marginalizes material equality, but the movement itself entails and masks the marginalization by prioritizing material sufficiency. In other words, the efforts to provide everyone with a basically sufficient life—which appears absolutely correct—cause and sustain the neglect of material equality.

The reason behind is not as simple as the wrong choice of human rights advocates, that they should have focused on material equality instead of material sufficiency. Both values are important for the development of Global South, but they are alternative to each other in the sense that choosing one inevitably entails the sacrifice of the other. Their conflict arises in the following ways. First, material sufficiency prioritizes individualist thinking by focusing on individual needs, whereas material equality stresses relational thinking and collective welfare (see e.g., Mutua 2008; Langford 2018). Second, economically, to realize material sufficiency requires a strong economy to provide adequate resources for satisfying people's basic needs. This upholds an economy that favors a free market and individual investments, which at the same time curbs those more socialist-styled regimes that prioritize egalitarianism and collective welfare (Moyn 2018).

Thus, when material sufficiency informs the human rights policies in Global South countries, equality is the price we pay for the gain we make. For instance, in Brazil, individuals' legal claims regarding their healthcare or education are more likely to

be accepted than the claims made about the welfare of groups and communities; as most claims are made in more developed areas like Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul, it remains a privilege of the middle and upper class to make legal claims, while the life needs of the poor are largely left unattended (see e.g., Hoffmann & Bentes 2008; Ferraz 2011). Also, in the case of China, the move from an egalitarian, communist economic structure to a market economy results in the wealth accumulation of a small number of people. This entails an inequality in income and living standards that is enlarging at an alarming rate (see e.g., Knight 2014; Zhou & Song 2016).

The problem-solving conception of moral progress requires us to design policies that accommodate the need to alleviate inequality, but a moral predicament we face is that the conflict between material sufficiency and material equality is no less acute today than the 1970s. On one hand, because of the highly uneven distribution of wealth among countries, we still need a large amount of material resources to guarantee people's basic life needs in many Global South countries. In these areas, a policy that puts equality ahead of insufficiency when the overall material resources of society are limited may just end up in keeping most people in poverty.[22]

[22] There is a long debate in moral philosophy over what we should aim for—sufficiency or equality. Harry Frankfurt (1987) and Joseph Raz (1986, ch. 9) both deem that having enough is better than having the same as others do. But others dispute this claim for the reason that needs are relative to what others possess; people are still insufficient when others possess much more than they do (see e.g., Marmor 2007, ch. 12). In the case of human rights development, the main issue is that the Global South countries are in general impoverished, and prioritizing equality over sufficiency may limit individual investment and the flow of capital. The countries then do not have enough material resources for distribution. In the end, people may be more equal, but they are overall economically deprived.

On the other hand, a continuous ignorance of inequality is very likely to exacerbate the life conditions of many to a further extent—for instance, the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected the poor, for they suffered foremost from the job loss and lack of income caused by the lockdown measures and quarantine policy (see e.g., Carreras et al. 2021). Thus, any option we make may either repeat the past mistakes or entail new sorts of costs that undermine many people's life.

The search for an economic structure that reconciles sufficiency and equality seems to be the solution. But the main economic options we have are still the neoliberalism that stresses the primacy of free market and individual investments and the Keynesianism that favors a government-led economic structure. Both theories show its merits and defects in their exercise in the post- WWII period, despite their disagreement over the role of governments in economic activities. But when our concern is to balance material sufficiency and material equality, a question both theories face is how economic activities should be organized in order to produce the economic surplus necessary for guaranteeing everyone's basic life and for narrowing the material gap among different people. Therefore, we have to decide again whether we should prioritize individuals' economic investments to accumulate material resources or have an economy where distributive justice serves as the guiding principle. Finally, this results in an infinite regress that feeds back to the predicament we have—regardless of what choice we make, we inevitably risk putting the life of a large number of people in jeopardy.

Apart from the contemporary human rights movements, the dual character conception of moral change also reveals what we do not usually see in the tension between secularism and religion when sticking to the problem-solving conception of moral progress. The conflict is that while a secular society is supposed to be

neutral and maintain an equal distance from all systems of belief, a religious society favours a particular religious system (see e.g., Ahdar 2013). This gives rise to the hostility between the two forces—on one side, secularism saves us from the absolute control of religion, and from the rise of fundamentalist movements in recent decades that is threatening the secular and liberal order of many parts of the world. On the other side, for many religious people, secularism is not as neutral as it claims to be: It endorses reason and rationality to be the dominant ideal of society, and religion is contained from having an equal impact on public affairs (Calhoun et al. 2011, p. 7). Religious doctrines, as a result, are characterized as myths—"a subjective, non-rational opinion or preference that must remain in the private sphere" (Ahdar 2013, p. 414-415), just like astrology or belief in UFOs.

The disagreement over what is the best for society elicits a search for the way to reach consensus or accommodation—that is, finding a way to reconcile different parties and facilitate their peaceful co-existence. This usually involves deciding on some higher-level values to resolve a conflict or manage it in a way towards minimizing the vicious impact of the conflict (see e.g., Gutmann &Thompson 1990; Wong 1992; Ceva 2016; Kappel 2018). But before we find the perfect solution, a predicament that should be recognized is that for those stuck between secular and religious values, choosing any side imposes upon them some losses—for instance, conforming to religious values might be seen by atheists and liberals as conservative and irrational, while shifting to secular values puts us at risk of breaking the religious, cultural, and social ties we have to our families and communities. Thus, while the problem-solving conception of moral progress allows us to see how religious fundamentalist movements violate the liberal value of secularism, it is through the dual character conception of moral change that we see

the struggle of those stuck between secularism and religion: When choosing any value is to sacrifice for the other, regardless of their choice, people suffer from a loss and a psychological pain that is much less likely to be experienced by those with a purely secular or religious background.

How do we make sense of this experience and its significance? What it highlights is a failure of understanding and a condition of life that stems specifically from the conflict of values. We are expected to stick to a particular set of values and achieve the "unity" of our identity and will in our society (see Korsgaard 2009, p. xii). As a result, we tend to neglect the identity-search process that constitutes a substantial part of life of many of us. This search originates from the conflict between the values we are drawn to and the values our communities expect us to follow. Because of the importance of living an authentic life[23] and the importance of meeting community expectations, not only are we pressured by the two ideals, but we are also required to find a firm identity while bearing the losses our choices entail.

This life experience, thus, differs substantially from those with a purely religious or secular background. For their personal values usually overlap with those of their communities. They are less likely to experience anxiety over not having an authentic life, fear of being blamed by their communities for deviating from them, or distress over not being able to have a unified identity and will. The failure of understanding occurs when people lack experiential resources to grasp the experiences of those struggling between conflicting values. This failure then contributes to the neglect of their condition of life. Ignoring the conflict of values,

[23] "Authentic" means a life that is worth of living.

thus, has the impact of masking the hardship people undergo when they have to deal with conflicting values. Shifting to the dual character conception of moral change to view the historical process of secularization, accordingly, allows us to see people's struggles that result from the conflict of values, and based on that we can see how we should adjust society to help them cope with the difficulties.

VI. Final thoughts

In her book *Between Past and Future*, Hannah Arendt (1961) discusses famously the peculiar position that the present occupies in connecting our past and future. On her view, because of political concerns, or collective amnesia, or some other factors, we miss out on many important parts of our past in planning for the future (ibid., p. 6). Likewise, the distorted understanding of the past might also misshape our vision of what the future should be like. Hence, we need to contest continuously our understanding of the past to facilitate the critical thinking of the future; the present—which stands as a gap between past and future, and in which individuals recollect actively and retrieve selectively the 'no longer'—fosters responsibility for the 'not yet' (Kohn 2006).

By the same token, what I want to stress in this chapter is that we need to revisit the style of historical thinking we carry into our studies of moral progress. Our moral history should not be canalized to the point that the only way to look at it is to picture humans as problem-solvers, who trace the violation of liberal values and improve society towards the greater realization of the values. When the problem-solving conception of moral progress remains dominant in the studies of moral change, this reinforces the predominance of liberal values, which creates the

impression that one has to conform to these values to be considered moral and be socially accepted. This is not to imply that the values philosophers endorse are wrong, but that we should always stay aware of other morally important values and bring into our discussion the life of those who adhere to them.

It is therefore our task—we who live and ponder the past in the present—to expose the flaw of the problem-solving conception of moral progress, retrieve the conflict of values to reach a new understanding of the past, and re-orient ourselves in our march towards the future. The dual character conception of moral change, as a currently neglected way of looking at our moral history, stresses how the exercise of one value entails the neglect and sacrifice of other alternative values. It challenges the dominance of liberal values in discussions of moral progress, and brings to our attention the needs and concerns of people who live by non-liberal values. Based on the equal importance of everyone, we should stop equating the realization of liberal values with moral progress. Instead, we should see the issues arising from the neglect of alternative values, and from that search for new arrangements of society and help more people attain a life they desire.

This new way of looking at our moral history also leads up to my final stance that is akin to Berlin's (2013a): Given the competing importance of different values in offering alternative forms of life and society, "a certain humility" is important when we choose one value over others; as radical choice is inevitable at each moment of our decision-making, we ought to stay aware of the cost of each of our choice (ibid., p. 19). But humility is also crucial in a further sense. In science, two attitudes that obstruct the continuous exchange and update of scientific beliefs include epistemic overconfidence and arrogance—the attitude of overly trusting expert opinions while disregarding one's own intuitions and the attitude of never seeing one's idea as

wrong even when it is challenged by counter-evidence (see e.g., Parviainen et al. 2021; Bleicher 2021). This is particularly seen in some people's uncritical acceptance and others' adamant resistance to the opinions of experts in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. Epistemic humility is important for avoiding both—neither should we trust totally experts when scientific knowledge is still evolving, nor should we stay closed to contradicting information and ideas.

This is also what I find urgent in the moral domain. Beyond the awareness of the cost of each of our moral choices, we are at a historical stage in which nearly every part of our moral system is going through a rapid change. This includes promoting the equal rights of different gender and racial groups in societies that were previously more hierarchical and patriarchal, and it also includes the shift of economic policy from supporting free trade to protectionism. Regardless of the type of change, we tend to think highly of those who take the lead in movements that are labelled progressive, and the result is that we sometimes overlook the limitations of these people and follow them without much critical thinking.

The dual character conception of moral change reminds us of the importance of taking a step back to see what is truly achieved and what is lost in those seemingly progressive processes. Rather than drawing a quick conclusion of what is progressive and regressive, we should retrieve those parts of moral experiences that are not usually mentioned in the study of moral change and highlight the dynamics beyond what is usually captured by the problem-solving conception of moral progress. This to my mind is the right way of showing a greater regard for human life.

In the next chapter, I will shift to the explanatory model of people's moral view change. The explanations found in current accounts of moral change focus particularly on those who play the leading role in many instances of moral change. They usually discuss the triggering conditions of moral change and the thought processes that lead one to invest in a particular set of moral views. By drawing on empirical evidence from moral psychology, I will argue that these explanations miss out on the agential experiences crucial to our understanding of why some people change their moral minds and hold onto their views with determination and assurance, while others do not. This will constitute the second critique of the existing studies of moral change.

Chapter 2 Explaining moral change: second-order moral reasoning

I. Introduction

In the first chapter, I challenged the problem-solving conception of moral progress that runs behind the moral progress accounts of Michele Moody-Adams, Elizabeth Anderson, Martha Nussbaum, Philip Kitcher, and some other philosophers. On this conception, moral progress occurs when people discover moral problems and resolve them, and progress is seen in the greater realization of liberal values. However, this conception is flawed in overlooking the conflict of the values we live by and the moral change dynamics that conflict engenders. The change of morality, therefore, exhibits a structure that is not as simple as applying liberal values to recognize moral problems and solve them.

In response, I propose the *dual character conception of moral change* to replace the *problem-solving conception of moral progress* as a more accurate way of understanding moral history. That is, our instantiation of some values entails the neglect of other conflicting ones, and the flourishing we gain from our efforts is in fact sustained by the suffering caused to those who adhere to the neglected values. The dual character conception of moral change, therefore, highlights the loss that is inseparable from the gain we make from exercising our endorsed values. Based on the dualistic aspect, my stance is that we should avoid rushing to draw the distinction of moral progress and regress, and shift to exploring different sorts of dynamics of moral change and grounding our moral reflection in all these complexities.

Following the conception of moral history that shapes a group of influential moral progress accounts, in this chapter, I will move on to the second issue with current

studies of moral change: i.e., their explanatory models for explaining people's acquisition of new sets of moral views. In the existing literature, people identify from historical evidence the conditions that trigger people's moral view change, and use those conditions to explain the transformation of morality in society. In particular, these explanations do not focus on the public in general, but the groups of people who are especially responsive to those conditions. Thus, these accounts are specifically about how the leading figures of moral change break from the rest of society and endorse nascent moral views. My argument, nevertheless, is that the current explanatory models fail to identify the agential experiences most crucial to people's change of moral views. Therefore, they miss out on the most important factors that drive people's moral view change.

Around this idea, in Section II, I will divide existing explanations into two models—methodological individualism and structuralism—to provide a more fine-grained understanding of the explanations of moral view change in current studies. Next, in Section III, I will specify the target group of current explanations —i.e., those who lead a moral change, rather than the general public. After that, in Section IV, I will introduce the naturalistic approach to the social history of morality, and explain why we can invoke the empirical studies of moral psychology to challenge accounts that ground the explanations of moral view change in historical details. Then I will refer to the empirical studies of moral learning and moral view change to develop the distinction between *first-* and *second-order moral reasoning.* I will argue that second-order reasoning is the type of agential experience which current studies overlook. Based on this, I will go back to the existing accounts of moral change and show what they fail to identify in their explanations. Thereafter, in section V, I will elaborate the methodological implication of second-order moral

reasoning and its implication for the dual character conception of moral change. Last, in section VI, I will draw the final conclusion.

II. Two explanatory models of moral view change

In contemporary philosophy, moral phenomena are usually seen as a distinctive type of phenomena that possess some features which social phenomena like economic crises and political protests do not have. Distinct from the lawlike regularities that govern social behaviors, moral behaviors are also driven by a normative psychology—that is, what is moral usually denotes an imperative much more forceful than what non-moral factors like social conventions and customs imply. Many studies in moral psychology, therefore, try to find the mechanism that accounts for the particularly binding force of morality. However, the opposite trend is also emerging, in which philosophers see moral phenomena as a subtype of social phenomena and employ the explanatory models of social science to explain the shift of morality. Two notable models include methodological individualism and structuralism.

Influenced by classical economics, in which micro-behaviors—the choices and behaviors of individuals—shape macroscopic economic structure, and the political theory of popular sovereignty in which everyone participates equally and autonomously in political decision-making, methodological individualism is derived from the modernist social and political thought that society is constituted by a foundation of autonomous and equal individuals. This view requires that social processes be "explained by being deduced from principles governing the behavior of participating individuals and from analyses of their situations, and not from super-individual, 'holistic,' sociological laws" (Watkins 1952, p. 186). One

peculiar aspect lies in individual mental states, such as their intentions, desires, and beliefs (see e.g., Taylor 1985; 1995). In a simple example, given our desire for maximizing utility, we reduce spending when our income declines, and this causes deflation in the long term by lowering the social demand for manufactured goods.

In current studies of moral change, Kwame Anthony Appiah's (2010) account of honor and moral revolutions is one example of methodological individualism. In *The Honor Code: How Moral Revolutions Happen*, Appiah surveys the historical cases of the end of dueling in England, the elimination of women's foot-binding in China, and the abolishment of transatlantic slavery trade between the British Empire and recently independent America. He proposes honor codes to be a particularly important mechanism of people's moral view change. For instance, when China was invaded by western countries in the 19th century, Chinese intellectuals' desire for national honor motivated them to root out backward practices like women's feet-binding. With the proposals made to the emperor, the ensuing national reform brought the practice to an end. In this account, the psychology of honor is an innate capacity we are endowed with; as we seek recognition for ourselves and the groups we belong to, we adjust moral rules to restore our honor when it is impaired. Appiah's account, in this respect, reflects methodological individualism.

Other individualist explanations appeal to moral inconsistency and reasoning as the main mechanism of moral view change (see e.g., Kumar and Campbell 2012; Campbell 2017). For example, in the case of the decriminalization of homosexuality in Denmark, homosexuals remained criminalized before liberalism established a strong foothold in Danish politics and society (Erikson 2019). As more people came to endorse liberal principles and see the inconsistency between liberal values and

the hostility towards homosexuals, they were driven to rethink and adjust the moral and legal status of homosexuality. As it is people's mental activities that elicit their moral view change, this case reflects again the methodological individualism.

A model competing with individualism is structuralism, which is a development of methodological holism (see e.g. Fay 1996). On the holistic model, individuals' behaviors and beliefs are determined by the groups they belong to, and what they do is simply a function of their culture and society. Rejecting this deterministic view, people over the past century come to see individuals as active, reflective, and interpretative, who respond to their society and culture in a highly individualistic way. This gives rise to the view that social phenomena are created and sustained in the interaction of social structures and individuals. Social structures resemble language rules, which provide us with a fundamental set of grammars and vocabularies that constrains the proper use of a language. We still possess the latitude to generate an infinite range of thoughts and expressions, and our innovation of expressions or novel uses of language would add variation to the original language, thereby generating new rules for language use. Social structures, accordingly, delimit the range of possible and acceptable actions, and we select from this range what to do, which in turn reshape our culture and society.

Based on this conception of social structure and individual agency, morality is a type of social phenomena that results from the interactions of individuals and the particular social conditions of a time. In a recent paper on techno-moral change, Hopster et al. (2022) stress the "noteworthy" importance of technology in moral change (p. 6). In one of their cases, plough technology favored the emergence and persistence of unequal gender norms (ibid., p. 23). When plough technology was introduced into farming in ancient times, the high demand for upper body strength

led people to reward men for their continuous economic contributions. Therefore, they lifted men to the dominant position in society, and developed inegalitarian gender norms and institutions that excluded women from activities outside their households in order to maintain men's superiority.

In a different example, when contraceptive technologies like the pill became more available in the 1960s, it destabilized the old sexual morality of the time by decoupling sex from reproduction. As safe and protected sex became possible, people challenged the sexual morality that stressed chastity, purity, and sexual modesty, and they advocated individual freedom in sexual choice. Similar to the plough case, the pill did not cause directly the change in sexual freedom, but it changed the kinds of actions people could perform, and this led to a new understanding of the legitimacy of the past freedom-constraining sexual morality. Hence, the new rise of contraceptive technologies is a social condition that enables a change, and it was through individuals' reflection on that condition that the freedom-driven sexual morality became truly possible. This reflects again how individuals' interactions with social structures cause moral change.

In a similar vein, Hermann (2019) adopts the structuralist explanation to account for moral progress and its failure. In her account, social conditions are crucial to the sustaining and lifting of one's moral ignorance. In the example of slavery abolition, the social conditions are the main reason why slavery was initially sustained but abolished later. When social institutions sustained the legitimacy of slavery, and when the enslaved did not possess the epistemic authority to question it, many people were unable to see the problems with slavery. Later, when new economic conditions like wage labour emerged, it deepened people's understanding of "equality" and "personal liberty," and this drove them to question the legitimacy of

slavery and end it. In this case, the social structure that maintains the legitimacy of slavery limits individuals' agency in changing the situation, thereby keeping the institution intact. Conversely, with the rise of the liberal political-economic structure, people respond to this new condition, and their new insights into the nature of slavery bring about its elimination.

Taken together, methodological individualism and structuralism are two major models for explaining moral view change in current accounts of moral change. From the perspective of individualism, many changes are ultimately caused by individual-level attributes. Structuralism, by contrast, sees the change of morality and its sustenance as the result of the interactions between individuals and social structures. With the rise of new technology or the change of economic structures, the social conditions people perceive lead them to re-examine existing moral practices and arrive at new understandings of what actions should be commended, permitted, or forbidden.

III. Target group of current explanations

Despite the ongoing debates in philosophy of social science over the validity of methodological individualism and structuralism as the appropriate level of analysis, moral reasoning is central to both models when they are employed in the study of moral change. For this reason, both models share the same limitation: They miss out on the agential experiences crucial to people's moral view change. These agential experiences refer to the psychological processes in which people weigh different types of moral views in light of their deeply-held values, and determine if they should endorse a particular type of moral views.

Before elaborating these agential experiences and the supporting empirical evidence, what needs clarification is that the explanations in current accounts of moral change do not target just anyone, but those playing a leading role in moral changes. Though not explicitly specified, the accounts of Appiah, Hermann, and others reviewed in the previous section concentrate on those who respond proactively to their psychology or social conditions. For example, it was those Chinese intellectuals, rather than the more conservative party or the public in general, that advocated the elimination of women's foot-binding. Likewise, it is also those people who strongly supported sexual liberation at the introduction of the contraceptive technology that led the reform of sexual morality. What is unique about these people is that they are not passive beings that simply follow the moral views prevailing in their society, but they think actively about morality and reason through their psychology or social conditions to see what moral views they should endorse and what actions they should take.

As current explanations of moral change target these people, this excludes other sorts of psychological processes from our discussion. The large-scale change of moral or normative views is not a new issue; multiple psychological processes are proposed to explain how large groups of people acquire a particular type of moral views. For instance, in Cristina Bicchieri's (2016) work on norm change, her research team conducts a behavioural intervention to test under what circumstance people in African communities would change their opinion on genital mutilation. Before the intervention, uncut girls are seen as *ghalfa*, which "carries connotations of dishonour and promiscuity" (ibid., p. 140), and they have to go through the cutting to sustain the honour of their family and community. But when the leaders of local communities re-interpret uncut girls as *saleema*—a word connoting "whole,

intact, healthy, and perfect," people follow their lead and develop the view that being uncut is in fact "the natural, pristine state" (ibid., p. 139). This destabilizes their belief that "uncut girls are not chaste and pure" (ibid., p. 140), and many of them stop seeing genital mutilation as necessary for girls. The conformity to what most people in a social environment think and do is the key psychological process at work here.

Nudging is another way that the general public may go through a view change. As a type of behavioural intervention usually carried out by governments, nudge policies borrow heavily from behavioural science in trying to "improve people's decisions by changing the ways options are presented to them, rather than changing the options themselves or incentivizing or coercing people" (Schmidt & Engelen 2020, p. 1; see also Thaler & Sunstein 2008). An example is putting horrifying pictures on cigarette packs to dissuade people from consuming tobacco, or highlighting fruits and vegetables in grocery stores to promote healthy eating and lifestyle. The underlying logic is that when the information or the heuristics available for people's cognition are changed, people's choice architecture is shifted; they will understand the consequences of each option differently and arrive at a decision they may never have made before the information was available.

In contrast to the general public that are the targets of nudge policies or Bicchieri's intervention, those who lead the moral revolutions in Appiah's accounts, and those who transform morality following the rise of new technology, are more similar to the United Nations experts Bicchieri worked with, or the governments that design the nudge policies. In these cases, these leading people decide what is good and right, and they inculcate these values in larger groups of people. How those leading figures adopt those new sets of moral views, therefore, is crucial to seeing how we

can bring more changes to society. Thus, by focusing on the limitation of current explanations of people's moral view change, my critique is towards improving the understanding of how those who lead a moral change acquire new types of moral views.

IV. Limitations of current explanations of people's moral view change

Following the target group of moral change accounts, the limitation of current explanations is that they overlook the agential experiences crucial to one's moral view change. That is, the current explanations capture only *first-order moral reasoning*—i.e., the generation of moral views for consideration and endorsement, whereas they neglect *second-order moral reasoning*, in which people retrieve the values central to their selves to decide whether they should endorse and act on a moral view. This critique is grounded in a range of moral leaning and moral view change studies in moral psychology: As empirical studies show that people's moral view change usually occurs at the stage of second-order moral reasoning, rather than the first, current explanations fail to specify the more important process that leads many of us to change our moral minds.

4.1 A naturalistic approach to the social history of morality

Hitherto, the study of moral change in social and moral philosophy and those in moral psychology have remained largely disconnected. Following Appiah's work, Kumar and Campbell (2016) further bolster the moral significance of honour as "an

emotional and moral form of recognition respect that can hinder or aid moral progress" (p. 147), but overall not much work comes out along this line.

However, the issue here is that none of the empirical studies I will use below touch directly upon the history of moral change mentioned in section I. In other words, if the empirical studies do not investigate the episodes of moral change I reviewed, can I still use them to expose the insufficiency of the existing explanations? My view is that we can, and we should. A particular logic is that empirical studies are conducted towards revealing the way we are, and when the studies in different behavioral domains converge upon the same cognitive and behavioral pattern, it becomes empirically and statistically robust to believe that we are disposed to think and act in a particular way. These empirical data, then, highlight what we overlook in our current explanations and facilitate "the recasting of theory" (Merton 1948, p. 509). This recasting involves the reformulation of an existing conceptual scheme by taking into account the repeatedly observed but neglected facts. Therefore, it creates the new direction for theorizing the data, and we develop new explanations for the phenomena addressed by the old conceptual schemes.

This logic is common in economic and political theorizing. In these two fields, scholars posit assumptions of human cognition and develop from them explanations of economic and political behaviours. Some examples include the characterization of humans as utility-maximizing in classical economics, which is then challenged by psychological and behavioural studies, with the idea of bounded rationality being proposed to represent a more accurate understanding of the structure of human cognition behind decision-making (see e.g., Conlisk 1996; Jones 1999; Kahneman 2003). Deviating from the rational-agent model in which an agent would search all information and reason lengthily through them to find the best option, the

bounded rationality thesis holds that people may instead attend to environmental factors and make options depending on what is salient in her surroundings (Akerlof 1991).

The human behavioural propensity revealed in the bounded rationality studies provides new insights into many significant social and moral phenomena. One form of bounded rationality is the bias of "attaching undue weight to recent or vivid events," and this explains why people sometimes show excessive obedience to authority (Conlisk 1996, p. 676). For instance, in Stanley Milgram's experiments on authority, many participants perceived the inappropriateness of disobedience because of the presence of the experimenters (1974). As a result, they neglected their moral values and gave in to the order of the experimenter to give high volume electric shocks to the "learner." The erosion of rationality by situational factors explains why people who usually aspire to be moral can commit terrifying actions.

Back to the issue raised at the beginning of this part, it is in following the same logic that a naturalistic approach to the social studies of moral change is plausible. When a group of moral learning and moral view change studies point to a reasoning structure that mainstream studies of moral change fail to consider, we should adopt these empirical data to improve the explanatory models of moral view change. This allows us to go beyond the models of methodological individualism and structuralism, discover previously neglected information, and enable a grasp of the historical transformation of morality we are unable to reach by looking at historical details only.

Next, I will elaborate the distinction between *first-* and *second-order moral reasoning*, and support it with empirical studies of the psychological foundation of

moral convictions, moral exemplars, and identity fusion. After that, we can see the insufficiency of methodological individualism and structuralism in explaining moral view change.

4.2 First- and second-order moral reasoning

The empirical studies I will use here include those on the psychological foundation of moral convictions, in which psychologists study how things that are originally morally neutral turn morally relevant, and how individuals develop positive or negative moral attitudes towards them. They also include the research on moral exemplars, such as what types of exemplars are effective in shaping individuals' moral behaviours and why. The last is identity fusion, which focuses specifically on how individuals shift to a group-centred morality from an individual-centred one. Despite different behavioural domains and research purposes, these studies show that second-order moral reasoning is more crucial than first-order moral reasoning in determining people's change of moral views.

Though it has been questioned if reasoning is enough for changing moral views (see e.g., Hermann 2019; Pleasants 2010), it is still a necessary condition, even though not always a sufficient one. For instance, on the moral consistency model, emotions—mental states "that are inherently affective or valenced" (May & Kumar 2018, p. 140), or intuitions—such as the quick flashes of discomfort or pleasure we experience in daily life (Haidt & Bjorklund 2008, p. 187)—would trigger our feeling that something should be done or avoided. Yet it is through reasoning that we adjust our moral views and create the consistency between our emotions, intuitions, and moral opinions (see e.g., Campbell 2014; Campbell & Kumar 2012).

Empirical studies of moral learning and moral view change, however, suggest that we need a more fine-grained understanding of moral reasoning: Each change usually starts with first-order moral reasoning, in which we process the information we receive from the external world and consider the moral views we abstract from the information. But what is more crucial is second-order moral reasoning, whereby we consider the moral values and concerns that are central to ourselves and decide if we should truly endorse a view. Thus, moral view change is not merely the outcome of our reaction to the external world; it is part of the process of our becoming the kind of person we want to be and living the sort of life we find meaningful.

At the psychological level, second-order moral reasoning is akin to the *second-order volitions* proposed by Harry Frankfurt (1971). In his paper "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," Frankfurt introduces the distinction between *first-* and *second-order desires* to distinguish human agents from other types of agents. First-order desires are what we share with other species, which refer to the mental process in which we form desires and motives about some objects and make certain decisions. Second-order desires, in contrast, describe our desires about our first-order desires—though one may "have a settled intention to do X, he may nonetheless do something else instead of doing X," for "his desire to do X proves to be weaker or less effective than some conflicting desire" (ibid., p. 8).

What defines human agency are *second-order volitions*. We go through this process when our will is involved in our second-order desires. In other words, we may not will the process in a way that our second-order desires would eventually motivate actions when we develop second-order desires from the first-order ones. On the contrary, when we are "critically aware of" our own will, the process of forming

second-order desires is also the process in which the desires effectively move us to act (ibid., p. 11). The involvement of our reflective self-evaluation and our will to align our actions with a particular desire therefore distinguishes second-order volitions from both first- and second-order desires. In a similar vein, while we generate moral views from the information we receive in first-order moral reasoning, we decide what views we should truly endorse to be the basis of our actions through our second-order moral reasoning.

Another distinction that lends support to the differences of first- and second- order moral reasoning at the psychological level is *elaboration* and *validation.* As two routes of attitude formation following people's media exposure to issues like charitable causes, they have very different impacts on attitude stability and action tendencies. Elaboration, or "primary or first-order cognition," refers to the process in which we think carefully or cursorily about certain information (Briñol & Petty 2015, p. 273). The elaboration of an attitude, however, does not determine how we think, feel, or judge about that attitude. Instead, we enter the stage of validation and develop "confidence or doubt in the validity of" our thoughts and attitudes (ibid., p. 273). These "metacognitive reactions" then determine to what extent the attitudes we form about our thoughts rationally guide our behaviours (ibid., p. 273). Hence, it is through validation that the thoughts we form acquire a binding force upon us.

Because of the functional differences between first- and second-order moral reasoning, they also have different implications for the exercise of our reflective freedom. First-order moral reasoning is usually driven by our built-in mechanisms like emotions, instincts, or biological drives. We either process the information we receive or we repress it; there is not much latitude left to us to choose otherwise. Second-order moral reasoning, by contrast, allows us to explore and adjust the

values and concerns we take to be crucial. We may initially be influenced by the values prevailing in our societies, but we can also put them under scrutiny and endorse values and concerns that reflect better the kinds of person we want to be. Thus, not any sort of moral influence can fully determine our second-order moral reasoning: We are able to exercise our reflective freedom to decide what values we should truly stick to and what kinds of moral views we should endorse.[24]

4.3 Supporting empirical studies

How do the psychological studies reflect the different roles first- and second-order moral reasoning perform in the psychological process of people's moral view change? To study the psychological foundation of moral convictions, researchers investigate the process in which people who are originally neutral about meat consumption come to endorse its moral wrongness (Feinberg et al. 2019). The study consists of three experiments, which all begin with exposing people to the emotionally salient information about the cruelty of farm business. In the first one, participants are given texts that highlight how humanity's desire to eat meat causes suffering to animals. In the second and third experiments, participants watch evocative videos that show the pain and suffering of animals. Following each

[24] This chapter focuses mainly on the functional differences between first- and second-order moral reasoning. A more complete theory of second-order moral reasoning—which I will develop in my future research—should touch on the conception of human agency. Methodological individualism and structuralism both assume that individuals are the functions of pre-existing psychological and structural conditions. Second-order moral reasoning, in contrast, implicates an agent who is in a lifelong search for a meaningful life. This life purpose makes it necessary that people do not decide on a view in their first-order moral reasoning, but they go through second-order moral reasoning to decide if a moral view is truly in line with their values.

exposure, people are tested on a variety of concerns, such as their endorsement of the no-harm principle, the centrality of morality to their identity, the perception of the similarity between humans and animals, the pleasure of eating meat, the fear of social ostracism and so forth. Finally, a group of participants endorses the wrongness of meat eating and engages in a range of actions to support and spread the moral importance of animal welfare, while others do not.

The distinction between the first- and second-order moral reasoning is seen in the stage at which participants' moral view change occurs. First, because of the emotional salience of the information, participants consider the wrongness of eating meat. This reflects first-order moral reasoning, where subjects develop an awareness of the substantial harm meat consumption causes to animals. However, the difference in reactions does not emerge until the next phase, in which participants evaluate further the wrongness of meat eating and decide what they should do about meat eating, farm business, and animal welfare. In this phase, what guides their moral reasoning is no longer the information they are initially exposed to, but a variety of society- and self-related concerns, such as the fundamental principle that harm should be avoided and that care should be promoted, the importance of being a moral person to their identity, the fear of being ostracized by their social groups, and so forth.

More specifically, for many participants, protecting animals from harm and being a moral person overwhelm the pleasure of eating meat and other social concerns, and this drives them to stop eating meat to protect animals. In contrast, for those whose love of meat overrides the suffering of animals, they fail to change. Therefore, even though people are aware of the harm incurred upon animals by the meat-eating behaviours, their view is not resilient enough to override other concerns

to bring about a genuine change in their moral views. Rather, only for those who resist harm and take morality to be central to themselves, they are eventually motivated to stop consuming and eating meat.

The causal importance of first- and second-order moral reasoning in people's moral view change is also shown in the experiments: Even though the exposure to previously neglected moral views is important in triggering people's moral thinking, it is their pre-existing values—the things to which they attach substantial moral weights—that help them see if they should endorse a moral view. In other words, although the information about the cruelty of animal business directs people's attention to the suffering of animals, this condition is insufficient in guaranteeing a change. Rather, it is those self-related concerns that factor into their second-order moral reasoning which are more crucial. These concerns reflect the deeply-held values people acquire from their life experiences, and they are more significant than the information they receive during the experiments in shaping their moral views.

The significance of second-order moral reasoning in individuals' moral view change is also seen in the psychological research on moral exemplars. Different from the experiments on people's attitude change towards meat consumption, the moral view change in moral exemplar studies of Han et al. (2017) concerns the increase or decrease in people's willingness to invest in prosocial behaviours. In the first experiment, one group of participants is presented with an exemplar who engages in voluntary service one hour per week, and the other is given the exemplar that teaches disadvantaged children 15 hours per week. The difference between the two is that the second sort of moral exemplar is more demanding and perceived to be less attainable. Hence, in comparison to the group with more demanding moral exemplars, those in the less demanding group report much more confidence in

pursuing the same actions as their exemplars do, and they increase their voluntary services in the follow-up investigation.

Second-order moral reasoning, in this case, is seen in participants' evaluation of the attainability of different types of moral exemplars. As the stage in which people consider the values and concerns central to themselves to decide what moral views should guide their actions, second-order moral reasoning here is about participants' consideration of their capacity and their decision whether it is realistic to follow the exemplars. The same finding is also confirmed in a different experiment, in which participants are given peer exemplars, such as teachers who do voluntary services on a regular basis, and the exemplars of historic moral figures, such as Martin Luther King Jr and Mother Teresa (Han et al. 2022). Since many of them find the deeds of those historic figures too demanding, they are discouraged from following them. Hence, these studies show again that seeing the goodness of certain moral exemplars is only the first step towards an adjustment in moral views, and what is more crucial is second-order moral reasoning, in which people decide if a change is truly necessary and if it is realistic to follow those exemplars.

Last, studies on identity fusion also affirm the importance of second-order moral reasoning in determining people's change of moral views. Different from the above psychological studies, the moral view change researched here involves the shift from an individual-based morality to a group-based one. The original purpose of identity fusion studies was to account for people's pro-group behaviours—in particular, the extremist, self-sacrificing behaviours (Gómez & Vázquez 2015; Gómez et al. 2020). As the studies revealed, an important phase of identity fusion is the "visceral sense of oneness" with a social group, a stage in which individuals

see themselves and their groups as the same. By making group agency their personal agency, they act out of group concerns rather than their individual ones.

In the study of Carnes and Lickel (2018), participants recalled "negative, adverse, or traumatic collective experiences," such as natural disasters like an earthquake, and reported how the help they receive from others in navigating those disastrous events arouses their positive feelings of gratitude and elevation, which leads them to see the importance of groups and other fellow members. However, this does not lead them to endorse a moral and social order that primes group-identification immediately; rather, many of them engage in a reflective process to examine their relation with the groups, and many come to develop a tighter connection to them. It is through this fusion process that the group will replaces the individual will and becomes the new basis of people's moral beliefs and behaviours. Again, in the identity fusion studies, the initial processing of the given situation or information rarely leads to the shift from a personal agency to a group agency as the foundation of one's morality. People's first-order deliberation over the importance of groups opens them up for a change, but it is in their second-order reasoning that the change genuinely happens.

Altogether, despite the different purposes of these psychological studies, they reveal a similar pattern of moral reasoning, which usually starts with the processing of a particular set of information. However, this does not necessarily lead people to change their moral views; it is through second-order moral reasoning—in which people retrieve their self-related concerns and values—that they see to what extent they should endorse and act on a new set of moral views. This stage thus determines whether a moral view change will really occur. In light of this, even though the explanations in current moral change accounts capture the triggering factors, they

fail to point out the second-order reasoning that determines more crucially people's change of moral views.

4.4 Limitations of the current explanations of moral view change

Finally, given the above empirical evidence, we can see the insufficiency of the explanations of people's moral view change in current studies. For those accounts that assume the individualist and structuralist models, they point out the first-order moral reasoning in their explanation; what they overlook is the second-order moral reasoning, and those individual and social concerns that drive people to endorse new types of moral views. These aspects are crucial to our grasp of how some of us go through a moral view change and act on those moral views when others still doubt and resist them.

For instance, in the case of contraceptive pills, their availability calls for the update of sexual morality, but that on its own is not sufficient for gathering people's support and adherence. Rather, people may then consider in two ways: the centrality of freedom to their identity and the pursuit of a meaningful life. First, as contraceptive pills indicate the possibility of protected and safe sex, the need to affirm our identity through the pursuit of freedom may lead many of us to support the transformation of sexual morality as the means to achieve that. Second, sexual freedom may also endow us with the meaning we have been looking for in life, which gives us a sense of accomplishment and purpose. Likewise, when we see others' active participation in social movements to promote liberty and freedom, our self-understanding, the understanding of our relation with the movements and

others, and the relevance of our own actions to the enterprise as a whole, may also help us determine if we should join them to pursue the same set of moral ideals.

Second-order moral reasoning is also neglected in Appiah's account of honour and moral revolutions. In the example of eliminating foot-binding in China in the 19th century, the desire of Chinese intellectuals for national honour was kindled when China was invaded by other countries. Missionaries arriving from the west initiated some movements and organizations to challenge the foot-binding practice, which led Chinese intellectuals to see foot-binding as even more humiliating than opium addiction and poverty. On their view, many western countries had been modernized, whereas Chinese people still bound girls' feet and associated the practice with their marriage and the rank and honour of their families; this was undoubtedly a sign of backwardness.

However, is honour sufficient for the revolution? In the further details Appiah (2010) provides, before Chinese intellectuals submitted their memorandum to the Emperor of Qing Dynasty for a national reform, many activists—western missionaries in particular—reached out to the intellectuals because they were the "hope" of the country. These intellectuals were particularly concerned about the country's fate, and they felt the strong need to modernize and strengthen the country. Thus, they had a sense of responsibility and power that many others did not possess, which gave them the motivation others lacked. While the desire for honour led the intellectuals to see the problems with the country, it was the responsibility they hold for the country—especially the responsibility for its future power and honour—that gave them the ultimate impetus to truly launch the revolution.

In a different case, Appiah takes the practice of honour killing in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, and many other parts of the Middle East to be a contemporary case for which a moral revolution is urgent but has not yet been achieved. Honor killing involves violence against women in the name of the dishonour their extra-marital sexual behaviours cause to their families and communities (ibid., pp. 144-146; p.152). Even though they may be the victims of sexual violence, women are killed or assaulted to restore honour. International society has thus far taken some actions to change the situation, but the practice of honour killing is still prevalent and the efforts to end it encounter much resistance. For Appiah, the psychological mechanism of honour—especially the dissociation of dishonour from women's sexual experiences, and the association of honour code with the elimination of honour killing and the respect for women—provides new hope for its demise.

Nevertheless, the limited impact of efforts in this direction reminds us again of the importance of second-order moral reasoning. One international movement aims to end honor killing through "collective shaming," which is organized by a group of human right activists to pressure the Pakistani government to change their law and protect women from honor killings (ibid., p. 159). Although the law has been modified and women no longer need four male witnesses to testify to her rape, the impact so far is minimal—whenever honour is mentioned, many murder cases remain ignored, and in more remote areas, people continue to kill women for the sake of honour (ibid., p. 159). Even though the movement of "collective shaming" urges the Pakistani government to ban the practice by humiliating them, honour killing is still deeply entrenched there.

In this case, what we lack is not the actions that inform people of the wrongness of honour killing, but the insights into the concerns that obstruct them from changing

their minds. To put this differently, we do not know what people have in mind that they refuse to think differently, or why the blame is not sufficient to change their minds. For many people in western societies, their liberal minds help them see immediately the wrongness of honour killing, but the liberal values important for them may not have the same weight for people in Pakistan. As a country faced with the clash of western influences and their own culture and history, international reputation is important, but so are the domestic political interests, the respect for the country's history and traditions, and cultural and religious autonomy. What seems obviously wrong to a western eye is in fact a battlefield of all sorts of different concerns for a Pakistani; international reputation *per se* does not seem significant enough to drive more stringent policies to eliminate honour killing.

Based on the importance of second-order moral reasoning in people's moral view change, instead of humiliating the Pakistani government, we need invest more resources into investigating the concerns that shape people's moral thinking. Though a variety of studies on the issue of honour killing trace its root to the paramount value of family honour in a society, this is intertwined with many other factors that complicate the matter. As Appiah (2010) mentions in his book, though families that emigrate to Europe and North America are influenced by the liberal thought that supports women's freedom, fathers and brothers of these families continue honour killing to preserve "the ways of their ancestral homes" (p. 165). Another analysis, based on the same phenomenon in Turkey, sees honour killing as essentially driven by the patriarchal pattern that subjugates women under men's control (Sev'er & Yurdakul 2001). This is particularly severe among the Turkish poor, for "they have little else in the rigidly stratified societies in which they live"

(ibid., p. 972). The lack of other means to command respect from others, therefore, also contributes to the prevalence of honour killing.

Given the complexity of the concerns behind people's resistance, what I take to be a crucial step is to cultivate people's critical autonomy to enable a critical examination of the cultural and social milieu one grows up in and the rules one lives by. For people outside Pakistan, this is to question their intuitive understanding of the wrongness of honour killing, and urge them to see genuinely the concerns that tie people to honour killing. This is also to give autonomy and control over the affairs back to Pakistanis, and avoids forcing their change through a top-down structure. Thus far, moral authority mostly belongs to those who do not have much knowledge of Pakistan's culture and history, and those who are apathetic to the psychology of Pakistanis.

However, the diversity of the concerns behind the continuity of honour killing requires solutions targeting different parts of them. As Appiah indicates, to maintain historical continuity and cultural autonomy against western influence is one motivation behind people's adherence to honour killing. In this situation, what the intellectual community and policymakers can do is to deploy historical resources creatively and develop new kinds of collective remembrance of the past. This is to put Pakistanis into a position to re-examine the connection between honour killing, culture, and history, and inspire their new collective imaginings.[25] To state this differently, is honour killing always consistent with Pakistan's culture, history and

[25] Though the issue of history, collective memory and imaginings is not directly discussed in the context of honour killing, it is a major theme running at the forefront of the national construction of Pakistan. See e.g., Jalal, A. (1995) "Conjuring Pakistan, History as Official Imagining."

identity? Is there no other way of understanding their ancestral heritage, which would allow Pakistanis to conjure up a country that preserves its distinctive identity while forsaking honour killing?

In other parts of Pakistan's history, new perspectives are excavated to cast new light on matters that are crucial to the self-understanding of Pakistanis and their understanding of their country. For example, the history of Partition is replete with violence and bloodshed that sustains the hostility and division among different religious groups (see e.g., Fahad et al. 2022). A group of Indian and Pakistani thinkers and writers counter this by uncovering the humane aspects of the Partition. They claim that the love, compassion, and care of people of different religions is also a substantial part of Partition. Likewise, in challenging the prejudice against the non-Muslin Pakistani minority, people also stress the "deep sense of love and faith for the soil" that is widespread in different religious groups (Farooq et al. 2021, p. 146). Following this trajectory, when we turn to the love and kindness of humanity that runs through the history of Pakistan, honour killing is not a continuity of Pakistan's history, but a disunity that deviates from the central spirit of the country. Severing the tie between honour killing and Pakistan's culture and history, accordingly, questions the legitimacy of the practice as appropriate for maintaining the identity of the country; by re-conjuring the past of the country, it encourages new imaginings where honour killing no longer plays its assumed cultural and historical role.

The place occupied by honour killing in the history and culture of Pakistan can then be filled with new cultural symbols to maintain the psychological attachment that gives people a connection with their culture and history. In other words, as people stick to honour killing to continue the tradition that preserves their distinctive

identity and their control over their society, we can cultivate alternatives to fill in the vacuum left by honour killing. For example, Iran has been Islamised for many centuries, but it was saved from Arabisation, and the majority there are able to preserve their Persian identity. An important cultural bond, as is assumed by many scholars and Iranian people, is the epic poem *Shahnameh* composed by the Iranian poet Abolqasem Ferdowsi over 10 centuries ago. As a national epic, it is repeated and remembered by every generation, and is used to preserve a Persian identity throughout the good and the difficult times of the country (see e.g., Boroujerdi 1998; Farhat-Holzman 2001).

This may sound controversial, as Iran is another country where honour killing and other forms of persecution of women are prevalent, but what I find particularly important is this construction of historical symbols to maintain the continuity of one's history and cultural autonomy. What concerns many Pakistanis is the erosion of their history and culture by external influences, and when they demand a distinctive and respectable cultural identity, honour killing fills in the place when no other things can deliver. Building new symbols, therefore, serves to wear down people's psychological reliance on honour killing while preserving the intactness and continuity of their history and culture. When the concern of history and culture is removed from the second-order moral reasoning underlying honour killing, concerns like international reputation may acquire more moral weights in shaping people's moral decision, and this increases the chance that people will be moved towards a society free of honour killing.

In sum, although it is important to expose people to new sets of moral ideas to open up the space for change, current empirical evidence shows that it is not enough to focus on the exposure only. Regardless of what elicits people's moral thinking, their

second-order moral reasoning about the values and concerns central to one's self is critical for understanding how they come to endorse a particular set of moral views. As the explanations of moral change in current studies fail to pay attention to this, they overlook the agential experiences crucial to people's moral view change.

V. Further thoughts on second-order moral reasoning

Following the whole discussion of second-order moral reasoning and its neglect in current literature, how should we continue the study of moral change? The most immediate answer is that we need much more anthropological investigation to expand our knowledge of the values and concerns that shape people's second-order moral reasoning. But second-order moral reasoning indicates more than this. Compared to the structuralism that highlights the limitations social structures exert on the moral options available to individuals and how they react to that, second-order moral reasoning leads us to put individuals—their moral values and concerns—back to the centre of moral change. But this is not to shift back to methodological individualism, and appeal to the individual attributes that exist independently of social and historical contexts to explain people's decisions and behaviours.

The idea of second-order moral reasoning, on the contrary, requires us to situate individuals back to their social worlds to understand how they come to hold onto those values and concerns that factor into their second-order moral reasoning. However, this is not towards limiting their moral reasoning to a particular mode. In her paper, Tam (2020) challenges the democratic moral reasoning of Anderson and proposes what she calls "We-reasoning" to be the key mode of moral thinking that contributes to the abolition of slavery in British oversea colonies (p.3). On her view,

people's group identification compels them to have joint commitments with other group members, which can facilitate or obstruct moral progress by trumping concerns like self-interest. In the case of slavery abolition, the slave trade was sustained by the joint commitment of British to a national honor that consisted partly of the "economic value of slave labor" (ibid., p. 17). But as the slave trade came to be seen as an evil in the late 18th century, the renewed joint commitment to a national glory that forsook the trade facilitated the abolition of slavery (ibid., pp.17-18).

Group concerns are one important value that people consider in their second-order moral reasoning, but what Tam contends is that the "We"-mode reasoning is an innate part of us—an built-in mechanism—that dominates the way we think and act in our life. Thus, we do not have much latitude to avoid the We-thinking.[26] But this apparently neglects the reflective freedom, self-consciousness, and self-determination of individuals in contemporary society. In societies like the ternary society that divides people strictly into the clergy, the nobility, and the common people in the Medieval Age, people are usually expected to do what their group membership requires them to. But even in those historical periods, people have the freedom to go beyond their group commitments, and engage in a series of

[26] This can be seen from a range of cases Tam (2020) reinterprets, such as why Chinese parents bind their daughters' feet despite their knowledge of the practice's cruelty, why white people refuse to serve black people, and why in Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment, kind people gave up their morality to follow the order of the experimenters and treated "prisoners" cruelly (pp. 16-17). On Tam's view, group expectations trump other concerns in all these cases, and they determine how people act.

movements to resist the religious, political, and cultural control of the Catholic Church.

In this respect, even though both Tam and I think that knowing some moral views is not enough for a change, what I believe is that people can always grow beyond their groups, and that they can have more than one value and concern for their moral decision-making. Therefore, we should not limit moral reasoning to just the We-mode thinking. Instead, we should see individuals' freedom and flexibility, and recognize the multitudinous forms of life that result in the individual differences that cannot be subsumed under a particular mode of thinking. This requires us to stay open to individuals' life experiences and understand genuinely how their particular ways of living give rise to the values and concerns that matter substantially for their moral decisions.[27]

The difference between finding the means to achieve moral progress and understanding people's moral life leads up to the "person-centric" model of moral change I will develop in the concluding chapter of the project. I will elaborate more there what the person-centric means and how we organize our study of moral

[27] The distinction between first- and second-order moral reasoning elicits the question of whether there will be a third-order moral reasoning that conditions people's second-order moral reasoning. It is not clear from current empirical evidence that we need one more distinction. Second-order moral reasoning is about the moral values and concerns central to one's self; these values reflect the kinds of person they want to be and the sort of life they desire to live, and they may adjust the values and change the way they understand themselves. This reflects people's desire/ambition to be a moral person and live a meaningful life. But I do not think the desire/ambition itself warrants a separate mental structure—it could be understood as one value that impacts people's views of other values, and it is still a form of second-order moral reasoning that they decide what values are in line with their moral goals and what moral views they should endorse.

change around it. In addition to the methodological aspect, the idea of second-order moral reasoning also helps us grasp more deeply the dual character conception of moral change. What the dual character conception picks out is a pattern where our endorsement of one value entails the neglect of alternative values, and one question this elicits is why the neglect is usually sustained, rather than challenged and changed.

Our acceptance of existing cultural and societal norms provides the first answer: When our cultural and societal norms ignore many values, and when we rely on those norms for our second-order moral reasoning, our norm compliance sustains the neglect. But the neglect can also be sustained through a different route. That is, for those who come up with some crucial moral views to improve society, they may never be aware of the limitations of the values and concerns that shape their second-order moral reasoning. Therefore, they fail to see what they neglect when they rely on those values for their moral reasoning, and acting on their moral views sustains the neglect.

For instance, many human rights advocates in the 1970s relied heavily on individualist considerations to arrive at the idea of the sufficient life of everyone. They surpassed the in-group/out-group differentiation that dominated moral thinking for a long period of history, and endorsed the idea of universal human rights to improve the life of all humans. But what they fail to see is the implicit support their individualist thinking lends to neoliberalism, and the collective welfare and fair distribution of material resources marginalized by neoliberalism. As a result, acting on the idea of material sufficiency does not just bolster neoliberalism, but it also causes and sustains the neglect of the value of material equality.

This way of looking at human rights movements, therefore, explains why some scholars accuse human rights advocates of contributing complicitly to the widening inequality of this day (see e.g., Moyn, 2018; Mutua 2008). In this respect, second-order moral reasoning points to a limitation of human cognition that gives rise to the moral change pattern tracked by the dual character conception. More importantly, this should lead us to think further upon what I brought up at the end of chapter 1—the attitude of humility and the importance of not to follow blindly those who lead moral changes that are labelled progressive.

That is, given the diverse values and concerns we consider in our second-order moral reasoning, some of us are able to transcend the epistemic and moral limitations of our culture and society and reach some revolutionary moral views to change society. But without a critical examination of our reasoning, we can always go back to the state in which we stick tightly to what we endorse, while failing to see the limitations of the values and moral concerns that shape our moral reasoning. In the end, while many of us see ourselves as moral agents that are capable of challenging our social milieu, we remain narrow- and closed-minded because of our lack of awareness of the limitations of our moral reasoning. This, again, upholds the importance of staying humble with regards to our moral views and sticking to our autonomy in our moral thinking.

VI. Conclusion

To conclude, in this chapter, I moved from the conception of moral history to the explanatory models of people's moral view change in current studies of moral change, and argued that existing explanations fail to identify the most crucial

agential experiences—which I call *second-order moral reasoning*—in explaining people's moral view change. Thus, we lack the insight into what exactly makes some people break from the moral views of their time and act on new views with determination and assurance.

Divided into methodological individualism and structuralism, many current studies conceptualize moral change as highly contextualized dynamic processes in which psychological factors or the interaction between individuals and society brings about the transformation of morality. These factors include the desire for honor, the rise of new technology, the shift of economic systems, and the like, and in current explanations, they elicit people's moral reasoning over what an ideal society is like, what moral views are legitimate and appropriate for such a society, what kinds of actions are preferred. These factors and interactions are usually taken to be sufficient for people's acquisition of new sets of moral views on the existing explanations.

However, in light of recent empirical evidence in moral psychology, both models overlook the agential experiences crucial to people's change of moral views. They focus mostly on what I call first-order moral reasoning, which involves the activation of individual psychologies, the exposure to moral information, and the rumination over them. The actual change, by contrast, usually occurs at the stage of second-order moral reasoning, in which individuals consider how valid a moral view is and how strongly they should support and act on them. The guiding principle of this reasoning is not the information people initially receive, but the preexisting moral values and concerns they acquire in their socialization. It is out of these considerations that they decide whether they should change their moral minds and pursue new types of moral actions.

All in all, following the dual character conception of moral change, explaining people's change of moral views is crucial to our grasp of how some people come to invest in some new sets of moral views with determination and assurance. Though many efforts have been made to show us the factors and thinking processes leading to people' moral view change, the empirical studies of moral psychology remind us that more should be done. We should both expose the flaw of the explanatory models in current accounts of moral change, and encourage explanations from new levels of analysis in future research. We should also understand how the second-order moral reasoning that enables moral view change also gives rise to our cognitive limitation, which maintains our neglect of the moral views that are crucial to the flourishing of many of us.

In the next chapter, I will shift to the issue of moral intervention. I will develop a new conception of moral intervention that discards the elitist structure, and is instead grounded upon our inherent demand for wellbeing and the self-generated impetus to change.

Chapter 3 Moral intervention and critical autonomy

I. Introduction

Following the dual character conception of moral change and the importance of second-order moral reasoning in people's moral view change, I will shift in this chapter to the issue of moral intervention, and build up a new theory of intervention in connection to the points in the previous two chapters. Thus far, there are few systematic accounts of moral intervention in moral change literature—in most cases, intervention is mentioned as an implication of some particular understandings of moral change and moral progress (see e.g., Eriksen 2019; Appiah 2010). More discussions of intervention are in the field of conceptual engineering. Focusing on adjusting our conceptual repertoires to facilitate scientific research, legislation, policymaking, and other aspects of life (see e.g., Issac et al. 2022), many conceptual engineers seek moral progress by improving our conceptual uses. A key issue that concerns conceptual engineering is the "implementation problem," i.e., how to make people accept engineered concepts (see e.g., Podosky 2022; Jorem 2021). Accounts of implementation, thus, also highlight the issues behind the current understanding of moral intervention.

Implicated in current accounts, intervention usually assumes an elitist, top-down structure[28] in which the intellectual community is the major agent of intervention, and the general public is only to accept or resist it.[29] For liberal thinkers, this

[28] In the rest of the chapter, I will use 'elitist' or 'top-down' to describe the structure of moral intervention implicated in current accounts.

[29] I use 'the intellectual community' to include all groups of people that claim moral authority. Though it needs a case-by-case analysis to see what the intellectual community consists of in

structure entails the violation of the transparency, freedom, and autonomy crucial to liberal democracy. The feasibility of the elitist structure is further questioned when we consider the dual character conception of moral change: As many moral changes are pursued by the intellectual community, their confidence in their moral views entails and sustains the neglect of alternative values that jeopardizes the life of many people. Therefore, it is doubtful how a moral intervention with a top-down structure can live up to its goal.

Against this background, my view is that we can have a new conception of moral intervention that dispenses with the top-down structure. An aspect that is obscured in current accounts of moral intervention[30] is the inherent demand of humans for wellbeing[31]. According to the ethical tradition that traces back to Aristotle, an

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each situation, I suggest they include people who, within their particular social structures, can legitimately declare themselves to be the moral authority and argue for others' ignorance. For instance, a range of discussions of moral ignorance, such as Moody-Adams' affected ignorance (1994), Pohlhaus' wilful hermeneutical ignorance (2012), and Philip Kitcher's false consciousness (2021), presuppose the existence of a moral authority that knows what is morally correct, and those who hold different views are ignorant. Scholars, activists, policymakers, business leaders, or anyone else who promotes new moral ideas in society can all claim the authority. By contrast, the "down" part of the top-down model are those whose behaviours and views are subject to the doubt and blame of the authority.

[30] These include both the accounts from moral change literature and the accounts of implementation in conceptual engineering. Same below.

[31] In this chapter, I use 'wellbeing' and 'desired states of life' interchangeably. Wellbeing means a variety of things in different contexts, such as "states of mind" in psychology, the "objective quality of life" in development economics, or "perceived or actual health" in medicine (Alexandrova 2017, p. 3). My intention here is not to support any notion of wellbeing, but to stress a moral agency who actively pursues their desired states of life. As I will explain more in section III, many people assess actively the kind of life they desire to live, and adjust

important goal of morality is human flourishing, and moral codes are towards helping people attain a life that is good, meaningful, and fully realized (see e.g., Fowers 2016; Hirata 2016; Bynum 2006). It is out of this concern that our demand for wellbeing becomes one of the critical factors that condition our moral codes—what we take to be our desired states of life can determine the sorts of moral beliefs and practices we adopt. Over history, this demand drives our ancestors to overcome adverse natural environments to ensure their survival, and it also drives them to experiment with different designs of society to attain the good and meaningful life they desire. Individually, we adapt in response to the vicissitudes of life and adjust ourselves and social environments to achieve our flourishing and self-worth.

Given this common propensity, it is plausible to assume that the demand for wellbeing generates in us the impetus to assess and critique moral practices in society. Following such critique, we adjust ourselves and our practices to create favourable conditions for reaching the desired level of wellbeing. However, this propensity might be repressed due to our socialization, which sometimes leaves us unable to see that we can do more to enhance our wellbeing. For this reason, a new framework of moral intervention should cultivate people's critical autonomy in order to motivate their examination of their social environments and assessment of their desired states of life. The public will then be the major agents of intervention,

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themselves and their external environments to attain that. This capacity for self-reflection and change is what I want to highlight in discussing people's demand for wellbeing.

and moral intervention is essentially about self-reflection, self-intervention, and self-development.[32]

In the following sections, I begin with the challenge to the current conception of moral intervention posed by the dual character conception of moral change. This challenge, combined with liberal thinkers' concern for the anti-liberal consequences of current attempts of intervention, requires us to reconceptualize and restructure moral intervention. Then, in section IV, I will propose a new conception of intervention that is grounded in humans' demand for wellbeing. Since this demand is sometimes repressed by our socialization, I will point out that cultivating individuals' critical autonomy is key to unlocking the process in which people assess their wellbeing and make changes to themselves and social conditions to have a flourishing life. After that, in section V, I will propose a new framework of moral intervention, which shows how the intellectual community can aid people's self-reflection and self-intervention.

II. Dual character conception of moral change and moral intervention

In current literature, "moral intervention" refers to the implementation of certain measures to correct morally problematic practices or to preserve substantial moral

[32] Given the importance of autonomy in the modern world, I highlight this part to challenge the denial of this aspect by the elitist structure of intervention. What is especially problematic is that elitism is grounded in this denial; it can hardly co-exist with everyone's autonomy. By highlighting autonomy, we can see this ill of elitism.

values in society. [33] Apart from exposing people to particular sets of moral ideas, facilitators of interventions also try to induce people to think in such a way that they will endorse the ideas recommended to them. For instance, Cristina Bicchieri (2016) once led a campaign that aimed to eliminate female genital mutilation in African communities. By promoting a new understanding of uncut girls as being natural and pristine rather than a disgrace to their families, many families stopped the cutting practice after a number of people in their society endorsed the change. This case is therefore an example of correcting morally problematic practices. In comparison, the Holocaust memorials taking place every year are meant to preserve substantial moral values. Decades after WWII, racial supremacism has not come to an end, and intergroup violence still occurs intermittently. Reminding people of the dark side of human history, those memorial events are intended to prevent the same crime against humanity. These activities, accordingly, are aimed at preserving the substantial values of equality, peace, and love of all.

The current conception of moral intervention assumes a top-down structure. That is, members of an intellectual community, such as government officials, experts in international organization, scholars, or activists, usually set interventional goals and decide on the procedures to achieve them. They are also responsible for assessing the outcome of an interventionist project, and deciding when and where revisions should be made. The current conception of moral intervention, therefore, presupposes that the intellectual community stands for what is morally good and

[33] Here, what is morally problematic and what is substantial are both based on the perspective of those who lead the intervention.

right, and that the public should accept the moral opinions of the intellectual community.

The dual character conception of moral change, however, poses a challenge to the top-down structure of moral intervention. In the first chapter, I delineated a picture in which the exercise of some values entails the neglect and sacrifice of other important values, and the gain we make is sustained by the loss that results from the neglect. The cognitive limitation of the intellectual community is particularly useful for understanding the neglect: As they lead many of the moral changes that shape our contemporary moral life, their lack of critical examination of their moral ideas entails an overconfidence that sustains their neglect of other values. This maintains the social structure that obscures the neglected values and the loss this neglect engenders.

To mention again the case of human rights movements, when those advocates endorsed individuals' material sufficiency as their goal in the 1970s and engaged proactively in the poverty elimination of the Global South, they upheld the individualist and economically liberal thinking that disregarded collective welfare and distributive justice. Material equality, as a result, is marginalized in policymaking, and this marginalization is sustained by the belief of the human rights advocates in their rightness. In the end, though the human rights movements seem progressive from the perspective of poverty elimination, a large population falls victim to the widening inequality, which questions the "achievements" of those advocates.

A more thorough reflection on the part of the intellectual community and the overcoming of their cognitive limitation seems to be the right solution. This,

nevertheless, can barely address the issue. For some degree of certainty over what moral ideas are good and right is necessary for moral intervention to carry out. In other words, the intellectual community should be firm about the set of moral ideas they want the public to accept, and a constant contestation, challenge, and change of the ideas may simply paralyze the process. Thus, the need to keep a critical attitude towards one's moral views can hardly be reconciled with the need to stick to a particular stance in promoting what is morally good and right in society.

Is intervention still possible and desirable given this limitation? In cases like secularisation, the tension between secular values and fundamentalist movements leaves us in a situation we can hardly take for granted. On one hand, we can't just reverse the historical process to restore the dignity and respect many religious people desire. On the other hand, faced with a world rife with problems like gender oppression and political persecution, many of us still want to do something to change it. Thus, what I support is a new structure of intervention, which recognizes people's demand for wellbeing and their capacity for change.

On this new structure, the public replaces the intellectual community to be the major agent of change. A new framework of moral intervention is then about how the intellectual community can aid the public to pursue the change towards their desired life. Following this trajectory, in the next sections, I will firstly elaborate the liberal concerns about current attempts of moral intervention, which challenge the elitist structure from a perspective other than the dual character conception of moral change. After that, I will shift to developing a new conception of moral intervention by explaining the ideas of wellbeing, adaptation, and critical autonomy. Finally, I will develop a new framework of moral intervention that is non-elitist.

III. Liberal challenges to current attempts at intervention

Before moving onto the new conception of moral intervention, I will go through a brief review of existing accounts of intervention and elaborate the challenges posed to the elitist structure by liberal thinkers. Although it is not my stance that we should take liberalism to be the sole ground for seeing the issues with current attempts of moral intervention, the criticisms of liberal thinkers, combined with my concern derived from the dual character conception of moral change, point to the importance of developing a new, non-elitist conception of moral intervention.

In moral change literature, not many accounts directly mention moral intervention, but many of them say something about what we could do to shift morality and have people accept those more desirable beliefs and practices. For example, in Moody-Adams' account of moral progress, morally engaged inquirers play the leading role in deepening our grasp of the semantic contents of moral concepts (1999; 2017). However, as many of us may be subjects of "affected ignorance"—i.e., "choosing not to know what one can and should know" (Moody-Adams 1994, p. 296)—recognizing our fallibility and overcoming it is key to moral progress. Or, consider Appiah's (2010) account of how to intervene in the practice of honour killing prevalent in regions like Pakistan, India, Turkey, and the Middle East. Given the previous failure of the movements of "collective shaming" directed at the Pakistani government, Appiah suggests that international society can try the approach that dissociates honour codes from women's sexual conduct and links them to the end of the violence.

Outside the studies of moral change, conceptual engineering is a field focused on improving our concepts, i.e., "our representational devices" (Cappelen 2018, p. 3). One line of inquiry concerns the revision of the semantic meanings of particular

concepts, freedom for instance, and how that can improve the philosophical discussions of it (ibid., p. 150). Others try to expand the extensions of a concept to broaden the topics for discussions (ibid., p. 148). Because of the critical role of concepts in shaping the way we think about the world, some philosophers apply conceptual engineering to the task of addressing social injustice and realizing human liberation.

In one earlier paper, Sally Haslanger (2000) proposes the ameliorative project of redefining gender and race to address social injustice. Per her definition, the concept of "woman" refers to those who are systematically subordinated in society for being "observed or imagined to possesses certain bodily features presumed to be evidence of a female's biological role in reproduction" (pp. 42-43). Having this definition, however, is not just to provide another description of women, pick out some of their common features, or prescribe the normative ideal of what women should be (pp. 45-46). The ameliorative aspect is that when people shift to understand women this way, they come to see the situation of women as "deeply molded by injustice," which will draw them to see that something should be done to address these injustices (ibid., p. 48). The same idea also applies to race. As our concepts or categories for people shape the way we think about them, we can expose the practices we take to be morally problematic by creating new concepts or imbuing new meanings into existing concepts, and encourage a change of them.

Most current attempts of moral intervention assume an elitist structure. That is, the intellectual community decides what is morally right and wrong, and the rest of society are only to accept their opinions. For instance, in Kitcher's account of "democratic contractualism," he proposes a set of procedures for negotiating over the proper moral views to implant in society (2021). The key component of this

procedure consists in the organization of an ideal conversation that involves different parties. These parties are represented by the people who have the best moral knowledge and possess the most power and authority within their groups. They are responsible for identifying urgent moral problems, proposing solutions, and deciding which one to endorse. Other people are merely to exercise the endorsed solutions and test them in actual practices.

Some liberal thinkers express their concerns for the illiberal consequences of current attempts of intervention.[34] That is, while many attempts at intervention are legitimized for their liberal claims, the elitist structure they assume undermines the principles crucial to a liberal democracy. For example, in discussing the implementation problem in conceptual engineering, Kitsik (2022) points out that when the intellectual community recognizes themselves to have the expertise and moral authority the general public do not possess, this breeds the attitude that they can go beyond explicit persuasion and education, and make interventions without informing the public. Conceptual engineers investigate the cognitive structure behind people's conceptual acquisition and application, and interfere with their "ability to go about their inquiry (to access, collect, and evaluate information)" without their prior knowledge and consent (ibid., p. 2). This violates individuals' autonomy with regards to their belief formation, which is a crucial foundation of liberal democracy (ibid., p. 3).

[34] I frame the critique of the elitist structure of moral intervention within liberalism for the reason that these concerns are already recognized and discussed in existing scholarship.

Bicchieri's interventional project on the practice of female genital mutilation in Africa is one example. Grounded in the cognitive model of connectionism, in which our information processing is shaped by the schemas and scripts[35] we acquire throughout our life experiences, we can change people's behaviours by exposing them repeatedly to new schemata and scripts (Bicchieri 2016). Thus, Bicchieri and other facilitators launched the "Saleema" initiative, and developed the new understanding of uncut girls as natural, intact, and pure, rather than a disgrace to their families (ibid., p. 139). Though this initiative aims to free women from genital mutilation, the change process fails to give people the chance to learn how their beliefs are formed and changed. In other words, it fails to respect individuals' autonomy over their belief formation.

In a different example, philosophers utilize people's obedience to authority to solve the implementation problem in conceptual engineering. On Nimtz's view, many of us may not have the expertise to determine if the change of the conception of Pluto from planet to dwarf planet is valid, but we accept it when the International Astronomical Union (IAU) approves it (2022). In a similar vein, we can rely on people's deference to authority to enforce engineered concepts. Underlying this approach, however, is the attitude that individuals' autonomy over their moral reasoning and moral views is secondary to conceptual engineers' moral goals.

A third example of cognitive intervention that disregards individuals' autonomy takes an etiological approach to implementation. This approach cultivates "settings

[35] Schemas and scripts involve generic knowledge about a particular object, category, or event; we rely on them to interpret ongoing experiences and decide the appropriate behaviours in particular situations (see, e.g., D'Andrade 1992; Strauss 1992).

that modify the payoffs and penalties associated with conceptual conflict" between conceptual engineers and those who resist their attempts (Gibbons 2021, p. 2). Given people's practical calculation that accepting engineered concepts may sometimes cost them more than what they gain, the etiological approach to enforcing engineered concepts seeks to change the payoffs and losses associated with concept use. These incentives may be material, social, or moral, such as the enhancement of one's social status, or the higher chance of winning public support for policies like the legalization of abortion. The etiological approach nonetheless does not require any communication between the intellectual community and the public; it allows the intellectual community to utilize people's desire for self-interest to achieve their goals, while overlooking their rights to know and participate openly in the public affairs that matter for their life.

Taken together, for some liberal thinkers, when interventionists induce people into accepting the moral views they endorse, they inevitably violate individuals' cognitive autonomy. In addition to the above proposals, in conceptual engineering, people also seek the collective enforcement of concepts to achieve their moral goals. For instance, one proposal to implement engineered concepts is to envision an institution that is similar to a legal system (Queloz & Bieber 2022). In the legal system, the "authority over what concepts should be used is centralized within a jurisdiction, and the recognition of that authority is itself regimented, hierarchically organized, and supported by an educational apparatus providing extensive legal training in prevailing conceptual norms and in the norms by which concepts are revised" (ibid., p. 674). Not only does this system foster a high degree of uniformity in the use of legal concepts, but it also allows for conceptual innovations and the enforcement of such innovations by the centralised authority. Analogously, society

can adopt a similar hierarchy to enforce engineered concepts. Besides, people also suggest that we construct a new language with all the concepts and meanings conceptual engineers prescribe (Jorem 2021).

The two proposals yield two more problems. First, with a group of people determining the concepts and meanings that are appropriate, those in control of engineering concepts may abuse their power and commit wrongful acts to further their ends. Second, a liberal democracy does not just stress the autonomy of people, but when it comes to collective decisions, it also requires the free and autonomous consent of the public. As forcing concepts upon them is equivalent to manipulating people into thinking in a particular way, this leads to "engineered consent," rather than the genuine consent real democracy requires (ibid., p. 680).

To sum up, the elitist structure implicated in the current attempts of moral intervention is problematic from the perspective of liberalism. The enforcement of any idea by the intellectual community may threaten the autonomy and transparency that serve as the building blocks of liberal democracy. Not to enforce anything, however, may simply leave the practices and beliefs that jeopardize people's life untouched. Intervention then fails to deliver on what is expected of it, which gives us more reasons to explore a new conception of intervention.

IV. A new conception of moral intervention

Following the concerns elicited by the dual character conception of moral change and the anti-liberal consequences of current proposals of moral intervention, my response is that the elitist structure is not the only option for moral intervention. Instead of assuming that the intellectual community always knows better, and that

the general public should just accept what is prescribed to them, the public can replace the intellectual community to be the major agents of intervention.

In the rest of the chapter, I will advance a new conception of intervention that positions the public at the centre of intervention and stress their own capacity for change. An aspect we have not seen much in moral change and conceptual engineering literature is the inherent demand of humans for wellbeing, namely, our desire for "optimal psychological functioning and experience" (Ryan & Deci 2001, p. 142). Driven by this desire, we assess the satisfaction of this need and adjust social conditions to reach it. Even in the absence of an external source to force our change, we evaluate our current situations and acquire the impetus to make changes to ourselves and society. Therefore, we do not need to confine moral intervention to an elitist structure; it should focus instead on arousing people's demand for wellbeing and driving them to remove unfavourable social conditions and create favourable ones to reach their desired states of life.[36]

This inherent demand is captured in the eudaimonistic notion of wellbeing. Departing from the hedonic notion that wellbeing is about "pleasure attainment and

[36] The idea of individuals' self-generated move to improve their life is not entirely new. For instance, Aristotle emphasizes people's improvement of practical skills and wisdom to attain flourishing, and Kant stresses our moral perfection—how we move closer to the moral ideal of "acting from duty" (see e.g., Stohr 2019). I do not aim at building up something that is completely new, but in contemporary moral philosophy, theories of Aristotle and Kant are usually limited to the individual moral domain, concerning how individuals should cultivate their virtues to be better humans. Less emphasized is the capacity for improvement, which is internal and fundamental to us. My focus, thus, is less on what people should do, but on urging society to acknowledge our capacity, and extend it from the individual moral domain to the change of social structures and practices. This highlights the capacity's potential to induce an impact at the collective and societal level.

pain avoidance," the eudaimonistic notion emphasises "meaning and self-realization," i.e., "fulfilling or realizing one's true nature" (ibid., p. 141). The differences in these notions lie in the dimensions for measuring wellbeing: While hedonic wellbeing looks at individual's subjective judgment of happiness, eudaimonistic wellbeing requires people to consider a variety of life dimensions, such as autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery, positive relatedness, and competence.[37] Wellbeing, then, is not the judgment based on any single dimension, but an overall assessment of one's life based on multiple dimensions. While hedonistic wellbeing expects people to be in a psychological state of happiness that remains stable across time and space, eudaimonism encourages people to evaluate their wellbeing more flexibly and make necessary changes to themselves and their social environments to achieve the life they find satisfactory.[38]

Eudaimonism, therefore, recognizes our propensity to adapt ourselves in search of our desired states of wellbeing (Gough 2004; Waterman 2007). This adaptation is sometimes seen in our response to the changes in life circumstances—when faced with the ups and downs of life, many of us do not just accept passively what happens

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[37] See e.g., the measurement of psychological wellbeing of Ryff & Keyes (1995); also see the self-determination theory (SDT) of Ryan & Deci (2000).

[38] Emphasizing the eudaimonistic notion of wellbeing over the hedonistic notion is not to reject that happiness is a crucial component of wellbeing. The eudaimonistic notion can accommodate happiness, but it stresses diverse dimensions. Therefore, people are not merely driven by their desire for happiness; they are also driven by many other important life goals and make efforts to achieve them. The eudaimonistic notion gives more emphasis to people's exercise of the capacity for reflection and change, which is why I use this notion to highlight the neglect of this capacity in current accounts of moral intervention.

to us, but actively seek adjustments to create new social conditions to restore our wellbeing. At other times, adaptation is seen in our efforts to carve out a life path in which we mesh our life activities with our deeply held values and find meaning from it (Waterman 1993). This trait is also supported by a range of psychological theories. For instance, the "eudaimonic treadmill" refers to the phenomenon in which an activity that once gives us a sense of satisfaction becomes a source of boredom. But, instead of becoming pessimistic about the possibility of happiness, many of us are driven "to increase the level of challenges undertaken, thereby striving to further enhance the realisation of personal potentials" (Waterman 2007, p. 612).[39]

In empirical studies, the demand for wellbeing and the impetus to adapt is seen in people's adjustment of their expected income when their actual income does not meet their initial expectation (Knight & Gunatilaka 2010), and among migrants who leave their home communities and societies for better socioeconomic situations (Czaika & Vothknecht 2014). In the first case, the enormous economic changes in China resulted in a change of people's expected incomes and conceptions of a good life. Many people go through despair when their actual income fails to meet their initial expectation, but this does not stop them from pursuing a life they desire; by adjusting their expectations, they come to see their efforts as rewarding and lives as improving. Similarly, in the second case, many migrants go through a struggle to integrate into their new countries. This causes a reduction in satisfaction and

[39] The same phenomenon is also captured by theories like "adaptive preferences," "hedonic adaptation," or "response shift" (e.g., Camfield and Skevington 2002; Cummins and Nistico 2002; Frederic and Loewenstein 1999).

feelings of pleasure at certain points, but when people come to see the gain in personal growth, autonomy, and the expansion of their freedom, this motivates their persistence to realize their potentials to the greater extent.

The two cases, therefore, show that individuals' wellbeing is more than the psychological state of happiness. In particular, by showing that wellbeing can be grounded in the autonomy they have, the personal growth they undergo, and the improvement of life from previous stages of life, the two cases support the ability of humans to assess their level of life satisfaction and make changes to themselves and their social surroundings to improve their wellbeing. Humans, in this respect, do not just passively experience happiness and sadness from the life experiences they have, but they actively perceive their life conditions, adjust their standards, and take positive actions to create a good and meaningful life.

Following this trajectory, I suggest this capacity for change be the core of the new conception of moral intervention, with the public being the major agent of intervention. As a matter of fact, many moral changes in the past are driven by people's self-generated impetus to reach their desired levels of wellbeing. Enlightenment thinkers, such as the forerunners of secularism and secularisation, were impelled by the desire for a free and autonomous life, and they fought against the Catholic Church to release people from the control of religious doctrines. Likewise, in the history of slavery abolition in countries like Haiti, the desire to be free and live a dignified life motivated the continuous struggles of enslaved groups, which contributed substantially to the cause of abolition (Anderson 2016).

As the capacity for change is possessed by most people, we need "interventions directed toward promoting self-realization" (Watermann 2007, p. 612). The

demand for wellbeing is nevertheless sometimes silenced, or people are unable to see the social structure that constrains their pursuit of wellbeing. For example, in response to Moody-Adams' view that people would be able to see their wrongness when they recognize their fallibility (1994), Benson (2001) challenges her view by pointing out how oppressive relations can obstruct people from having a genuine scrutiny of their social environments. He cites the example of Aristotle, who went through a detailed assessment of the legitimacy of chattel slavery, but failed to see its wrongness. An important reason is that the oppressive practices in society cover up much "good evidence about the rational capabilities of persons subjected to enslavement, thus preventing him from being able to discern those capabilities" (ibid, p. 611).

Likewise, a Greek slave might not agree with the legitimacy of slavery, but they may not find the need to put it under critical scrutiny. Due to their socialization, they might internalise the norm of slavery and be convinced that it "was necessary for the long-term survival of widespread chattel slavery, since some tasks routinely assigned to slaves, such as child care and cooking, could not be performed well without the slaves' demonstrating genuine cooperation and trustworthiness" (ibid, p. 612). They might also acquire a sense of esteem from the "social and personal trust" (ibid, p. 612) bestowed upon them from those slave owners, which tied them further to slavery.

In this case, as oppressive relations hide the information for assessing what a truly flourishing life is like, people like Aristotle fail to see the equal worth of the enslaved people. Therefore, they fail to see the limitation of their society and how that deprives the enslaved people of their freedom. The enslaved, in contrast, fail to see the possibility of having a free life, and they lack the motivation to challenge

the society that denies their freedom and dignity. Hence, efforts should be put into helping the public see beyond what they perceive directly from their society, so that they are able to examine properly their desired life, assess their actual life conditions, and see the limitations of society.

One particularly important factor in driving this assessment process should be critical autonomy (Gough 2004; also see, e.g., Camfield and Skevington 2002). As opposed to mere autonomy where we decide on when and how we act, critical autonomy "entails the capacity to situate the form of life one grows up in, to criticise it and, if necessary, to act to change it" (Gough 2004, p. 302). This capacity enables individuals to "situate and challenge the particular rules into which they are born, or, for whatever reason, find themselves," and it drives them "to compare cultural rules, to reflect upon the rules of one's own culture, to work with others to change them and, in extremis, to move to another culture if all else fails" (Doyal & Gough 1991, pp. 187-188).

Critical autonomy is thus crucial to our awareness of the state of life we ought to desire, and it facilitates our move towards the state by driving us to see the gap between our actual life condition and aspired ones. This then propels us to take actions to attain our desired state of life. But critical autonomy is not always operative. It needs two things: "individual capacities to exercise critical agency and social preconditions that provide opportunities for the exercise of critical agency" (Gough 2004, p. 302). In absence of these conditions, our critical autonomy may simply remain dormant—we may never be aware of our capacity, or we might be in a situation that we are unable to exercise it. Thus, the non-elitist conception of moral intervention requires actions that awaken and cultivate people's critical autonomy.

This leads to my final proposal for a new, non-elitist framework of intervention. This framework is specifically about how the intellectual community can help people exercise their critical autonomy, see the sort of life they want to live, and generate from that the impetus to make changes to themselves and society to reach their desired life.

V. A non-elitist framework of moral intervention

Before moving onto the details of the new framework, the first thing to clarify is that this framework is designed for the intellectual community—it is meant to show how they can serve an assisting role in individuals' self-generated search for wellbeing.[40] Thus, the framework requires an attitude shift on the part of both the intellectual community and the public in general: Instead of identifying themselves to be the moral authority, the intellectual community should focus on cultivating people's critical autonomy and providing them with the resources they do not usually possess to facilitate their assessment of their desired levels of wellbeing.

This non-elitist framework of moral intervention may face two issues. First, how should the intellectual community interact with the public to avoid elitism? Second,

[40] The focus on the intellectual community may entail the worry that the elitism will still be present, and it also entails a doubt about whether we must rely on the intellectual community for moral intervention. I target the intellectual community here partly because they are the main audience of academic works, and they should change the way they look at moral intervention and their responsibility in perpetuating and changing elitism. Meanwhile, I see my work as a starting point—although I focus on what the intellectual community can do in this chapter, this does not mean that they are the only force we rely on to complete the shift from a top-down structure of moral intervention to a more bottom-up one.

when we aim at individuals' self-generated impetus to reach their desired states of life, this may result in the clash between the desired lives of different parties. To address the first issue, we need an interventional style that is more dialogical. Field work is important for the new framework of moral intervention, but it is not intended to preach moral ideas as we see in the elitist conception of moral intervention. Nor is it like what anthropologists and sociologists usually do, namely, developing empirical generalizations about people's behaviours, lifestyles, and forms of society through studying them. Instead, dialogues should be the major form of interaction: Scholars converse with people, raise critical points, invite their challenges, and facilitate a critical exchange. These conversations can occur on media platforms, and also in community activities and other communal settings where different groups of people can meet and exchange opinions with each other.

The idea of conversation may at first sight seem problematic because of the possibly unequal power relations in discursive practices (see e.g., Alcoff 1991). That is, due to the power structure in society, even if scholars try to converse with people for the sake of their wellbeing, their unequal power positions may still result in the uncritical acceptance of the expert opinions by the public or their resistance to them. I do not think this can be entirely avoided, but the intellectual community has the responsibility to remember that the purpose of their work is to motivate people's critical autonomy. Thus, it is essential that scholars and experts always reflect on themselves and guide the conversations in a way towards equal communication.

To track the actual effects of their conversations is also important. This requires scholars and experts to devise appropriate conversational styles: Considering that their social positions and the contexts of conversations can mediate the meanings of the things said, they should be able to examine the actual effects of their

conversations and adjust the contents and forms of conversations (ibid., p. 26). In particular, they should attend to the new information and new sorts of interactions that arise from the conversations. Using this information to see the real concerns of the public, scholars and experts can decide how the conversations should continue. Then we can see what people really need and where we can help.

The importance of attending to the needs and concerns that emerge from the interaction is supported by the practice of medical intervention. Paul Farmer, as a physician and epidemiologist who dedicated decades to the provision of medical care and the improvement of public health in areas like South America and Africa, proposes the idea of "accompaniment" as the right attitude and procedure for foreign assistance (Farmer 2013, p. 234). The key point of accompaniment is that it isn't sufficient to offer medical services only; instead, people need long-term care, ranging from the transport to reach the medical services, the helpers to support their recovery, and childcare during the treatment periods (ibid., pp. 235-236). The essence of accompaniment, therefore, is that we should see the real life needs of the public, rather than merely what we think that they need.

Analogously, for a non-elitist framework of moral intervention, scholars and experts should also track the actual effects of their conversations with the public; they should note whether people simply follow or resist them, or express thoughts and concerns that were previously unheard. Then, they should maintain a sensitivity towards what people express, so that they can determine what really needs to be challenged and what kinds of information should be provided to help people identify what they really desire and assess their actual life situations.

The intellectual community can also provide a society-wide education to encourage people's habitual exercise of critical autonomy. It has been studied that psychologically not everyone has the same need for critical reflection. While those with a higher openness to reflection are more likely to consider new sorts of information and adjust their attitudes and opinions, people with a low openness are more likely to remain stable in terms of their attitudes and opinions (see e.g., Haugtvedt & Petty 1992; Cárdaba et al. 2013). Thus, we can expect that certain groups of people will be more proactive than others in their critical thinking. With a society-wide education, even though some people have lower needs for thinking, their friends, teachers, and families can always encourage their critical thinking in their everyday interactions.

With regards to the second issue, if everyone sees wellbeing differently, will this throw society into chaos? From my viewpoint, people's efforts to adjust society always involve their search for those who share their visions of ideal society and who can join them to strive for the same cause. Examples include feminists' joint efforts to realize women's liberation and powerless people's collective efforts to organize themselves for transformative social change (see e.g., Zheng 2022). We can anticipate from these experiences that people will seek others' support in order to make changes at the societal level, rather than just acting on their desires. Moreover, the clash of the understandings of wellbeing provides people with a chance to think more carefully about their desired states of life and negotiate with others over the kind of society they want to create. This enables them to reach a consensus on how to build society.

Together, the above procedural aspects show the general shape of the non-elitist framework of moral intervention. Although it is probably inevitable that people's

desired states for wellbeing will still clash, the new framework of moral intervention more importantly challenges the elitist structure of moral intervention by recognizing the agency of the public and their capacity for change. While it will not be easy to follow this new organization of intervention, it is of primary importance to shift from giving the intellectual community the entire moral authority to recognizing the moral capacity of the public.

Next, I will propose what the intellectual community can do in their dialogues with people in order to motivate their critical autonomy. Following the second chapter, where I argued for the crucial role of second-order moral reasoning in shaping people's moral views, my point here is that second-order moral reasoning should be the key target of intervention. As second-order moral reasoning is shaped by the moral values and concerns one acquires from their socialization, reflecting on them amounts to putting their cultural and social milieu under critical scrutiny. Challenging second-order moral reasoning is therefore equivalent to the exercise of critical autonomy.

The focus on second-order moral reasoning also distinguishes my model of intervention from the one developed by Bicchieri. In the remainder of the chapter, I will start with pointing out some of the limitations of Bicchieri's model, and from that I will use some examples to show how the intellectual community can motivate people's critical autonomy through targeting their second-order moral reasoning.

5.1 Bicchieri's model of moral intervention

Similar to my proposal, Bicchieri[41] also supports the interaction between people and the facilitators of intervention in her interventional design. But the focus of the interaction is to replace the schema that sustains problematic practices with new schemata. This design is grounded in the cognitive model of connectionism, which assumes that our social cognition is shaped by the schemas and scripts we acquire throughout our life (Bicchieri 2016). Schemas refer to the generic knowledge we hold about objects and events, and scripts provide us with action guides in particular situations. In one example, the schema of "good wife" is usually associated with messages like "faithful," "submissive," "has children," and so forth (ibid., p. 134). The script of restaurant activates sets of actions like "we should wait to be seated, decide to eat an item that is listed on the menu, and keep our elbows off the table" (ibid., p. 132).

Moral view change, according to this understanding of human cognition, can start with schemas that are comparably more peripheral. In the "Saleema" program, facilitators focus on shifting the understanding of uncut girls from being a disgrace to their families to being "natural" and "pristine" (ibid., p. 139). As the change of one schema usually triggers the change of associated schemata (Bicchieri & McNally 2018, p. 27/32), when uncut girls are seen as pure and natural, they become good rather than disgraceful because of the two positive attributes.

[41] It should be recognized that many parts of Bicchieri's works are done by her research and interventional team. I mention Bicchieri only for simplicity.

The key aspect of the design is that as facilitators mobilize a group of people in the communities to endorse the new understanding of uncut girls, more people will follow the suit because of the shift of their social surroundings. Thus, without directly evoking the value of family honour (ibid., p. 41), facilitators can still dissociate genital cutting from people's concern for honour by reinforcing the goodness of uncut girls. This design, however, has some limitations. As I mentioned in section II, it fails to respect people's agency and autonomy in their belief formation: People are not offered the chance to reflect on how they acquire their views, nor are they provided with any resources to see how they come to change their beliefs.

The way Bicchieri interprets the supporting evidence is also flawed. In their discussions, they mention those public figures and celebrities who stand out to support the "Saleema" campaign, as well as those families who agree not to cut their daughters (Bicchieri & McNally 2018, p. 41). These people contribute to the shift of social environments that support the new understanding of uncut girls. However, there are also many who refuse to change. When we compare them, one question arises: Given that all these people are exposed to the same new understanding of uncut girls, what makes people react differently?

Among the multiple reasons Bicchieri and McNally propose, the first is that as many people continue the cutting practice, their behaviours lead many to believe that it is still right to practice genital mutilation (ibid., p. 34). But this should impact all people in the society, and it does not explain why people react differently to the same change. Another reason is people's "personal investments" in particular norms (ibid., p.34)—for instance, if they want to preserve a norm that denies women's control over their bodies, they justify it regardless of counterevidence.

This second aspect indicates why some people are more ready to change than others, but what those personal investments indicate is more than some personal concerns. Instead, they point to the moral framework one adopts to decide which norms they should particularly preserve, and such frameworks refer back to the core values and concerns one develops in their socialization.[42]

Thus, instead of believing that the shift of social environments is key to the change of beliefs, we still need appeal to people's core values and concerns to make sense of their different reactions. This lends support to my theory of moral view change—though people generate similar moral views from the information they receive, the differences of their second-order moral reasoning result in their different moral decisions. This drives us to develop a new design of moral intervention, and the one I propose below targets specifically second-order moral reasoning. Not only is this moral change process empirically supported, which I have shown in chapter 2, targeting second-order moral reasoning is also crucial to the cultivation of people's critical autonomy.

5.2 Moral intervention targeting second-order moral reasoning

Why is second-order moral reasoning important for critical autonomy? As I showed in chapter 2, although individuals process the moral information they receive in their first-order moral reasoning, change usually occurs at the stage of second-order

[42] For instance, a person born in the 1950s may hold a tighter connection to tribalism than someone born in the 1990s, when the world was much more globalized. As a result, the older person may invest more in female cutting to preserve the purity of their tribes, and be less willing to abandon it than the younger person. The values one adopts to evaluate norms then condition the norms they invest in.

moral reasoning. In this process, they retrieve the moral values and concerns central to their selves and decide whether they should change their minds and shift to new kinds of behaviours. Those values and concerns are usually the result of one's socialization, but they may not have the awareness that their values and concerns have limitations and that they should subject them to a critical examination.[43]

Following the definition in section III, exercising critical autonomy requires people to put the rules that shape one's life under scrutiny and seek improvements by comparing the rules of different cultures and experimenting with new ones. Challenging one's second-order moral reasoning, therefore, is one way of motivating people's critical autonomy. Meanwhile, focusing on second-order moral reasoning also overcomes the political issue raised in section II: Rather than inducing the change in people's normative beliefs through the shift of social environments, focusing on second-order moral reasoning allows people to see how their beliefs are formed and how they are changed. This pays respect to people's agency and their autonomy over their belief formation.

In chapter 2, I have already applied the theory of second-order moral reasoning to addressing the issue of honour killing in Pakistan. There, I focused specifically on the preservation of history and cultural identity, which many studies find to be one of the central concerns that sustain the practice of honour killing in Pakistan. One step I suggested is for scholars to explore new narratives of Pakistan's history. By motivating people to reflect on the history and cultural identity they want to

[43] In the last section of chapter 2, I mentioned the failure of the leading figures of moral change—such as those human rights advocates—to critically examine their second-order moral reasoning. Here, I extend the critique to people in general.

preserve and the actual history and identity they preserve, not only does this acknowledge the distinctiveness of Pakistan' culture and history, but it also encourages new ways of assessing the place honour killing occupies in Pakistani history and society.

Apart from this case, I am going to show more on how the intellectual community ("facilitators") can encourage people to think critically about their values and life. Then they can reassess their desired states of life, examine the social world that shapes their life, and see what they can do to attain the desired life. One case is the stigmatization of Muslims by many secularists. Many people have expressed concerns about this[44] —because of the substantial harm stigmatization causes to Muslims, and because of the entrenched hostility between many Muslim and secularist social groups, this is one issue that I believe the intellectual community should tackle.

One stigma Muslims face is their ignorance for adhering to an evil religion. This usually results from the perception reinforced by the repeated reports of the violence committed in the name of Islam, such as those terrorist attacks led by ISIS. To the minds of many secularists, Muslims adhere to a religion that causes much violence in society (see e.g., Juergensmeyer 2011, p. 186). Their continuous adherence, therefore, is to permit the existence of the religion and the violence, which makes the ignorance of Muslims a too obvious fact.

[44] This goes back to the dual character conception of moral change. When the exercise of one value entails the neglect of other important values, it follows from this idea that we should not rely on any value to decide what counts as a moral problem. Thus, I suggest we focus on what people express—what they want others to pay attention to—to determine the target of intervention.

In this case, one possibility is that the second-order moral reasoning many people go through is highly constrained by the principle of avoiding harm—when news reports are full of the violence committed in the name of Islam, people see the evilness of the religion and infer from that the ignorance of Muslims. In response, the facilitators can firstly motivate people to think about what secular and liberal values mean to them. Based on this, they can prompt people think whether Muslims would think about their religious values in a similar way. The rationale is that while many people may appeal to the single aspect of the violence of a small number of Muslims to evaluate the whole religious group, they are encouraged to consider the deep reasons that tie Muslims to their religion, and if there are any other aspect—other than that no people should incur harm upon others—that they should see to make sense of Muslims' choice.

Though it is hard to foresee how people will react, following the above steps, the facilitators can lead people to reflect on their social surroundings: what they usually learn about Muslims, and what aspects of Muslim life they do not see. By impelling people to reflect on how the secular world they live in shape their view of Muslims, this is towards spotlighting their second-order moral reasoning and evoking the values they might hold—such as the freedom of choice of belief—to encourage their re-examination of Muslims' faith and the validity of the ignorance view. Their new understanding of Muslims may lead many of them to criticize the social world that attends almost exclusively to the violence of Muslims.

Associated with the ignorance view of Muslims is also the view that women who convert to Islam are no longer enlightened and emancipated. For instance, in Netherlands, some of white Dutch women convert to Islam after marrying Muslim men, and immediately they become one of those Muslim women who are weak,

oppressed, and submissive (see e.g., van Es 2019). Although many of the women are well-educated, independent, and competent, they fail to challenge the stereotype that all Muslim women are simply oppressed. Rather, many of them are now under the burden of proving to those who question them that they are still "normal" and "emancipated" (ibid., p. 385).

Given the resistance of those Dutch Muslim women to the naive view of the inferiority of all Muslim women, the whole of society should reflect on the appropriateness of that perception. People's examination of their second-order moral reasoning is important here. One direction the facilitators can try is to organize public discussions and mobilize people to think what is more crucial if we want to evaluate a person properly: to appeal to some pre-existing group perceptions or to look at the actual behaviors and attributes of one person. This is towards driving people to question the perspective they adopt in evaluating those Dutch women who convert to Islam and also Muslim women in general. Such discussions do not have to end with the shift of people's perspectives, and the facilitators can continue to encourage people to think about the limitation of each perspective. Thus, people can have a continuous exchange over the appropriate manner of social group cognition, which is also important for other issues like racial cognition.

Following people's examination of their second-order moral reasoning and the questioning of its limitations, facilitators should encourage people to examine the social structure that shapes their views and the life they have been living. The variety of dimensions connected to the eudaimonistic notion of wellbeing—personal growth, autonomy, self- acceptance, life purpose, and so forth—are all helpful for people to see what sort of life is worth of living and what life they

actually have. These allow them to rethink how they should see those who hold different types of faith and what kinds of group relations are important for their desired life. This then enables them to see what changes they should make to reach what they desire.

This is only the first step towards having a new and non-elitist framework of moral intervention. More work should be done to understand second-order moral reasoning and the change and stability of moral views. More trials are also needed to test the effectiveness and actual effects of the interventional model that targets second-order moral reasoning. But most importantly, we should dispense with the elitist structure of moral intervention, recognize individuals' demand for wellbeing and their capacity for self-reflection and change, and have a new model of intervention led by that demand and capacity.

VI. Conclusion

To sum up, in this chapter, I shifted to the issue of moral intervention in current studies of moral change and conceptual engineering. The current conception of moral intervention assumes the elitist structure in which the intellectual community decides what moral views to inculcate, and the rest of society are only to accept or resist them. However, we can hardly avoid the conflict between enforcing moral ideas, violating liberal principles, and the potential problems caused by the overconfidence of the intellectual community in their moral ideas.

In response, I proposed a new conception of moral intervention that is grounded in our demand for wellbeing, and the intervention is about motivating individuals' self-adjustment and the adjustment of social conditions to move towards their

desired level of wellbeing. As the key to unlock this process is critical autonomy, I suggested a new framework of moral intervention with two major elements—first, the shift of the attitude of the intellectual community and their interventional style, and second, a model of intervention that targets people's second-order moral reasoning. Finally, in the concluding chapter, I will develop what I call the person-centric model of moral change. Based on the defining feature of this model, I will advocate it as a new paradigm for studying the historical change of morality.

Conclusion: a person-centric model of moral change

In chapters 1 through 3, I raised three methodological issues with contemporary studies of moral change. First, recent philosophical accounts of moral progress adhere to the problem-solving conception of moral progress to understand our past moral experiences. On this conception, humans are problem-solvers who identify the violation of liberal values in our social life and address them to bring progress to society. This, however, neglects the conflict of values we live by and the moral change dynamics this conflict engenders. Therefore, I proposed the *dual character conception of moral change* as a better alternative. I highlighted how our exercise of some moral values entails the neglect and sacrifice of other conflicting values, and how this neglect engenders moral predicaments we do not usually see from the problem-solving conception of moral progress.

Second, current explanations of moral change appeal to individual-level mental structures (methodological individualism) or the interaction between social structures and individuals (structuralism) to explain individuals' moral view change. Moral reasoning is crucial to both types of explanations. Empirical studies of moral psychology, however, show that moral reasoning occurs in different stages. I argued that *second-order moral reasoning*—in which people retrieve their central values and concerns to decide if they should truly endorse a moral view—is more crucial than *first-order moral reasoning*—in which people merely consider received moral information. As current explanations of moral change neglect second-order moral reasoning, they fail to identify the most crucial agential experiences and other key factors that determine people's moral view change.

Last, recent accounts of moral intervention and conceptual engineering conceive of intervention within an elitist, top-down power structure, in which the intellectual community always knows better, while the general public is meant only to passively accept or resist the views prescribed to them. Following the dual character conception of moral change, the intellectual community may neglect many important moral values in their efforts to change society. Thus, we should not trust totally their moral expertise. Many liberals also question the elitist structure behind current attempts of moral intervention for violating the individual autonomy and transparency that are crucial to liberal democracy. This leads them to believe that we may need to abandon the whole idea of intervention. Given these concerns, I propose that we can have a new structure of intervention that recognize individuals' own capacity for change. The role of the intellectual community, instead, is to cultivate people's critical autonomy and facilitate their self-reflection and self-intervention by helping them see the life and society they desire.

Based on these three critiques, I will now propose in this last part of my project what I call the *person-centric model of moral change* as a new paradigm for studying the historical transformation of morality. This model is to place people, rather than knowledge, as the locus of moral change research. By 'knowledge,' I mean that when the contemporary study of moral change sees moral change as a subtype of social phenomena and seeks to ground normative claims with historical and sociological evidence, they focus mostly on making more moral claims rather than challenging the perspectives that shape their study. The person-centric model, therefore, is to overcome this methodological flaw of the study of moral change as a research field.

I. Cognitive limitation as the nexus of three critiques

Before moving onto the "person-centric" theory of moral change, an aspect to which I wish to draw attention—but was not explored much in previous chapters—is the connection between the dual character conception of moral change, second-order moral reasoning, and the elitist conception of moral intervention. While the dual character conception of moral change is intended to challenge how current accounts of moral progress think about moral history, the conception is not just a theoretical construct for highlighting some moral issues currently understudied in moral philosophy. The pattern of moral change the conception posits—in which the progress toward one value entails the simultaneous neglect of other alternatives—also reflects a process sustained by a particular type of cognitive limitation.

In his account of scientific revolutions, Kuhn (1996) describes a cognitive pattern that explains scientists' prolonged adherence to a paradigm and their resistance to paradigm shifts. That is, when a paradigm proves valid in addressing more puzzles and deepening the understanding of a field, it gives scientists the confidence to continue working within it, and ignore searching for other alternatives. Because of this confidence, scientists believe that they are moving towards the correct understanding of a field by following a paradigm, even when in fact they are mistaken about the correctness of the paradigm in describing the features of the world. The cognitive limitation of scientists—which sustains their adherence to a paradigm and neglect of alternatives—is the basis for paradigm-based scientific practices.

Back to the moral domain, what second-order moral reasoning suggests—which I mentioned briefly at the end of chapter 2—is that since our central moral values and concerns are crucial to the moral views we endorse, this yields two sorts of

outcomes: When we endorse cultural and societal norms as central to us, we adopt the views consistent with them within our own morality. That is how the moral views prevailing in our culture and society are preserved. Likewise, when our values lead us to adopt the moral views currently unrecognized by our culture and society, we bring new sorts of morality into society.

One case that supports the two sorts of second-order moral reasoning and their outcomes is the psychological experiment on meat eating mentioned in chapter 2. For instance, for people who come from a society that stresses individual pleasure, their consideration of this value leads them to reject the importance of animal welfare (Feinberg et al. 2019). Therefore, they continue to disregard the suffering caused to animals by our meat consumption and farm business. Contrarily, the concern with being a moral person allows for a greater individual freedom in interpreting what being moral means. As a result, instead of confining their second-order moral reasoning to particular culturally and socially endorsed values, some people surpass the norms that remain silent about the harm of animals, and switch to support animal welfare to be a moral person.

Based on the different routes for moral view formation, we can see how the adoption of one value entails the neglect of alternative values. Regardless of the values we retrieve to form our moral views, many of us do not usually check the limitations of these values.[45] Our adoption of new sets of moral views results from our trust of the values underlying those views. However, because of this trust, we

[45] This excludes the situation in which the mechanism of social criticism is established, in order to keep people's awareness of their cognitive limitations.

neglect that choosing one value means that we often cannot simultaneously pursue values conflicting to them. Thus, we simply act on the moral views we endorse in line with our values, and even if we bring new sets of moral views into society, our moral efforts end up fostering neglect. This trust, analogous to scientists' commitment to a paradigm, constitutes the cognitive limitation crucial to grasping the moral change process tracked by the dual character conception.

This firstly leads to my doubts about the elitist structure of moral intervention in chapter 3, for the structure presupposes the privileged epistemic status of the intellectual community, whereas this community is equally subject to the cognitive limitation induced by their adoption of certain values. Secondly, from the cognitive level, the issues explored in the previous chapters can link together to create a new, coherent picture of moral change. This lends support to the person-centric model of moral change I will explain below. By exploring different aspects of human moral life to criticize the perspectives that shape contemporary studies of moral change and moral progress, we develop new pictures of moral change through which we see those moral issues that were previously obscured, and continue our moral reflection on them.[46]

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[46] The critiques in chapter 1 and 2 reflect the "person-centric" model. In chapter 1, many people live by values not usually recognized by the liberal world. Therefore, the dual character conception of moral change highlights the human struggles when we focus only on developing some partial sets of values. In chapter 2, it is in the light of people's efforts to live a moral life that we see second-order moral reasoning and its impact on moral view change.

Based on the person-centric model, we can also see that while people desire to be moral, their lack of reflection on the limitations of their values obstructs them from seeing the aspects they neglect in pursuing their moral life. When this occurs to those who advance new moral ideas in society, this creates the picture I mentioned at the end of chapter 1—that is, a group of people lead those change

II. From a knowledge- to person-centric model of moral change

What does it mean for current studies of moral change to be knowledge-centric? The main idea of this model is that scholars usually focus on establishing more claims of moral change and moral progress, and much less attention is paid to the limitations of the perspectives they adopt in generating the claims. In the chapter on second-order moral reasoning, I argued that moral philosophers see moral change as a subtype of social phenomena and apply the explanatory models in philosophy of social science to explain them. An important feature of this method is that moral knowledge—i.e., moral claims that are taken to be valid—is grounded in the historical and sociological evidence moral philosophers gather. Thus, the knowledge-centric model stands for the method of developing normative claims from an empirically grounded understanding of human society.

This method is proposed to challenge the method of logic-based, abstract moral theorizing, which aims at establishing universal and totalizing moral prescriptions that govern all cultures and societies (see e.g., Christensen & Eriksen 2020; Klenk 2019; Hämäläinen 2016). Examples include utilitarianism and the moral framework of rights and obligations. For utilitarianism, an act is moral if it maximizes our utility (see e.g., Mill 1966). Rights and obligations, in a similar vein, organize moral debates around people's entitlements and duties. In Judith Jarvis Thomson's famous paper "A Defense of Abortion," she attacks the opposition to abortion by arguing for the right of mothers to decide what actions to take to protect themselves when

processes that many people take to be progressive, but as a matter of fact, what they do contributes to the process in which alternative moral values are neglected and sacrificed. Thus, the "dual character conception of moral change" is not just about how things have been in the past, but it also shapes present reality, making the neglect and sacrifice a real part of ongoing moral experiences.

their life is threatened by their pregnancy. The question of what rights mothers are entitled to constitutes the core of the debate.

Departing from abstract moral theorizing and universal moral claims, the historical turn in moral philosophy in recent years has mirrored the descriptive and empirical approach of moral studies in other disciplines: Rather than studying morality "independent of an understanding of the actual social and ordinary life contexts of human beings," philosophers turn to a "ground-up" approach and gather "first-hand" moral experiences from anthropology, history, sociology and other studies of human society in order to examine moral life and encourage reflective moral analysis (Christensen & Eriksen 2020, p. 81). This approach provides philosophers with more solid and genuine knowledge of moral life by offering "an understanding of moral relationships and the social, cultural, and historical aspects of ordinary life," which in turn allows their theories to actually impact our moral practices (ibid., p. 82).

But this new approach is not so different from abstract moral reasoning as many philosophers assume. Abstract moral theorizing seeks to formulate a universal moral law that would apply to particular cases in everyday moral life. Descriptive ethical projects challenge the sufficiency of pure reasoning, and instead develop normative theories from empirical evidence. But both methods focus on following established research lines to generate more moral claims, rather than constantly challenging the perspectives that shape their studies. In other words, similar to what Kuhn (1996) argues for, despite the different sources of moral theorizing—i.e., *a priori* moral principles or particular moral experiences— research following the two methods appear to be paradigm-based: They improve the procedures for deciding the utility of an action, or they refer to new types of historical resources

for developing alternative explanations of the abolition of slavery. What receives less attention are the limitations of the perspectives that guide their research.[47]

This gives rise to the limitation of the study of moral change. That is, researchers objectify the phenomena of moral change to develop causal explanations, with the hope of using the knowledge they generate to shape future moral trajectory (see e.g., Hopster 2022). However, when less attention is paid to the limitation of the perspectives they adopt, even though they draw on much historical evidence to support their accounts, the gathering and interpretation of evidence is inevitably limited by their perspectives: What they take to be morally important usually shapes the moral claims they make, and this biases their discovery and presentation of evidence.

The current research method of moral change is even more problematic when we recognize the ambitious goal of philosophers. Some of them seek to tie our future to a morality and society they derive from the empirical knowledge of past moral changes. Others may not try to produce such an effect, but because of human responsiveness to the social theories that relate to our life and wellbeing, the moral claims philosophers make also affect how we think about ourselves and society.[48] Researchers' perspectives, then, limit the possible forms of life and society we can

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[47] This view is influenced by the thought that our views are always enabled and constrained by our standpoints. This is usually seen in critical race/gender theories (see e.g., Hardin 2009; Wylie 2013), and I apply the same logic to the study of moral change. That is, the study is inevitably shaped by certain standpoints, and each standpoint is inevitably limited. Thus, we should constantly contest any standpoint, and the "person-centric" model provides a direction for doing that.

[48] For a detailed discussion of how theorizing can change social practices, see Charles Taylor's paper "Social theory as practice" (1985).

envision. Thus, rather than just encouraging more research along the same lines, we ought to diversify the ways we develop moral inquiries, challenge the perspectives that limit the selection and presentation of historical evidence, and contest continuously the moral claims we make.

In response, I propose the person-centric model to be a new research paradigm for moral change, which stresses that the study of moral change should aim towards recognizing the complexity of moral values, and particularly the dilemmas and predicaments posed by the conflict of values underlying our everyday moral life. Our research can then make many previously neglected moral experiences seen and heard by more people. By developing from them new perspectives to continue our moral inquiry or challenge the currently endorsed ones, we are able to revisit continuously what is morally important, what should be respected, and what should be tackled.

Following this trajectory, in the remainder of the chapter, I will use three examples to show how adopting the person-centric model can challenge the perspectives that dominate current studies of moral change. The first regards how theorizing moral change around human cognition can give rise to new pictures of moral change that change our ways of attributing moral responsibility and building solidarity. The second is based on Joel Robbins' study of the moral transition of Urapmin people of Papua New Guinea, which highlights individual experiences of moral and value conflicts. The last concerns the social change model of modern resistance politics. On this model, we are expected to side firmly with a particular group, but this fails to match the fluid identities we experience in the contemporary world.

2.1 Theorizing moral change from human cognition[49]

As a crucial aspect of human moral life, moral cognition provides new perspectives for studying the social history of moral change. In existing literature, moral changes are usually categorized as following bottom-up or top-down processes. Bottom-up change processes are driven by the "pressure from collective groups," while top-down changes are those achieved "through established legal/constitutional processes" (Zheng 2022, p. 3). As the distinction implies, people who have or lack control over social and legal institutions usually group with those occupying similar positions within a power structure to initiate a moral change.

The dynamics of moral change, however, is not simply about what powerful or powerless people do. Rather, people with similar social positions might actually be driven by different cognitive processes to engage in a moral change. Therefore, it is too simplistic to characterize moral change simply based on power differentials. In the example of human rights movements in chapter 1, the efforts of many human rights advocates to achieve material sufficiency bolsters the neoliberal economic structure that keeps the concern of material equality at the margins. This, as a result, contributes to increasing inequality. Human rights advocates, however, are not simply powerful or powerless—some of them work for governments or international organizations, but others might be activists representing socially disadvantaged groups, or they may come from local regions that are usually

[49] In moral psychology, researchers appeal to reasoning or emotions to establish the psychological mechanism of people's moral view change (see e.g., Kleiman-Weiner et al. 2017; May & Kumar 2018). My focus here is not to challenge the accounts of moral change in moral psychology, but to continue what I pursued in the earlier parts of this project—i.e., applying moral psychology to improve the studies of the social history of morality.

marginalized in global policymaking. Despite their different social positions, many of them search actively for what is good and right for people and society.

Given the substantial costs and the sacrifice of personal life they sometimes have to bear, we cannot just place them with those who wilfully ignore the importance of material equality in order to preserve their political interests and social privilege. But the good will of those advocates does not always enable them to see the limitations of their values. The importance of material sufficiency is largely informed by the individualist thinking that puts individual needs above collective welfare (Moyn 2018). What many human rights advocates neglect is that their individualist thinking reinforces the individualist social trend, which in turn upholds the neoliberalist doctrine that encourages the growth of individual wealth, rather than distributive justice. In the end, they inevitably contribute to increasing inequality just as many selfish policymakers do.

This gives rise to different ways of attributing moral responsibility to different parties of human rights movements. Based on the forward-looking approach, we should hold good-willed human rights advocates and selfish policymakers responsible for the enlarging inequality equally. For regardless of the cognitive processes behind, they all contribute to the widening income gap that harms people. Attributing responsibility equally is to motivate their change of actions to alleviate inequality (see e.g., Talbert 2023). But when responsibility attribution is towards developing appropriate reactive attitudes, the difference of the cognitive processes of good-willed human rights advocates and selfish policymakers requires us not to blame them in the same way. In Strawson's account, people who harm us "accidentally" and those who harm us out of a "contemptuous disregard" of our existence deserve different reactions (2008, p. 6). Similarly, good-willed human

rights advocates try to make some positive differences to society by actively promoting people's material sufficiency, but self-serving policymakers simply permit the worsening of inequality. Reacting to them differently, in this respect, is to do justice to those who make efforts to improve others' life despite their cognitive limitations.[50]

The neglect of cognitive processes also narrows the ground for solidarity. In the context of power relations, solidarity is confined to the "collective ability of otherwise powerless people to organize themselves for transformative social change" (Zheng 2023, p. 893). This idea of solidarity, however, presupposes and perpetuates the opposition between the powerless and the powerful. But when we take into account people's cognitive processes behind their moral views, many powerful and powerless people are not always each other's enemy, which means that they can actually work together to tackle issues like human rights. This aspect is now obscured in the "bottom-up"/"top-down" classifications of patterns of moral change.

The above is one example of how we can theorize moral change from new perspectives. But moral cognition is not confined to "good will" or "self-serving" thinking. At the end of the chapter on second-order moral reasoning, I argued that we should not limit people's moral thinking to a particular mode but stay open to

[50] Apart from the cognitive processes of human rights advocates, a further aspect to consider is the cognitive processes of those who react. For instance, the bad will of some people may lead them to ignore the intentions of different groups of human rights advocates. Therefore, they still fail to develop appropriate reactive attitudes, and they fail to do justice to many good-willed advocates. This aspect deserves much more detailed analysis, which I will leave to future research. My point here is that we should move away from a consequentialist approach of assigning moral responsibility, and start seeing the importance of cognitive processes in distinguishing different groups of people and assigning moral responsibility properly.

the ways of thinking shaped by their unique ways of living. Following this point, my view is that we should give more attention to people's second-order moral reasoning, and explore from this diverse forms of moral thinking. Then we can develop from them new pictures of moral change to constantly update our understandings of the roles and interactions of different parties in a moral change.

2.2 Agential experiences of moral and value conflicts

Studying moral change from the perspective of people's moral concerns also allows us to see the insufficiency of limiting the analysis of moral and value conflicts to the group level. As a phenomenon associated with moral change, moral and value conflicts arise when new sorts of moral ideas are brought into a society that endorses different kinds of moralities. People usually study the conflicts at the group level,[51] but Joel Robbins' study highlights individuals' struggles in navigating those moral conflicts.

The moral transition the Urapmin people of Papua New Guinea experienced began with the arrival of Christianity (Robbins 2002/2004/2022). In Christian morality, being a moral person requires everyone to work on themselves, focus on their own sins, and dutifully obey Christian doctrine. In contrast, the relational moral system Urapmin people followed in previous ages requires them to cultivate, manage, and

[51] For instance, in Jonathan Haidt's work *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion*, he adopts a psychological approach to explain the intransigent political battles among the conservative and the liberal in the US (2012). Also, in accounts of Gutmann and Thompson (1990) and Nagel (1987), value conflicts—like those faced by different religions—are usually framed around groups.

maintain relations with others; their goodness is measured specifically in terms of the social relations they build with others (Robbins 2004, p. 80).[52]

The incomplete transition from a relational to individualist moral system gave rise to a dilemma important for understanding the moral experiences of Urapmin people. Stuck in a moral conflict caused by the rivalry of relationalism and individualism, Urapmin people felt the difficulty and pain induced by the need to find their moral faith and be socially accepted at the same time. Because of the residual relational moral system in Urapmin society, people who faithfully adhered to the individualist moral values of Christianity were seen as moral failures for being overly self-focused and ignoring social relations. Conversely, for those who endorsed the Christian worldview, and for areas where Christian moral system was already in place, people's insistence on the relational morality was seen as a moral failure for failing to respect others' privacy and always wanting others to build relations with them (ibid., p. 82).

Against this background, for those Urapmins born into this transitional period, the difficulty is more than making up their minds about which moral system to adopt. Rather, they have to find a stance, and "they did so at the cost of failing to experience much in the way of moral comfort as they went about their daily lives" (Robbins 2004, p. 82). The example of the Urapmin people therefore highlights a distinctive human concern that may not be shared by those who live under one

[52] The distinctiveness of this relational moral system also lies in its contrast with the inwardness moral trend of western society. Inwardness requires people to use reason to objectify and criticize themselves in order to be moral (Taylor 1989). It is in contrast to this moral framework and Christian individualism that Robbins stresses the relational moral system of Urapmin people.

particularly dominant moral system. This concern points to the neglect within many moral change studies of value conflict as part of individuals' agential experience of the process of moral change. This conflict nevertheless matters to how we understand people's moral experiences properly. Instead of just showing compassion for their struggles, we should also see how our neglect of their experiences partly contributes to the conflict and the resultant pain they have to deal with.[53] Recognizing people's struggles and their life conditions induced by the transition, we can develop proper social services to help them navigate the situation.

2.3 Modern resistance politics

The last example is the limitation of the social change model of modern resistance politics, which requires us to side firmly with a particular group. As one salient feature of contemporary society, our identity is not like the group identity experienced by societies that are highly homogenous, closed, and hierarchical. For instance, premodern ternary societies divided people strictly into clergy, the nobility, and commoners ("the third estate") (see e.g., Piketty 2020, p. 51). As each

[53] This claim draws from a point Srinivasan makes in "The Politics of Compassion" (2022). In response to Nussbaum's (2013) claim that cultivating people's compassion for others' suffering is crucial to building a liberal, just, and equal society, Srinivasan points out that people—such as the privileged citizens of a country like the US—should also feel the guilt of sustaining complicitly a social system that engenders others' sufferings and social injustice. Similarly, we tend to see what is going on in other societies as their own issue, which may be tragic, but irrelevant to what we—as the outsiders of a society—do. But when we aspire to deepen the humane goal, as the "person-centric model" of moral change intends, it is not enough to see others' pain, but the impact our neglect has on it. Highlighting it in the study of moral change is one means of remedying it.

individual is tied tightly to the social group of their birth, their identity is fixed for the rest of their life in most cases. By contrast, our identities are prone to change in contemporary society; the lenses we use to identify ourselves and our relations with others are diverse, and we have the freedom to change them, which shifts the boundary between "we" and "they."

The fluidity of our identities gives rise to a salient feature of modern life—that is, we map different sorts of moral influence into our moral outlook and decide in particular contexts which part of our morality should be primed, which group of people we want to bond with, and for what reasons we bond with them. In the example of Muslim women, it is oversimplified that I stand with them in our resistance to patriarchy just for being a woman. Rather, what I see is that, despite our religious differences, many Muslim women do not just empower themselves by adapting to liberal values, but also hold firmly onto their moral and religious convictions to gain their freedom and strength. This part resonates particularly with me, who tries not to be drawn into either western liberalism or Chinese socialism, but to find my own ground to make sense of what society needs and how we should achieve it. I, then, bond with Muslim women at a deeper and less straightforward level.

This points to the mismatch between our contemporary moral experiences and the model of social change advocated by modern resistance politics. Going back to 18th and 19th century thinkers like Hegel and Marx, the historical model for political and societal transformations usually posits two forces that are antithetical to each other, such as proletariat and bourgeoisie, or the enslaved and their masters. The revolution for human freedom, for instance, consists first and foremost in removing all sorts of social constraints one force exerts upon the other. But this model is

apparently too simplistic to fit with our contemporary experiences. Resistance politics requires a relatively stable self-understanding and self-identification, such as the resistance of environmentalists to corporations and governments that sacrifice the environment for economic interests. What the fluidity of our identities implies, however, is that we can both connect and disconnect with people and deeds at a deeper and less straightforward level, which renders a stable self-understanding and self-identification much harder to attain.

This discrepancy challenges the validity of the dualistic model of modern resistance politics. Just as the influx of moral influences obscures the boundary between "we" and "they," the same porous boundary applies to moral change: Rarely is anybody in absolute opposition to others, and rarely does an opposition obtain on all grounds. As the change model of resistance politics categorizes us into two oppositional forces to strive for some political goals, such as environmental protection and the halting of environment-unfriendly business practices, it ignores the more complex forms of connection we can build up with others. Thus, modern resistance politics is in fact more limiting than liberating: In expecting us to give up part of our identity, it diminishes the perspectives we can adopt to see what is morally important to us and what our desired way of living is. If resistance politics means that we defend and strive for what we deserve, the current model apparently contradicts this goal and needs be updated to be compatible with our moral experiences in contemporary society.[54]

[54] This might entail the concern that everyone will simply be changing, and no solid group basis will ever be possible. But seeing one's diverse identities and sticking to one of them firmly is different from not having the freedom to change how one wants to side with others. Thus, my key point is that we should see that people are not fully bound by any particular identity. Since change is always

Altogether, these are some examples of how we can bring currently neglected human moral experiences into the study of moral change. Different forms of human moral thinking provides new angles for theorizing moral change. Urapmin people's experience reveals the value conflict individuals go through in navigating moral transitions. The changing nature of our identities in contemporary society, then, highlights the limitation of the social change model of modern resistance politics. Hence, by shifting from the knowledge-centric model to the person-centric one, this is not to refute the use of empirical knowledge to develop normative claims on moral change and moral progress, but to include the complex dynamics of people's moral life within moral change research and challenge the perspectives we now adopt to further moral inquiry. Encouraging a continuous search and understanding of human moral concerns reflected in all sorts of moral experiences, the person-centric model aims to expose the real challenges we face in achieving human flourishing, and shape our thinking about the future of humanity.

possible, it is problematic that the dualistic model of modern resistance politics expects us to focus on some limited kinds of identities and advance the moral and political goals formulated by, for instance, some politicians and scholars.

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