

Yuichi Tei/Ung-il Chung, M.D., Ph.D.

Department of Bioengineering, Graduate Schools of Engineering and Medicine, The University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan; School of Health Innovation, Kanagawa University of Human Services, Kanagawa, Japan

BOOK REVIEW

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Abstract:

Book review of: “The Righteous Mind-Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion”
Written by Jonathan Haidt (2012). New York: Pantheon Books. eISBN: 978-0-307-90703-5.

Consideration for globalization and diversity is becoming common among all organizations that face international competition. For such organizations, including companies and universities, the top priority in management is to enhance their values sustainably; if they are too particular about nationality, ethnicity, religion, or gender of their members, they will immediately lose international competitions. In order to increase productivity and achieve results, they need to be tolerant of these attributes and to focus solely on the appropriate abilities of members. Globalization and diversity require us to cross borders. Crossing borders, in turn, put our morality to the test by exposing us to a different set of moral rules. Therefore, in order to achieve sustainable business in the globalizing and diversifying world, it is quintessential to reconcile morality and diversity, which often conflict with each other. We need to know human morality well for sustainable business.

In this book, the author tries to elucidate the origin and mechanism of human morality. The book is composed of three parts.

In Part I, first he discusses the origin of morality. After mentioning the two most common answers (the nativist answer and the empiricist answer), he especially focuses on the rationalist answer that morality is self-constructed by children on the basis of their experiences with harm. He rejects this idea based on his observations that the moral domain varies from culture to culture, that while the moral domain tends to be narrower in Western, educated, and individualistic cultures, society-centered cultures tend to have a broader moral domain that covers more aspects of life, and that people sometimes have intuitions that can drive their reasoning; therefore, cultural learning or guidance must play a larger role than rationalist theories had given it. He concludes: “If morality doesn’t come primarily from reasoning, then that leaves some combination of innateness and social learning as the most likely candidates.” Although he sounds as if he had found something original and novel, I would like to point out this tendency can be obviously seen in human language (Crystal, 1997; Hauser, 1997), and he could mention a possible close relationship of human morality and human language because the comparison will substantially help improve his theorization.

Second, he discusses the relationship between reasoning and moral intuitions (including moral emotions). He mentions 3 representative ideas: Plato’s belief that reason can and should be the master, Jefferson’s belief that the two processes are equal partners (head and heart) ruling a divided empire, and Hume’s belief that reason is the servant of the passions. He concludes that Hume is right, that the mind is divided into 2 parts, like a rider (reason, controlled processes) on an elephant (intuition/emotion, automatic processes), that people have strong intuitions about what is right and wrong, and they struggle to construct post hoc justifications for those feelings. Thus, he draws the first principle of moral psychology as follows: “Intuitions come first, strategic reasoning second.” Hume’s belief seems most convincing based on reality among the three. However, all three beliefs are based on the assumption of the dichotomous structure of mind (reason vs. intuition/emotion). This dichotomous assumption has never been tested. Is it really appropriate to dichotomize this way? What is reason anyway? The definition is vague. If we observe carefully, as long as we use human language, we in a sense follow some social/cultural framework (Chung, Mitsuyoshi, 2017). Since we reason using language, the reason is also restricted by language that follows a framework set by a certain society/culture. The reason, therefore, should have automatic processes as well as controlled processes, both of which are likely to be influenced, at least partly, by language. Therefore, automatic and controlled processes have, at least partly, the similar origin and mechanism of action; therefore, we do not have to and cannot effectively dichotomize. In a similar line, in traditional Western philosophy, free and rational individ-

uals are presupposed (MacIntyre, 1984; Russel, 1994; Kenny, 2012). However, as long as we speak human language, we are never free from restrictions of society/culture, and the term is self-contradictory.

Third, he reviews 6 areas of experimental research supporting his principle: brains evaluate instantly and constantly, that social and political judgments depend heavily on quick, intuitive flashes, that our bodily states sometimes influence our moral judgments; bad smells and tastes can make people more judgmental, that psychopaths reason but don't feel (and are severely deficient morally), that babies feel but don't reason (and have the beginnings of morality), and that affective reactions are in the right place at the right time in the brain. I have a comment on his third argument. Bad smells and tastes differ from culture to culture, at least partly; examples to the point are fermented foods including Swedish fermented herring, French cheese, and Japanese fermented soybeans. In the last example, Japanese people in eastern Japan like it in general, while Japanese in western Japan do not. However, if kids born to parents from the western part migrate to eastern Japan and grow up eating it in a daily life, most of them come to like it. Thus, the third argument does not necessarily endorse his principle. I strongly disagree with his fourth argument, which I think is oversimplification based on a wrong assumption. Affectively, psychopaths lack appropriate emotional responses, and any emotional responses are limited and short-lived (Patrick, 2006). Some psychopaths become emotional when they talk about their family, showing that they also feel, but the subject of their morality is severely distorted and restricted (Shunji Mitsuyoshi, unpublished data). In traditional moral philosophy, we are taught to judge how moral people are by looking at what people do (MacIntyre, 1998). If we, however, observe carefully, we treat fellow human beings roughly equally well or 'humanely'. On the other hand, we treat non-fellow human beings indifferently or sometimes cruelly, as if they were not human beings. These findings show the level of morality depends not on what people do, but on who they think their fellow human beings are (Chung, Mitsuyoshi, 2017). Morality levels are determined not by the content of deed, but by moral coverage (coverage of fellow). The more diverse the coverage of fellow, the higher the morality level.

Fourth, the author reviews 5 areas of research showing that moral thinking is more like a politician searching for votes than a scientist searching for truth: that we are obsessively concerned about what others think of us, although much of the concern is unconscious, that conscious reasoning functions like a press secretary who automatically justifies any position taken by the president, that with the help of our press secretary, we are able to lie and cheat, and then cover it up so effectively that we convince even ourselves, that reasoning can take us to almost any conclusion we want to reach, and that in moral and political matters, we are often groupish rather than selfish. He concludes that the worship of reason, which is sometimes found in philosophical and scientific circles, is a delusion. He urges instead a more intuitionist approach to morality and moral education, one that is more humble about the abilities of individuals, and more attuned to the contexts and social systems that enable people to think and act well. On these points, I generally agree with him. However, it all started by dichotomizing our mind into reason and intuition, which turns out to be unnecessary. If we abandon this dichotomization, his conclusion is self-evident. The key here is to take into consideration the significant role of human language as one representative example of capacity unique to human beings. If we think about human language and its effect on reason, we can obviate unnecessary detour. The author does not have to presuppose two agents to explain our morality; it can be explained by one agent, our unified mind. To avoid this confusion, we should not use the word 'reason' without clear definition and criticism.

In Part II, he first claims that the second principle of moral psychology is: "There's more to morality than harm and fairness." He raises arguments supporting this claim: that people who grow up in Western, educated, industrial, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) societies are statistical outliers on many psychological measures, including measures of moral psychology, that the WEIRDer you are, the more you perceive a world full of separate objects, rather than Relationships, that moral pluralism is true *descriptively*; as a simple matter of anthropological fact, the moral domain varies across cultures, that the moral domain is unusually narrow in WEIRD cultures, where it is largely limited to the ethic of autonomy; it is broader—including the ethics of community and divinity—in most other societies, and within religious and conservative moral matrices within WEIRD societies, that Moral matrices bind people together and blind them to the coherence, or even existence, of other matrices. I agree that the moral domain varies across cultures; however, pointing out just variation does not suffice. The moral domain can be divided into two distinct domains: one common to all societies and one specific to each society (Chung, Mitsuyoshi, 2017). The first one tells us not to harm other fellow human beings; the second tells us to think and behave in a manner similar to other fellow human beings. Finding both commonality and specificity is quintessential for modelling human morality. Pointing out just difference and variation does not help complete.

Second, he explains what more there is to morality: that morality is like taste in many ways—an analogy made long ago by Hume and Mencius, that Deontology and utilitarianism are "one-receptor" moralities that are

likely to appeal most strongly to people who are high on systemizing and low on empathizing, that Hume's pluralist, sentimentalist, and naturalist approach to ethics is more promising than utilitarianism or deontology for modern moral psychology; that 5 good candidates for being taste receptors of the righteous mind are care, fairness, loyalty, authority, and sanctity. I must say that his comparison of morality to taste is a bit far-fetched. Morality is like tastes in many ways, but also unlike tastes in so many ways. Although harm and fairness is insufficient to explain the whole picture of human morality, their central role is evident. I strongly disagree with him to increase the number of receptors to help explain minor details, which will ruin the efforts to clarify the essence of human morality by coarse-graining. In the process of coarse-graining, we inevitably lose some resolutions but instead become able to grasp the core. We should not lose the priority ranking.

Third, the author proposes that moral foundations are innate. He claims that particular rules and virtues vary across cultures, so people will get fooled if people look for universality in the finished books, that people will not find a single paragraph that exists in identical form in every human culture, but that if people look for links between evolutionary theory and anthropological observations, people can take some educated guesses about what was in the universal first draft of human nature. Five such guesses are: 1. the Care/harm foundation evolved in response to the adaptive challenge of caring for vulnerable children, 2. the Fairness/cheating foundation evolved in response to the adaptive challenge of reaping the rewards of cooperation without getting exploited, the 3. Loyalty/betrayal foundation evolved in response to the adaptive challenge of forming and maintaining coalitions, 4. the Authority/subversion foundation evolved in response to the adaptive challenge of forging relationships that will benefit us within social hierarchies, 5. the Sanctity/degradation foundation evolved initially in response to the adaptive challenge of the omnivore's dilemma, and then to the broader challenge of living in a world of pathogens and parasites. He shows how the two ends of the political spectrum rely upon each foundation in different ways, or to different degrees. I strongly disagree with him to his claim that there is no universality in human morality. His failure to find universality stems from his classification of 5 components of human morality. These five aspects are not MECE, and can be explained by fewer principles in a more comprehensive, exhaustive way. As I already pointed out, if we observe carefully, we can find moral rules common to different culture and societies that can be condensed to: "Do not harm other fellow human beings." On the other hand, we have rules specific to different cultures and societies that can be condensed to: "Think and behave in a manner similar to other fellow human beings." The author just enumerates different rules, mixes them up and fails to differentiate commonality and specificity. These two common and specific sets of rules can be integrated and further condensed to a basic principle of human morality: "Be fellowish." (Chung, Mitsuyoshi, 2017). The key to successful classification is to categorize human beings into fellows and non-fellows, rather than a single group of whole biological human beings. Without doing so, it is not possible to find and differentiate universality and commonality.

Fourth, using his taste theory, the author tries to explain why the Democratic Party has had so much difficulty connecting with voters since 1980. He claims that Republicans understand the social intuitionist model better than do Democrats, that Republicans speak more directly to the intuitions/emotions, that Republicans also have a better grasp of Moral Foundations Theory; they trigger every single taste receptor, and that his theory, with some revisions, better explains some voting behaviors that were not easy to explain before. Again, I would like to say there is a much simpler way to do the same job, as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

In Part III, the author introduces that Darwin believed that morality was an adaptation that evolved by natural selection operating at the individual level *and* at the group level. This idea was once denied, but in recent years, new scholarship has emerged that elevates the role of groups in evolutionary thinking. He organized such scholarship into four "exhibits" that collectively lead to a defence of group selection: *Exhibit A: Major transitions produce superorganisms*; the history of life on Earth shows repeated examples of "major transitions", *Exhibit B: Shared intentionality generates moral matrices*; the Rubicon crossing that let our ancestors function so well in their groups was the emergence of the uniquely human ability to share intentions and other mental representations, *Exhibit C: Genes and cultures coevolve*; once our ancestors crossed the Rubicon and began to share intentions, our evolution became a two-stranded affair, *Exhibit D: Evolution can be fast*; human evolution did not stop or slow down 50,000 years ago, but rather it sped up. He claims that although most of human nature was shaped by natural selection operating at the level of the individual, we have a few group-related adaptations too, that we humans have a dual nature—we are 90 percent chimp and 10 percent bee. In general, I agree with him. As for his comparison of human beings to bees, I find the analogy inappropriate. Workers of beehive are genetically related to each other closer than human sisters are. Therefore, it is more appropriate to compare workers to cells in our body, and hive to our body, than to compare workers to individuals and hive to our society (Chung, Mitsuyoshi, 2017). Therefore, cooperation and division of labour among bee workers are quite natural as those of our cells in our body. On the other hand, in typical human society/culture, especially in gigantic groups unique to human beings like religions, ethnoses and cultures, members are not genetically related. It is inappropriate and too naïve to directly com-

pare human society and bee hive without mentioning this huge difference in genetic backgrounds. This inappropriate comparison was made partly because the author did not differentiate different levels of the coverage of fellows by taking genetic background into consideration. I would like to repeat that morality levels are determined not by the content of deed, but by moral coverage (coverage of fellow); the more diverse the coverage of fellow, the higher the morality level. We need to differentiate different levels of morality and treat each level appropriately.

Then, the author presents the hive hypothesis, which states that human beings are conditional hive creatures. He claims that people have the ability (under special circumstances) to transcend self-interest and lose themselves (temporarily and ecstatically) in something larger than ourselves. He called this ability the hive switch. He mentions that the hive switch is another way of stating Durkheim's idea that we are *Homo duplex*; people live most of their lives in the ordinary (profane) world, but people achieve their greatest joys in those brief moments of transit to the sacred world, in which they become "simply a part of a whole." He describes 3 common ways in which people flip the hive switch: awe in nature, Durkheimian drugs, and raves. He also describes recent findings about oxytocin and mirror neurons that suggest that they are the stuff of which the hive switch is made and that Oxytocin bonds people to their groups, not to all of humanity. I generally agree with him to his descriptions, but again, there is a much simpler and more coherent way to explain the whole picture by focusing on the contrast between commonality and specificity and the distinction between fellows and non-fellows. I would like to point out again that he better mention the importance of human language (Crystal, 1997; Hauser, 1997). His theory of the dual nature of human morality could be more effectively strengthened by taking into consideration the characteristic of human language, not just oxytocin and mirror neurons.

The author interprets that religious practices have been binding our ancestors into groups for tens of thousands of years; that binding usually involves some blinding—once any person, book, or principle is declared sacred, then devotees can no longer question it or think clearly about it, that only groups that can elicit commitment and suppress free riding can grow; this is why human civilization grew so rapidly after the first plants and animals were domesticated, that religions and righteous minds had been coevolving, culturally and genetically, for tens of thousands of years before the Holocene era, that both kinds of evolution sped up when agriculture presented new challenges and opportunities, and that humans have an extraordinary ability to care about things beyond ourselves, to circle around those things with other people, and in the process to bind ourselves into teams that can pursue larger projects. He claims that with a few adjustments, it is what politics is about too. Generally, I agree with him to his descriptions. But again and again, his explanation could use the consideration of human language for improvement.

Lastly, the author tries to interpret the whole landscape of American politics using his theory. He claims that people whose genes gave them brains that get a special pleasure from novelty, variety, and diversity, while simultaneously being less sensitive to signs of threat, are predisposed (but not predestined) to become liberals; they tend to develop certain "characteristic adaptations" and "life narratives" that make them resonate—unconsciously and intuitively—with the grand narratives told by political movements on the left (such as the liberal progress narrative), that people whose genes give them brains with the opposite settings are predisposed, for the same reasons, to resonate with the grand narratives of the right (such as the Reagan narrative) and that once people join a political team, they get ensnared in its moral matrix; they see confirmation of their grand narrative everywhere, and it is difficult to convince them that they are wrong if you argue with them from outside of their matrix. He suggests that liberals and conservatives are like yin and yang—both are "necessary elements of a healthy state of political life," as John Stuart Mill put it. He says that Liberals are experts in care; they are better able to see the victims of existing social arrangements, and they continually push us to update those arrangements and invent new ones and that libertarians (who sacralize liberty) and social conservatives (who sacralize certain institutions and traditions) provide a crucial counterweight to the liberal reform movements that have been so influential in America and Europe since the early twentieth century. He defines moral capital as the resources that sustain a moral community; specifically, he says: "moral capital refers to the degree to which a community possesses interlocking sets of values, virtues, norms, practices, identities, institutions, and technologies that mesh well with evolved psychological mechanisms and thereby enable the community to suppress or regulate selfishness and make cooperation possible." I am afraid that there is nothing new and original in this analysis and I am disappointed with his remarks condoning status quo, although current American political system fails to address many problems and need some serious reform. Is it not a time for quitting two-big-party system? Is not there any suggestion for another better choice?

In conclusion, he recaps the content of the book and closes by citing Rodney King: "We're all stuck here for a while, so let's try to work it out." I would like to ask: "Who is 'we' anyway? Does it contain how many and how diverse people?" This is the key question. Using "we" without criticism, it ends up providing just a pep talk.

Overall, his descriptions are detailed and instructive, deserving respect, but theorization needs substantial reform. Theorization should start from and aim at simpler and fewer principles that cover the whole coarse-grained picture. In his extracting the essence of human morality, the role of language is belittled and should be given more value and incorporated. Identification of such essence will help us find the way to reconcile it with diversity and to enable sustainable business in a globalizing and diversifying world.

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About the Author

Yuichi Tei/Ung-il Chung, M.D., Ph.D.

Professor, Department of Bioengineering, Graduate Schools of Engineering and Medicine, The University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
 Dean, School of Health Innovation, Kanagawa University of Human Services, Kanagawa, Japan



Dr. Chung graduated from University of Tokyo School of Medicine to obtain MD in 1989. After working as Resident and Clinical Fellow in Internal Medicine at University of Tokyo Hospital, he entered and graduated from University of Tokyo Graduate School of Medicine to obtain PhD in 1997. In 1998, he was appointed Instructor in Medicine, Harvard Medical School, and then Assistant Professor of Medicine in 2001. In 2002, he came back to his alma mater to work at Graduate Schools of Medicine and Engineering. In 2007, he became Professor, Graduate School of Engineering; in 2013, Deputy Director and Research Leader, Center of Innovation “Self-managing Healthy Society”; and in 2019, Dean and Professor, School of Health Innovation, Kanagawa University of Human Services.

He specializes in skeletal biology/regenerative medicine and biomaterial science. In Center of Innovation, he promotes industry-academia cooperation projects to measure and visualize health status of each individual for health personalization and behavior change. In Kanagawa University of Human Services, he attempts to systematize and academicize ME-BYO concept for social implementation. He also studies the role of morality in Innovation management.