# Social and Historical Reasons of an Individuals' Moral Crisis

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**ABSTRACT**

Morality always becomes the central topic of all disciplines including sociology, psychology, psychoanalysis and literature. Throughout human history, rapid changes in society cause moral crisis of human beings. In addition to this, moral identity is known as the base of morality and is tied to judgments of personal responsibility and integrity or the realization. Each individual differs in moral identity, moral motivation and personality development. This article focuses on identifying social and historical reasons of appearance individuals' moral crisis.

| Keywords: | morality, identity, family codes, factor, culture, technology, world war, social system, personal development, manner |
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In today's society the attitude towards morality is turning into a deep philosophical problem. At the same time, we understand that morality is not only ethical criteria or set of social standards but also expresses the essence of humanity. It plays an important role in the development of a human society. Morality is a set of behaviors and manners that are manifested in people's relationships with each other, family, and society. Scholars considered that the moral perfection of persons, their comprehensive development, and the formation of their spiritual image are one of the important factors of the progress of society. In the process of moral, generally spiritual and educational development of persons, they go through different historical stages from ignorance to knowledge, from evil to goodness in society. The struggle between two alternative beginnings – evil and goodness, ignorance and perfection – determining the evaluation of man and society lead to the realization of man as the possessor of intelligence. If these two alternative power struggles are expressed in the existing social relations in the society, in relation to the person's inner world, the soul is expressed in the struggle between reason and insanity. Ethics can change, develop, and disappear in a certain society and period. In addition to this, there is a specific morality of each nation and also universal moral standards. Such moral norms have an effective influence on the general development of the world. *Morality refers to the set of standards that enable people to live cooperatively in groups.*[1] It's what societies determine to be "right" and "acceptable." Young people are like sponge. They absorb everything around them and learn watching and tying to imitate what people around them do. Morality isn't fixed. What is considered acceptable in one culture might not be acceptable in another culture. Geographical

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[1]The Psychology of Morality: A Review and Analysis of Empirical Studies Published From 1940 Through 2017

regions, religions, family codes, and life experiences – all influence morals. Scholars do not agree on exactly how morals are developed. However, there are several theories that have gained attention over the years. *There are different theories as to how morals are developed. However, most theories acknowledge the external factors (parents, community, etc.) that contribute to a child's moral development. These morals are intended to benefit the group that has created them[2]* Sigmund Freud suggested moral development occurred as persons' ability to set aside their selfish needs, replaced by the values of important socializing agents (such as a person's parents). He theorized that moral development unfolds over time, in certain stages as children learn to adopt certain moral behaviors for their own sake rather than just abide by moral codes because they don't want to get into trouble. For example, a child who receives praise for being kind may treat someone with kindness again out of a desire to receive more positive attention in the future. Western society has probably gained an impasse, expressed as a crisis in all sphere of life: economic, technological, environmental and political. *This is experienced at the cultural level as a moral crisis or an ethical deficit[3].* Somehow, the means we have always assumed as being adequate to the task of achieving human welfare, health and peace, are failing us. Many feel that the means have taken over, and that somehow we have lost sight of human ends. Governments still push for economic growth and technological advances, but many are now asking: economic growth for what, technology for what?

In the Cambridge dictionary it is given a definition for crisis as *"an extremely difficult or dangerous point in a situation"[4]* and for moral like *"behaving in ways considered by most people to be correct and honest"[5].* So, morality crisis is an extremely difficult or dangerous point in behavior of the people. *A moral crisis is an event or period that will lead, or may lead, to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting an individual, group, or all of society. It is negative changes in the human affairs, especially when they occur abruptly, with little or no warning.[6]* Based on this definition moral crisis is a state which causes unpleasant, disagreeable conditions and as a result not only a person but also a group of people, the whole society may be damaged with it. The rapid changes of the society are the main reasons of moral crisis. Several distinct factors including evolution, emotion, socio-cultural factors and technology that control our morality and drive moral change have been researched in the article by Indian researcher, psychologist Aditi Subramanlam. As she claimed the first factor is evolution as it plays an important role in shaping morality. The second one is emotions, *"…as much as we would like to tell ourselves that our moral decisions are based on reason, our emotions play more of a role than we realize. It is not hard to imagine that our emotions are far more effective at driving moral behavior than reason. It is easier to cause people to condemn someone by inducing their emotions like <u>anger</u> or disgust rather than by appealing to their rational side."[7]* But emotions are not close to being good enough as drivers of morality; they often cause people to make faulty decisions. The next one is socio-cultural factors, according to Aditi "factors like gender, age, and culture are more significant in guiding our morality than we realize." So, the last one is technology, as it was stated *"a technology is widely available and alternative to earlier practices, it can lead to a shift in our collective morality."* Really, technology can change the morality of a person, can bring out worst behaviors as it has profound effects on social moral system.

Morality is the key aspect of social and psychological life of a human being and moral issues have been discussed from ancient times by Greek philosopher, Plato, who wrote about idealized forms of morality. Also, Aristotle, who

[2] https://courses.lumenlearning.com

[3] Ggeoffrey Hunt  Moral crisis, professionals and ethical education. Pennsylvania State Univer, 2016

[4] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/crisis

[5] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/crisis

[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crisis

[7] https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/parenting-neuroscience-perspective/202203/6-factors-drive-morality

long ago lived in a society that was still a community rather than an association of individuals, constantly emphasized the importance of keeping human ends in sight. He said: *There are two things in which well-being always and everywhere consists. The first is to determine a right aim and end of your actions. The second is to find out the actions which will best conduct to that end . . . The good life, or felicity, is obviously the end at which all men aim.*[8] Aristotle believed that, while any state must prepare its citizens for useful pursuits (the economic, and even the military), these are secondary. *'It is true . . .'*, he said, *'that they must be able to do necessary or useful acts; but they must be even more able to do good acts'* [9]. A truly human society must also be able to enjoy culture and peace. Aristotle complained about a decline taking place in his own time. Moreover, he speculated about what it meant to live a good life and appealed to virtues as well as to core principles of justice. From that time, debates about morality, moral problems and moral principles have been developed and continued to contemporary times. Evolutionary, psychological and sociological theories also brought new proposals for the conceptualization of morality. Current philosophers have continued these debates in varied forms. They have paid attention to psychological theories and provided new interpretations of classic theories to develop more integrated and complex treatments of morality.

Despite diverse interpretations, most scientists agree that *morality refers to individuals' treatment of others, not the self, and reflects individuals' intentions and motivations for actions*[10] Of course, we try to control our emotions and reactions toward the other peoples' relation to us and with this reaction we show our good or bad behavior toward them, our morality reflect itself in such kind of situations. *Each of us is unique in our physical, psychological, moral and social aspects. In the*

*beginning these are purely biological factors, later enhanced by social ones as well. Their effect is felt upon the human being throughout his life.*[11] Absolutely, all of us are unique in this universe and our physical and psychological state is related to biological factors, but our morality is not only related to biological factors but also adopted by society. The events, changes including social, technical, scientific happenings around us affect our psychology. Literary scholars began to investigate literary texts not only in philological sphere but also in non-philological fields. In the second half of the 20th century, as literary criticism develops, literary studies make connection with other fields in order to identifying it's objectives. According to literary scholars' opinion *we can gain knowledge not only reading text itself, we can do it with the help of distance reading: with themes, devices, trips and exc.*[12] Really, identify main themes, ideas, literary devices, symbols, motifs help readers to raise their deep understanding and improve critical thinking, make the brain to work. With the help of distance reading we analyze literary works in inner layer, are able to be aware of the author's message and importance of the work in all spheres of life. American sociologist Kagan coined the term "*system of subculture*[13] that helps to understand peculiarities of culture and it is useful for both European culture in the middle ages and modern civilization. In some parts of Europe, folklore was acknowledged as a part of the peasant culture with the relation to the feudal society but it was not restricted with a traditional peasant culture. Folklore is not only a creative production of common urban citizens and rural people but also, any social and ethnic group of people who tried to express themselves during conversations between their members and in the transmission of works of other groups that were created by people who had diverse professions. In both past and modern society folklore has various meanings: the simplest one is "the art of spoken word". Scientists identified

[8] Barker E. translator. The politics of Aristotle. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948. P 373

[9] IBID

[10] Melanie Killen, Judith Smetana. Origins and development of morality. 2015 P .702

[11] IBID

[12] Naomi Segal. From literature to culture. Journal Humanities. 2015. P-p 72

[13] Folklore as a term of cultural studies.

two meanings of the term: as "ancient manners, customs, rituals and ceremonies of past eras, turned into superstitions and traditions of the lower classes of civilized society" and as "a set of forms of the unwritten history of the people." In the 1920s-1930s the question "What is folklore?" was discussed and two opposed views appeared, on the one hand, V. Zhirmunsky, E. Kagarov, O. Freidenberg focused their attention on relic elements of folk culture in general but, on the other hand, M. Azadovsky, N. Andreev, Yu. Sokolov, N. Kravtsov perceived folklore as oral verbal creativity capable of innovations. Taking all things into consideration we can say that folklore as a subculture consisted of main common features of diverse phenomena which express the need of certain collectives and groups for informal self-expression and mutual communication.

East and West are two sides of the world and each of them has numerous differences based on their manners, traditions, culture, moral standards, and ethics. The main distinction between Eastern and Western perspectives is the fact that West tries to find truth, whereas East tries to show respect. Culture, social conventions and upbringing have a major impact on morality. Hence, people from different cultures tend to have different sets of morals. This is especially evident in morality of groups of people from the Eastern culture as compared to people from the Western culture. *Eastern moral system entails the ethics of community or the ethics of divinity* which emphasize the importance of fulfilling one's duties or attaining to group goals. Of course, Eastern culture teaches to do that one have promised to do or that one is expected to do. As persons we have several roles as a son or daughter, wife or husband, mother or father, grandfather or grandmother in the family and in the society as a friend, colleague, worker, employer and so on but we should not fail to fulfill our duties in any of this positions to keep our humanity and morality. In contrast, Western morality highlights an individual's right of choice with utilitarian consideration, *rather than any enforced social demand of*

*deontological concern[14].* Morality refers to a set of prescriptive norms about how individuals ought to treat one another, including concerns with fairness, others' welfare, equality and justice. A person is required to be impartial and fair and to not be bound by the dictates of group norms and consensus when they are in conflict with fairness and justice.

Nature that writers live in has a great influence on their culture and psychological state and it is reflected in the literary creation. *From the perception of eco-criticism, literature is reflection of local culture, possessing writer's psychological development and living circumstance.[15]* Also, culture and geography are considered as a basis for literary creation because writers show their individual attitudes and ideas with the help of them. Nature and culture are closely connected to each other and they are the base for literary works and help to create new symbols. Based on literary critique Engels' point of view *literary work is the expression of social life and culture and environment which help to shape a literary style[16].* Each writer creates the work based on the problems, events, changes in his/her society and while this creation an author enriches them with adding cultural elements and description of nature in order to raise the effectiveness of the work or hint some notions. Literature and geography are connected to each other as literature is an expression of peoples' spiritual state and geography is the symbol of place and every individual exists in any kind of space.

All in all, the role of culture is increased as a result of globalization and civilization of the society and countries. People have to know other nation's language and culture in order to communicate with them for diverse purposes. *Literature can be used as a source for developing the ability to communicate in alien*

[14] K.K.Hwang. Morality East and WEST : CULTURAL CONCERS. 2015

[15] Li Hou, Jianjun Kang, Yongli Xu. A Study on the Influence of Human Cultural Environment on Literary Creation from the Perspective of Eco-criticism. Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, volume 635 Atlantis Press SARL. 2022. Pp 69

[16] Ibid.

*cultural settings[17].* So the author aimed to raise students' awareness of cross-cultural variations through examples from international literature and to develop their intercultural communicative competence through analysis of the same examples. Literature is a piece of life and with the help of it writers describe the culture of their society. If a situation has a positive meaning in one culture, it may have a negative meaning in another culture. Language and literature describe the culture including private, interpersonal and social behavior. It is obvious that the observable and unclear aspects of culture influence people's thinking and behavior. Researchers inspired by both anthropological and sociological theories define morality in terms of cultural norms. Morality is seen as including justice and harm, but they extend the moral domain to include interpersonal duties and family obligations. Cultural perspectives often focus on cross-cultural variations in moral judgments, along with different perspectives on sources of influence and change.

It is clear that a moral crisis is not the problem of generations, it is an objective reality. Life in the XXI century differs from it used to be a century ago. Violence, homosexualism, corruption turned into everyday occurrence. Money and material well-being are priority goals for millions of people, who would easily give up their moral principles for financial gain or authority. All of these moral decadences have adverse effects on society, because it changes cultural moral and social norms and sets new but lower standards for appropriate behaviors. It supports public acceptance of violence, justifies discrimination and injustice, and limits opportunities for social, moral, psychological development and stability that is so important to keep societies flourishing.

Morality is very important for the construction, foundation of society and human civilization and their development because it saves from failure of community and human

beings also. Without morality society is corrupted and people become selfish and they are busy with their own interests, ignoring other peoples' needs and rights. According to scientists, moral crisis can be defined as failure to uphold sound morality in society. Of course, moral crisis means failure, decline and depravity, because, people whose morality declined are unsuccessful in both their relationships with others and personal development. Moreover, it can be suggested that in our contemporary society one of the main reasons of a morality crisis is social media. Our technologically developed world leads all of us from old people to very young children to use high technologies including the latest models of smartphones, iPads, tablets, television connected with WiFi and other forms of new digital technologies that offer people great benefits, but also substantial risks. They can help to solve some long-standing problems, but they may also create new and even bigger issues. With the help of them people are active in social medias like telegram, instagram, twitter, you-tube, face-book. Of course, misuse of the information, photos and videos, distributed in these social media applications, have an impact on human morality and psychology. If wrongly used, the moral crisis might be severely accumulated. The foundations on which society is built might be damaged intentionally or unintentionally within a very short period, which may not give people enough opportunities to prepare for respond to challenges, such as the serious moral crisis progressively surround in one community or the whole society. Persons do not become immoral as soon as they are born, it is formed under the influence of parents and the people around them. Looking at the rapid development of the time, teenagers especially are racing to use social media and internet resources. It should be highlighted that the issue of today's teenagers who are too obsessed in using social media that can have a negative impact on them, especially on students. As a result, usage of abusive words, violence and pornography show the negative impact of social media on their behavior.

[17] Z. N. Patil. Culture, Language and Literature: Developing Intercultural Communicative
Competence through International Literature. English Scholarship Beyond Borders: Volume 1, Issue 1. P-p 145

Literature is the unique expression of ethics and morality within a certain historical period and it expresses human beings' moral experiences and contains ethical structures or ethical lines. Any piece of literature has ethical value, reading any novel or story gives an opportunity to think about ethical questions. If they dramatize conflicts and dilemmas, it is not necessarily teaching people how to live, but they encourage people to contemplate the codes that the characters live by. In literature moral issues and values associated with the human himself/herself, human life in relation to God, and human life in relation to the social, including its relationship with nature. Literature is a product of ethics and morality, it is a form of ethical and moral expression in a specific historical situation.

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