

Abstract (in English)

This dissertation explores the notions of guilt and wrongdoing in the context of contemporary analytic ethics. It draws upon the critique, advanced in the second half of the 20th century, of a one-sided interest in episodic action and its rightness or wrongness. Thanks to the revival of virtue ethics during this time, the subject matter of ethics was extended to take account of human character and human life as such. As a result, the domain of moral psychology and of contingent aspects of moral experience started to be explored again. This development in ethics is outlined in the first chapter and the second chapter addresses the impact of this changed understanding of ethics upon our conception of moral judgment and responsibility. I suggest that the concept of responsibility divides in two: responsibility for the agent's (inner) fault and responsibility for the wrongdoing itself. Whereas the remainder of chapter two deals with the former, the rest of the thesis focuses upon the latter i.e. upon responsibility for the wrongdoing and upon two problems which are generated by the intricate bearing of luck and contingency on the concept of responsibility.

The first of these problems concerns the relation of the person to her guilt. Guilt arises through a condemnable action for which the person can be held responsible, i.e. when a judgment about the action can be transferred onto the agent. This transfer is possible only in cases of voluntary action the conditions of which are explored in the third chapter. Yet apart from her inner fault (bound up with her volition), the agent is blamed also for the deed as such. In the fourth chapter, I turn to the question of the relationship between these two aspects of guilt. Whereas the episodic conception of action did not manage to bridge the inner and outer aspects of guilt, the extended conception of ethics gives us the means to do so through a consideration of retrospective reactions to guilt. In remorse, do we blame ourselves for our bad character or for our action and for what we have become by doing it? Drawing upon an analysis of the story of Dmitrij Karamazov, I show the mutual connectedness of character and action: on the one hand, voluntary action follows from the agent's character and identity, but at the same time it is not fully determined by them and it can change character in a radical way.

Our understanding of responsibility for wrongdoing can be significantly influenced by the kind of wrongdoing which is at issue. To explore this dimension of responsibility, I turn to a second problem of guilt i.e. the problem of making sense of distinctive forms and types of moral failure. I show that the ethical theories that focussed narrowly upon the episode of action, and called upon an associated strong conception of responsibility, could not grasp an important type of wrongdoing that is marked by attenuated activity: wrongdoing which involves self-deception. In the fifth chapter I examine its historical connection with *akrasia* and with other types of wrongdoing and present an account of self-deception within the framework of the philosophy of mind. In the sixth chapter, I go on to describe the peculiar form of this type of wrongdoing without intention on the basis of detailed consideration of the wrongdoing committed by banker Bulstrode in the novel *Middlemarch*. The analysis of Bulstrode's wrongdoing culminates in an argument that, in spite of the absence of clear intention and the considerable influence of luck, his actions were nonetheless voluntary and therefore he can be held responsible for them.