



# What's Wrong With Morality?: A Social-Psychological Perspective

*C. Daniel Batson*

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Most works on moral psychology direct our attention to the positive role morality plays for us as individuals, as a society, even as a species. In *What's Wrong with Morality?*, C. Daniel Batson takes a different approach: he looks at morality as a problem. The problem is not that it is wrong to be moral, but that our morality often fails to produce these intended results. Why? Some experts believe the answer lies in lack of character. Others say we are victims of poor judgment. If we could but discern what is morally right, whether through logical analysis and discourse, through tuned intuition and a keen moral sense, or through feeling and sentiment, we would act accordingly. Implicit in these different views is the assumption that if we grow up properly, if we can think and feel as we should, and if we can keep a firm hand on the tiller through the storms of circumstance, all will be well. We can realize our moral potential.

Many of our best writers of fiction are less optimistic. Astute observers of the human condition like Austen, Balzac, Dickens, Dostoyevsky, Eliot, Tolstoy, and Twain suggest our moral psychology is more complex. These writers encourage us to look more closely at our motives, emotions, and values, at what we really care about in the moral domain. In this volume, Batson examines this issue from a social-psychological perspective. Drawing on research suggesting our moral life is fertile ground for rationalization and deception, including self-deception, Batson offers a hard-nosed analysis of morality and its limitations in this expertly written book.

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