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*Motivation, Moral Judgement, and the Justification of  
Morality*

**Andreas Pantazatos**  
**Ph.D. thesis in Philosophy**  
**Durham University**  
**2007**

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11 JUN 2007

# Motivation, Moral Judgement, and the Justification of Morality

## Abstract

It is often supposed that those who remain unmoved by their moral judgements cast doubt on the authority of moral requirements. In this dissertation, I consider the related, but neglected question, of how such people might be motivated to be moral. I consider four arguments. The first and the second investigate whether it is possible to justify morality to those who remain resistant to moral claims if we show that moral actions advance their self-interest, or if we expand their sympathies. I claim, that the former argument fails, since self-interested actions inspire moral motivation only accidentally. The latter argument by contrast might guarantee some motivation, but it is not successful because it depends on the feeling of sympathy and the arbitrary degree of motivation it produces. The third argument holds that there is no need to offer any justification for morality, since moral considerations are merely practical considerations and therefore if one understands the latter one will be able to understand the former. Nonetheless, this argument does not provide a standpoint according to which one would be able to judge whether one acts well and it therefore dismisses too hastily the skeptical threat. The fourth argument rests on the view that there is no difference between moral and practical considerations and conceives the entry point to ethical reflection in terms of a virtue ethical account of moral training.

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Morality*



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## Declaration

I declare that no part of this work has been submitted by me for any degree in this or any other university. All the work is conducted by me except where otherwise stated in the text.

Andreas Pantazatos

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## Introduction

Those who hold that moral demands override necessarily self-interest consider 'why be moral?' as an illegitimate question. But this view narrows the scope of the question since it focuses on the alleged antagonism between morality and self-interest. We can regard 'why be moral?' as a legitimate question, accepting Bernard Williams's proposal in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (1985: 22-29) according to which, such a question can be used as a starting point – an Archimedean point – to begin our inquiry concerning the 'peculiar institution of morality' that is, investigation about the justificatory grounds of morality.<sup>1</sup> My aim in this thesis is to investigate whether it is possible to justify morality to those who remain unmoved by their moral judgements and thus undermine the action-guiding force of moral considerations. If it is shown that there is an account of justification, those agents do not pose a sceptical challenge to morality.

Some of us from time to time do not act according to our moral judgements. Although we know that an action is morally right, we do not perform it for a variety of reasons. It might be the case that the action in question is against our short or long term self-interest and we therefore prefer to advance our interests rather than follow the demands of morality. It might be the case that we have realised that many agents who do not act morally although they know what they ought to do, they get away with it and we would like to imitate their behaviour. Or, it might be the case that we decided that we do not care anymore about morality and thus we remain indifferent to moral demands.

Those kinds of behaviour mark what in the literature of metaethics is called amoral behaviour. That is agents who fail to comply with their moral judgements despite the fact that they know the difference between morally right and wrong. And it is those agents who are supposed to challenge the normative force of moral judgements. In addition, they also undermine the other-regarding character of morality since to be unmoved by moral judgements is to refuse to take into considerations the interests of others like fellow human beings, animals and the natural environment.

It is said that the distinctive feature of moral judgement is that it incorporates normative force. Compare, for example, the two following judgements; 'killing is wrong' and 'the mug is blue'. If I sincerely hold the first judgement, we expect that I

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<sup>1</sup> Christine Korsgaard in *The Sources of Normativity* (1996: 7-18) puts forward a similar claim, arguing that 'why be moral?' is the normative question from which we ought to begin our search for the normative force of moral demands, and thus it does not undermine the normative force of morality.

will not kill and I will also advise others not to kill as well. Whereas, if I utter the second judgement, I am not necessarily motivated to have my coffee in this mug, since its being blue does not recommend that I should use the mug in question. In this respect, moral judgement provides me with a reason to act and it is thus tied to motivation. But how are we to understand the motivating element of moral judgement?

Moral philosophers have attempted to explain the motivating force, which moral judgements entail by appealing to those elements, which are related either to our knowledge about right and wrong and considerations of duty, or to our feelings. On one hand, some philosophers hold that it is our beliefs about right and wrong and our obligations which stem from our duties to others in virtue of which moral judgements motivate. On the other hand, philosophers like Hume claim that beliefs can only state facts and thus moral judgements are capable of motivation due to the desires they incorporate. Although Hume assigns the motivating function of moral judgements to desire, he also holds that desire alone is insufficient to motivate pointing out that it is the pair of belief and desire that motivates agents to act. This, for instance, implies that one might believe that 'killing is wrong' but if one lacks the relevant desire, one will not be motivated accordingly. Although moral judgement entails a certain motivating element, does it necessarily motivate?

Hence, to seek for an account of the justification of morality, it is necessary not only to focus on those elements in virtue of which moral judgements incorporate motivating force, but also to trace the elements in question to those agents who fail to be motivated by moral judgements. To explain failure in moral motivation is not sufficient enough to demonstrate what can justify morality to those who do not comply with it. Nevertheless, before I set the tasks, which I ought to undertake in order to fulfil my aim in the thesis, I feel that it is necessary to show how the question I investigate is relevant to the wider picture of the current debate in metaethics.

As I said in the beginning of this section, the question concerning the justification of morality is related to the conflict between morality and self-interest. Those who believe that morality and self-interest are necessarily in conflict, they hold that one casts doubts on the justification of morality because moral actions do not promote one's interests. This raises implications about the sources of motivation and constrains our view of practical reason. If practical reason is different from theoretical in the sense that the former is related to action, whereas the latter does not, those who believe that morality and self-interest are necessarily in conflict they concede dualism



about practical reason. Hence, they claim that if one fails to be motivated by one's moral judgements, one should be motivated by one's self-interest. This, however, narrows the sources of motivation for morality and precludes from the picture of moral motivation elements one's aims and projects which might be related to morality. Furthermore, if we accept that emotions and desires are connected somehow to one's interest, advocates of dualism about practical reason reject that these motivating elements can support moral motivation.

My treatment of the question 'why be moral?' is at least different in the following sense. Firstly, I do not consider the question illegitimate, and thus I aim to find out whether morality has any grip to agents who call into question its action-guiding force. Secondly, I do not argue for dualism of practical reason assuming that morality and self-interest are in conflict necessarily, but I presume that they conflict contingently. In addition, I intend to show that although it is possible to show that it is in one's interest to act morally, those who fail to be motivated by moral judgement, they might not concede the relation between morality and their interests as a reason to perform moral actions. So, since I do not hold that morality and self-interest are two unrelated standpoints I test those arguments, which connect the motivating element of moral judgement with self-interest and emotions, such as one's sympathy, in order to see how far they can take us to the justification of morality.

The question 'why be moral?' also concerns the connection between moral motivation and moral judgement and it is thus central in the debate between internalism and externalism. Common sense about morality complies with the idea that moral judgements are necessarily linked to motivation. This view raises two further implications. First that moral judgement is intrinsically motivating in virtue of the motivating element it incorporates, and this is what sometimes is construed as the special function of moral judgement. And second, that anything which is not part of the moral judgement might provide moral motivation only contingently. Two views correspond to these implications respectively, internalism and externalism. I will firstly treat internalism, and I will then define externalism. Internalism can be described as the general thesis that if one believes that an action is right, and then one is necessarily motivated to do it. For instance, if one sincerely holds the judgement 'I ought to give to famine relief', one has a reason to perform the action in question and thus is motivated to do so. This rough definition of internalism implies that moral judgements provide reasons for action and are therefore motivating. To put it across alternatively, internalism is firstly concerned with revealing the source of one's reasons for action,

and secondly, with tracing one's motivation to these reasons. Externalism, now, is the denial of internalism since it holds that the relation between moral judgement and motivation is not necessary but contingent.

The debate between internalists and externalists concerns the coherence of the thesis of those who claim that they are unmoved by their moral judgement because they are indifferent to morality. Internalists who claim that moral motivation is necessarily tied to moral judgements claim that those agents like amorality – if they exist – hold an incoherent position, or they are practically irrational. Externalists, on other hand, challenge internalists by providing the counterexample of the amoralist, arguing that internalism cannot count for the motivating force of moral judgements since they cannot explain failure in moral motivation. They claim that if there is such a necessary relation between moral judgement and moral motivation as internalist hold, there should not be amoral agents.

My argument, however, does not depend on the debate between internalists and externalists. Although I draw upon these two views to explain the relation between moral judgement and motivation, my aim is to show whether it is possible to justify morality to those agents like the amoralist, and as a result I am interested in those elements in virtue of which morality can have a grip to agents. Elements like self-interest or one's emotions can be motivating factors either in an internalist or externalist account of moral motivation. It is one thing to ask about which elements can provide motivation, and another to argue about the kind of relation between the elements in question and moral judgement.

Undermining the justification of morality, the amoral agent also challenges the motivational efficacy of moral judgements and one should expect that is connected to the debate between cognitivists and non-cognitivists about moral judgement. Cognitivists hold that moral judgements incorporate mental states such as beliefs, which are motivationally detached since they report facts about the world. Whereas non-cognitivists claim that moral judgement contain mental states such as desires which are motivationally effective since they are necessarily motivating states. So, for those who are cognitivist about the content of moral judgement, amorality fail to act morally because there is something wrong with their moral beliefs. On the other hand, non-cognitivists would explain failure in motivation due to the lack of the relevant desire. Cognitivists about the content of moral judgement can be either internalists or externalists about moral motivation (Dancy 1993). They can hold that one's beliefs about right and wrong motivate necessarily because they have a special status different

from other beliefs. They can also claim that moral beliefs motivate contingently and they therefore need the help of a relevant motivating state such as desire. Whereas non-cognitivist can be only internalists insofar as they hold that moral judgements motivate necessarily because they incorporate motivating states such as desires.

Although I acknowledge the difference between these two views, my argument does not necessarily depend on either of them since I do not argue that the threat that the amoralist poses to morality rests on the wrong moral beliefs his moral judgement entails, or the relevant desire to be moral that the latter does not incorporate. My argument aims to show that if neither self-interest nor the expansion of sympathies of the amoralist can justify morality to the amoralist and thus warrant moral motivation we need to look for an alternative. This is to investigate whether moral considerations are merely practical considerations which are necessarily motivating without appealing to a special feature such the other-regarding character or the action-guiding force of moral considerations. On this view, knowledge of what is good and what is not it is essential for an account of moral motivation, but this does not exclude the role of emotions and desire in a wider sense from the picture of motivation. So, my account of motivation can be construed as broadly cognitivist since it does not gives priority to non-cognitive states in the motivating operation of moral judgements.

So far, I have stated the problem I am addressing in this thesis, and I have located the latter in the context of the general metaethical debate. In what follows, I will set the tasks that I need to undertake in order to construct and present my argument, by outlining the structure of the thesis.

Since I treat the position of the amoralist as a philosophical thesis which calls into question the justification of morality, I need to investigate whether and how it is possible to provide a justification to morality to him. To fulfil my aim I need firstly to examine who the amoralist is and what kind of threat he poses to morality. By explaining other kinds of scepticism, which might challenge morality, I claim that the position of the amoralist calls for a different treatment since it is the one which undermines the justificatory grounds of morality.

Secondly, I ought to explore those accounts that can provide a justification of morality to the amoralist. I claim that there seem to be three of the accounts in question. The first concerns the possible relation between morality and self-interest, which I argue, that cannot support a justification of morality since it does not warrant moral motivation. The second involves Hume's view according to which, moral behaviour is related to the psychological mechanism of sympathy, and holds that the amoralist might

be persuaded to be less resistant to moral claim by expanding his sympathies. I deny that this account can provide a justification of morality to the amoralist, arguing that Williams's theory of practical reason is not consistent in its application with his argument concerning sympathy and its role in moral motivation. The third involves the view that there is no need to explore the motivating element of moral judgement, or to ascribe any special status to moral considerations. It is sufficient to show that moral considerations are action-guiding because they are merely practical considerations. I should point out here that the latter account has not been widely discussed in the literature and only recently Raz (1997) has tried to defend such an account. Raz adopts a classical conception of practical reason broadly construed which allows him to argue that our moral considerations are like any other practical considerations. That is to say that to act ethically is to act well. He reaches the conclusion that if this is the case there is no need to look for a justification of morality to the amoralist. However, I argue that his account dismisses the challenge of the amoralist too quick. Even if Raz is right, there is still space for the amoralist to doubt whether to act well is tantamount to a flourishing life.

In the light of this conclusion I present a third account which depends on a virtue ethical account of moral training according to which the amoralist can be re-trained to act ethically if he sees his life as a whole which is the first step into morality.

Finally, my third task is to compare the aforementioned account and show whether it at least avoids the criticisms which the former accounts cannot. I will therefore show that my account provides at least a less problematic answer to the threat of the amoralist.

So, in order to carry out my first task, in chapter 1 I explain the kind of sceptical threat which the amoralist poses to morality. Placing the amoralist's challenge in the context of the history of philosophy, I explore Plato's argument in the *Republic* according to which Thrasymachus aims to defend his view that one is better off if one is indifferent to justice, since the latter is to promote the interests of the strongest. Insofar as my aim is only to demonstrate that Thrasymachus reflects the position of the amoralist and thus poses a challenge to the Platonic account of justice, I do not examine Plato's argument against Thrasymachus's position. Having provided a historical introduction to the challenge of the amoralist, I explain the thesis of the amoralist, and I claim that he is someone who is indifferent to moral demands and he is therefore remain unmoved by his moral judgements. In addition, I distinguish two questions which are related with amoralism: first, whether it is possible for one to be an amoralist; and

second, if it is possible for one to be an amoralist what can be done so he will take the first step to morality. I explain two arguments which hold that the amoralist is impossible and I counter argue that the amoralist is at least intuitively plausible and this justifies my concern with the second and more interesting question. That is, what we are to say to the amoralist in order to be less resistant to moral claims. Then I turn my attention to egoism and its three different kinds, psychological, ethical and rational. I explicate what these positions hold and in which sense they undermine morality arguing that these kinds of egoism cast in doubt the other-regarding character of morality. They hold that acting out of self-interest is either compatible with human psychology – psychological egoism – or that one can act ethically if everyone pursued one's self-interest – ethical egoism – or, finally, that it is rational to promote our own self-interest that is, rational egoism. Leaving aside egoism, I focus on those kinds of positions which pose a sceptical threat to morality and they can be classified under the broad view of moral scepticism. I show how they undermine morality either by denying the existence of moral reality, or by rejecting all moral demands and existence of moral facts. In addition, I refer to the cases of weakness of will, accidie, claiming that although pose a threat to the motivating force of morality are rather emotional distortions without expressing a philosophical position like the amoralist does. Finally I conclude that his position is different from those I have so far explored because it undermines not only the action-guiding force of morality, but also its other-regarding character.

Moving to my second task, the next two chapters explore whether it is possible to justify morality either on self-interest, or sympathy correspondingly.

In chapter 2, I focus on self-interest and I intend to show whether it is possible to justify morality on the grounds that to act morally contributes to one's self-interest. If this can be shown, the amoralist who acts in the light of those reasons which are rooted in his self-interest he holds an inconsistent view and he is therefore irrational. In the beginning, I stipulate that moralists and particularly moral rationalists are those who hold that morality is necessarily other-regarding. This entails that morality and self-interest is necessarily in conflict and therefore one cannot act morally by promoting one's interest. Hence moralists do not aim to justify morality by relating the latter with self-interest, they do so in order to show that the amoral agent is irrational. Before, I examine the moralists' claim I shed some light on the role of self-interest in motivation, and its relation to egoism, arguing that not all self-interested actions are necessarily

egoistic. Consequently, the moralists' claim that self-interest is always in conflict with morality is rather defeated. In the last part of the chapter drawing upon Williams's article 'Egoism and Altruism' (1973: 250-265), I argue that the moralists' argument according to which the amoralist has either to accept to act morally and abandon his self-interest, or to be inconsistent and act morally against his own interests, fails since the amoral agent can escape the charge of irrationality. In addition, I explain the internalist thesis about moral motivation drawing upon the distinction between motivating and justificatory reasons and I claim that although internalists accept the distinction in question they tend to argue that under their own account the two kinds of reasons merge. And thus it is possible those reasons which justify to motivate as well, either by shifting from motivating to normative reasons stressing the motivating element of reason such as desire, or from normative to motivating insisting on the pure power of reason to guide action. I conclude that it is not possible to justify morality to the amoralist by appealing to his self-interest for two reasons; first, because he can escape the charge of irrationality; and second that some moralists cannot see how it is possible to move from self-interest and act morally. Even if this happens sometimes, it cannot warrant moral motivation.

Since we cannot appeal to the amoralist's self-interest to provide a justification for morality, in Chapter 3 I turn my attention to sympathy drawing upon to Bernard Williams's argument according to which it is possible to persuade the amoralist to be less resistant to moral claims if we can expand his sympathies. Firstly, I explicate the psychological mechanism of sympathy in the operation of moral motivation, focusing on its role to transmit others' sentiments and opinions via imagination as Hume suggests, and I explore the differences between motivating and normative reasons. I claim that Williams follows Hume's idea of sympathy and he attempts to show that a Humean view about moral motivation can explain how it is possible to alter the amoralist's views about morality.

Secondly, I argue that although Williams's account of sympathy appears to be persuasive, is not compatible with his theory of practical reason. According to the latter, he suggests that one has an internal reason to act insofar as this reason is related to one's subjective motivational set via a sound deliberative route. Since his account of reasons reflects the Humean theory of motivation, it gives priority to the motivating element of reason, and this is what appears to be a requirement for something to be a reason for action. What contributes to the normative part of the reason is the sound deliberative route. If the amoralist's sympathies are modified and he thus acquires new motivation

and consequently new reasons for action, either the latter are not sufficiently deliberative to count as reasons, or they are but they are external reasons in Williams's sense. Hence, I conclude that although an account of the justification of morality which depends on sympathy might place the amoralist closer to morality insofar as he is not only concerned with his own interests, it cannot warrant moral motivation. To expand someone's sympathies might be one step forward from one's self-interest but it is still an idiosyncratic motive to act morally and it cannot guarantee moral motivation.

Having argued that neither self-interest nor sympathy can provide a justification of morality, in Chapter 4, I focus on what I think it appears to be an alternative account from the last two. I argue that if we regard moral considerations as practical considerations that is, they have action-guiding force not because they are necessarily other-regarding or reflect a special normative feature, but because they are merely guide to those actions which are worth pursuing. In the first part, I analyse Raz's (1997) argument according to which the amoralist's threat to morality depends on the misconception of our arguments concerning moral discourse. Common sense idea about morality holds that the latter is necessarily other-regarding and this entails that it is in conflict with self-interest or other idiosyncratic feelings. If morality were related to those motives, this would undermine its special normative force. I also illustrate the reasons why Raz rejects that it is not possible to justify morality either by shifting from the self-interest standpoint to the moral point of view, or by expanding one's sympathies. Although in Chapter 2 and 3 I dealt with similar arguments concerning self-interest and the mechanism of sympathy, I rejected them for different reasons since I tackled those arguments from a different perspective. I conclude claiming that Raz's argument dismisses the challenge of the amoralist too quick. Although moral considerations are considerations about acting well, there is still space for the amoralist to doubt whether ethical actions are tantamount to good life.

So, in chapter 5 drawing upon Raz's suggestion that moral considerations are merely practical considerations and accepting a classical conception of practical reason I argue that the amoralist can move from the pre-ethical to ethical life if he reflects on his life as a whole. I propose that a virtue ethical account of moral training which depends on the three dimensions of virtue, the intellectual, the dispositional and the affective can re-train the amoralist. According to this account, as soon as the amoralist sees his life as a whole, he has already taken the first step to morality. In the last part of the chapter I respond to a couple of possible complaints that one might raise against my accounts. First, how my account of moral training is different from my account of

expanding one's sympathies and if it is not very different how it escapes the criticisms I raised against Williams' account. And second, how my account can escape the 'old' charge against virtue ethics. It is the charge that, on a virtue ethical approach, the acquisition and exercise of the virtues is undertaken for reasons of self-interest benefit, in which case a virtue ethical justification of morality is no different, in essence, from the already rejected attempt to justify it in terms of self-interest.

Finally, in my conclusion, carrying out my third task I provide a summary of my preceding chapters and drawing upon their conclusions I argue that a virtue ethics account of moral motivation solves the problems that those accounts, which depend on self-interest and sympathy, do not. And at least in this sense, I claim that my account provides a solution which is vulnerable at least to fewer problems than the two accounts which I have already present in the preceding chapters.



# Chapter 1

## Challenges to Morality and the Amoralist<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

In this chapter my aim is to define the amoralist and explain the sceptical threat that he poses to morality. I also intend to discuss those views which are supposed to pose a sceptical challenge to morality, and show that only the amoralist aims to discredit the normative authority of moral demands. In this respect, he aims to undermine the justificatory grounds of morality and we should therefore take his threat seriously. My perception of amorality is that it is possible for one to make moral judgements and remain unmoved by them.<sup>2</sup>

I begin my investigation presenting Plato's arguments concerning the sceptical attacks against Justice in order to show why it is necessary to distinguish between sceptical attacks to morality and a special kind of moral scepticism, amorality. In addition, I draw upon Plato's work to highlight that I am interested in the question whether we can justify morality to the amoralist.

In the second section, I focus on amorality. I claim that amorality is a kind of moral scepticism according to which, agents who hold moral judgements remain unmoved by them. The quest of the amoralist is a quest for the justification of morality. On this reading, I distinguish two questions concerning the amoralist. First, whether it is possible for one to be amoralist. Second, if one is an amoralist how we can get him back to morality. My claim is that although the second question has not been widely discussed, it is more interesting. If we can provide the amoralist with justification to act morally, morality will be stronger. In addition, I explain why I will not deal with the first question and I demonstrate why my answer will not be drawing upon the internalism and externalism debate.

In the third section, I investigate egoism and its kinds holding that egoism is in antagonism with morality because it undermines its other-regarding character. I draw the distinction between egoism and amorality, since it is possible for the amoralist to manifest egoistic behaviour. This, however, does not mean that the amoralist should necessarily be an egoist.

In the fourth section, I explore a variety of moral scepticism like moral nihilism that is, noncognitivism and moral error theory, which hold that there is no distinction

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<sup>1</sup> Part of this chapter has been presented under the title 'Amoral Scepticism' at *Scepticism: Graduate Conference in Philosophy*, Free University, Amsterdam, Netherlands, May 2003

<sup>2</sup> I use the term amorality and amoral scepticism interchangeably.

between right and wrong, and thus no moral knowledge. The aforementioned discussion stresses the differences between those kinds of scepticism and amoralism. Finally, in the fifth section, I explain how the phenomena of accidie and weakness of will which manifest motivational failure threatens the practical aspect of morality. I refer to these issues, since they are usually discussed with amoralism (Dancy 1993). However, I draw upon them to highlight that amoralism poses a different kind of threat to the practical aspect of morality.

Finally, if I am right my conclusion will be that amoralism is a different kind of scepticism from egoism insofar as the amoralist does not necessarily act in favour of her self-interest. Amoral scepticism is also different from moral nihilism so long as they are incompatible. Furthermore, although amoralism has some affinities with accidie and weakness of will, the former questions the justification of morality whereas the latter do not. Hence, amoralism demands to take seriously its threat and try to answer the question whether there can be any reasons to act morally.

### **1. Plato's defence of 'Justice'**

Plato points out, through his ethical ideas, that the definition and defence of Justice must be a convincing and consistent argument which will silence the sceptical attacks against Justice. He therefore assumes that the sceptic's question, 'why should I be Just?', is coherent, and as such demands an intelligible answer. Plato expends a great deal of effort dealing with questions such as 'what is virtue, and can it be taught?'; which aim to indicate that the virtuous life is worth pursuing. My intention, however, is to focus on those works in which he explores the nature of 'Justice', and articulates arguments which seek to explain away the sceptical attacks against it.

One point should be made clear before we begin to explore Plato's ethical ideas. The term 'morality' is absent in his works and Plato, instead, refers to the term 'Justice'. Williams (1985: 1-20) points out that ancient philosophers lack our notion of morality, and express their views about right or wrong actions by the term 'ethics'. One should not assume that 'ethics' carries the same meaning as 'morality'. For ancient philosophers, ethics centres on the idea of virtues (as a trait of character), and the view that what one should do or what one should avoid doing is related to the exercises of virtues, in addition to one's practical intelligence and wisdom.<sup>3</sup> One of so-called

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<sup>3</sup> Some theorists might object to this view, claiming that virtue is also present in Kant and Hume's ethical works. An obvious reply to this is that what determines the idea of a happy life in ancient ethics is the exercise of virtues, whereas virtue does not determine what is right or wrong in Kant's theory, and neither does it determine the relation between feelings and action, in Hume's moral theory.

cardinal virtues is 'Justice', which refers to the Greek word 'dikaiosune', which means that which is good for all (Annas 1981 and 1992). Good for all means one must take others' interests into considerations on an equal footing. Therefore, the exercise of Justice is significant for the cooperation and the relationship between the citizens of the state. And this is what Plato aims to show in the *Republic*, explaining why it is necessary for one to perform just actions. Granted that the commonly held view about morality is its 'other-regarding' character, it appears to bear a close relation to Platonic 'Justice'. With this in mind, my reference to Platonic Justice raises implications about morality, and thus I will refer to 'just' and 'unjust' actions as moral and immoral respectively.

In what follows, I will shed some light on Plato's ethical ideas from the *Republic*, in order to explain his response to the sceptical doubts over Justice. My aim, focusing on Thrasymachus' sceptical attack on justice, is to explain how his views constitute a coherent thesis. Plato's argument indicates why it is important to explain the possible challenges to morality, and why amoralism is a different kind of scepticism, which calls for a justification of morality.

### 1.1 Thrasymachus' challenge

Thrasymachus' challenge to the Socratic account of Justice, in *Republic*, has some affinities with the one that Callicles introduces, in *Gorgias*. The question raised on this issue is why Plato attempts to investigate the same challenge to Justice in the *Republic*, when in *Gorgias* Socrates defeats Callicles' arguments. Furthermore, if these arguments were successful, he should have appealed to them in order to defend justice against Thrasymachus, but he does not do so. Plato, in different dialogues, attempts to defend against a series of challenges to justice. In *Gorgias*, the challenge to Justice comes from the idea that the latter restricts one's desires; their satisfaction being necessarily related to one's self-interest, and thus happiness. Contrastingly, in the *Republic*, Thrasymachus casts doubt on whether Justice should necessarily be one's guide in life to achieve happiness, since injustice or self-interest might also lead to one's happiness. In particular, Thrasymachus asks the question, 'why should I be moral?'; that is, what else can provide him with a reason to do the just thing, beyond the normative force of justice (which he obviously acknowledges, since he urges the question). Contrastingly, the question that Callicles asks is 'why be moral?'; that is, to ask whether behaving justly is the best way to act, given the fact that acting according to one's self-interest is compatible with one's nature. The alleged difference behind the two

questions is that the former suggests that an agent is related to justice rationally and thus normatively; whereas, according to the latter, there seem to be a psychological connection between justice and the agent. My claim is that Thrasymachus poses a different challenge to the Socratic account of Justice than that of Polus and Callicles. Although his account might appear to be nihilistic, I will demonstrate that his sceptical doubts about justice manifest amorality, and therefore his account of justice is descriptive.<sup>4</sup>

In the *Republic*, Plato attempts to answer the question, “what is justice?”; or “what is the nature of just action?”. He accepts the Socratic assumption about justice, in order to provide a sound argument which will not only reveal the nature of justice, but will also explain why there are good reasons to act justly. According to Socrates, justice benefits both the just person and those around him. This entails two further implications: firstly, those who are unjust do not benefit and thus are being harmed; and secondly, that just people are good, and good is beneficial. Furthermore, these implications serve to show that there are two reasons for one to be just. If, on the one hand, being just is beneficial, one has a self-interested reason to pursue just actions, because doing otherwise will act against their self-interest, and this seems to be absurd. If, on the other hand, one is just simply to benefit others, one has an other-regarding reason to act in the light of Justice. These reasons might be in tension, so long as they are endorsed by different standpoints; nevertheless, what Plato tries to do is show that there is no real difference between these kinds of reasons, and that they are necessarily conflated in the realm of Justice. Whether this is possible or not is a question that Thrasymachus’ position poses.

In Book I of the *Republic*, Thrasymachus introduces his account of Justice, agreeing with Socrates that the just man benefits others. This point, however, does not entail any further agreement with the Socratic account of justice, such as one might expect. Thrasymachus’ views on justice appear to be confusing, and this is reflected on the disagreements concern his views. They surface in the dispute about whether he holds a consistent account of justice.<sup>5</sup> Disagreements can be resolved if one shows that Thrasymachus’ views on justice, even though confusing, articulates a consistent

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<sup>4</sup> Of course, there is more to be said about Callicles, Thrasymachus, Glaucon and Adeimantus, who follow the Thrasymachus’s argument, but it is not my aim to focus on Plato’s theory of ethics.

<sup>5</sup> Macguire (1971) suggests that Thrasymachus holds an incoherent position, whereas the Loeb translator holds that Thrasymachus holds the same position with Callicles, and that he expresses immorality, like a Nietzschean immoralist. Nevertheless, Foot (1958) suggests that Thrasymachus recommends injustice as a way of life.

position which casts doubts on the Socratic account of justice, rather than suggesting an alternative.<sup>6</sup> So, Thrasymachus appears to hold five different positions concerning Justice. (I) Justice is nothing other than the interest of the stronger (*Rep.* 338c). (II) Justice is prescribed by laws of the government and its government makes laws in its interest (*Rep.* 338e). (III) If stronger it is always in the government laws are for his interest (*Rep.* 338e). (IV) Justice and the just are in reality the other person's good (*Rep.* 343c). (V) Justice is neither virtue nor vice, and the same for injustice which is practical intelligence (*Rep.* 343c).

These all claims look incompatible. If (I) is true, then it cannot be guaranteed that the stronger will be always in government, and therefore it is absurd to claim that justice necessarily promotes the stronger's interests. Socrates points out that (II) and (III) are not compatible either, insofar as the strong do not always know what is in their best interests.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, even if they know that justice is, and what will be good for them, they might not pursue it. Moreover, Chappell (1993) points out that (IV) undermines positions (I)-(III); since, if Justice is another's good, and the stronger (according to Thrasymachus) pursues what is just, then the stronger seems to promote another's good over his own. So, (IV) seems to be contrary to the rest of the positions that Thrasymachus holds. As for claim (V), if justice is not virtue – that is, neither contributive, nor instrumental to one's happiness – how is it possible for justice to be beneficial to us, as (IV) entails?

As such, Thrasymachus' views on justice seem to be inconsistent and incompatible, assuming that he wishes to introduce a prescriptive account of justice (according to which there are always good reasons for one to perform just actions). In response to this claim, it is plausible to hold that Thrasymachus' claims on justice reflect a descriptive view, and thus we should not assess them under the condition that they introduce a prescriptive account (Chappell 1993). But how are we to understand his descriptivism?

Consider the case that Thrasymachus offers a prescriptive account of justice. This requires that one of his definitions demonstrate a conceptual relationship between justice and what is beneficial for the agent. This would yield normative reasons for action, so long as one is justified in acting justly in order to bring about a beneficial

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<sup>6</sup> What I imply here is that he does not hold a similar account of justice to Callicles', and that his account is not prescriptive.

<sup>7</sup> Socrates makes the same point to Polus when the latter claims that those who are concerned with their self-interest know necessarily what is good for them. Socrates points out to him that there is always the possibility that they might be ignorant of what is good for them.

state of affairs for oneself. If one acts otherwise, the account fails to acknowledge that there are reasons for one to act justly.

For instance, Thrasymachus would suggest that if  $x$  is justice and  $y$  is exercising justice, any time  $x$  is present  $y$  should necessarily follow. Returning to Thrasymachus' answers about Justice, there is nothing that reflects the conceptual relation in question, and consequently his account does not yield normative reasons for action, and is thus not prescriptive. One might claim that, taking (I) and (III) together, there seems to be a conceptual relationship between the two which generates normative reason. However, the conceptual relation in (I) is located between justice and 'law', while in (II) it is located between the powerful person and his interest. On this reading, reasons to be just come either from convention (that is, obeying the laws of the government), or self-interest (the arbitrary condition that one is stronger than others).<sup>8</sup> These kinds of reasons might provide an explanation for the agent's actions, but they do not justify them, and they are therefore motivating and not normative reasons. Hence, Thrasymachus explains how it is possible for agents to act justly, and describe what it is to act justly. He does not draw our attention to any reasons which justify the pursuit of justice. Therefore, his account of justice is (so far) descriptive.

To defeat the claim that the Thrasymachean account of Justice is descriptive (and show that it is dependent instead on motivating reasons), one must show that there is a conceptual relation between justice and virtue. Virtue is central to the idea of Virtue Ethics, a theory which Plato argues for in the *Republic*. Virtue is a normative concept. It requires the exercising of virtues by those who aim for an excellence of character and to flourish in their lives, and thus it yields normative reasons, according to which it is necessary for one's happy life to exercise the virtues. Furthermore, virtue is also evaluative, so long as it assigns values to those actions which pursue the exercise of virtues (and consequently one's well being and practical excellence). Given that Plato's question is "what kind of life should one lead?"; or "what kind of person should one be?", the answer should be, "a life or a person in tune with virtue". If Justice is virtue, then what marks one's well being – and what distinguishes the virtuous from the vicious – is the exercise of justice.

If Thrasymachus accepts that justice is virtue, he must also accept that virtue entails normative reasons, insofar as the exercising of justice is a requirement of one's well being and practical excellence. In contrast, if he believed that justice is vice, there

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<sup>8</sup> I say 'arbitrary' because, to the question of why there are good reasons to promote your own interest, the Thrasymachean agent would reply, 'because it is me'. Such an answer lacks any justificatory ground.

seem to be good reason for avoiding justice, so long as it is something vicious (and that anything vicious cannot contribute to one's well being). Thrasymachus, however, does not admit either of these points; claiming, in addition, that justice is neither virtue nor vice (answer (V)). This implies that there is nothing in Justice which can provide normative reasons for action, nor is there any way of preventing us from pursuing certain actions (and if one acts justly, this is due to contingent factors). In this respect, anything can motivate one to act justly and still be seen as a legitimate reason. At the risk of being repetitive, motivating reasons report causes of actions (and do not prescribe actions), and thus Thrasymachus' claim that Justice is neither virtue nor vice manifests his descriptivism regarding justice.

So far, I have shown that Thrasymachus' account of Justice is descriptive. In addition, his descriptive account is also consistent and coherent. Recalling his answers concerning the definition of justice, one can reconstruct them as follows: those who are considered to be the strongest agents have a motivating reason to practise justice, but this does not entail that they will always act justly. For instance, if there is nothing attractive in justice (if it neither corresponds to virtue nor to vice), they do not necessarily have reasons to act justly. So, it is plausible to suggest that Thrasymachus provides a coherent descriptive account of justice. Moreover, his descriptivism sustains his sceptical doubt towards the Platonic account of justice, which is different from the challenge that Callicles and Polus pose.

Descriptivism is the view that moral judgements report facts or moral properties, and thus they do not entail motivational force. That is to say, there might not be good reasons for one to be just. However, this does not necessarily disarm the motivating power of moral judgements and the normativity of morality, so long as it does not deny that moral judgements motivate. Instead, it holds that moral judgements can motivate, but that their motivational efficacy depends on contingent factors (which moral judgement itself might not entail).

This allows Thrasymachus to pose a serious challenge to the Platonic account of justice. He holds that there are not always reasons for one to be just; and thus, to be motivated to act justly, one has to be provided with reasons. Thrasymachus, in other words, is in search of a justification to act justly. His scepticism centres around the fact that he does not acknowledge that justice can itself provide one with sufficient reasons to act. What marks his scepticism is his answer that justice is neither a virtue nor a vice. Given that virtue or vice entail normative reason (on the one hand to act virtuously, and on the other to avoid wrongdoing), Thrasymachus appears to suggest that justice does

not play any role in one's deliberations. This lends support to the theory that his scepticism manifests amorality a kind of moral scepticism, indicating that we are justified in asking why we should act morally when there are no justifying reasons for it.<sup>9</sup>

My suggestion (that Thrasymachus expresses amorality) is in conflict with Anna's (1981: 34-57) view, according to which his views demonstrate an immoralist position. My understanding of immoralism is that one knows that  $x$  is wrong, and this provides one with a reason to do it. This indicates that an immoral agent is one who necessarily follows what he believes is the wrong thing to do. I do not think that a Thrasymachean agent would necessarily be motivated to perform unjust actions, since there is nothing in the Thrasymachean account of justice which makes unjust actions necessarily more attractive than just ones (and if this happens, it is entirely contingent). But let me retrace my steps for a moment. So far, I have focused on the Thrasymachean account of justice, claiming that his account of justice (unlike Calicles') is descriptive, and sustains amoralist scepticism against the Socratic account of justice (denying that there are reasons to exercise the virtues, and so to be a just person). Plato's discussion of those challenges to his own account of justice demonstrates that sceptical doubts over justice are possible, and that amorality is a kind of moral scepticism which should be seriously considered since, if it is true, it disarms the normativity of justice.

## 1.2. The Question of the Amoralist

In the preceding section, I considered Plato's arguments from *Gorgias* and the *Republic*, concerning the nature of justice. I argued that, although both arguments seem to undermine justice, they have a very different scope. Calicles rejects justice because it does not comply with human nature, whereas Thrasymachus does not acknowledge that there are any reasons to be just, if one's self-interest is not advanced.

Bearing this distinction in mind, I would like to turn my attention to the amoralist, whose existence challenges the authority of moral requirements. In this section, my aim is to define who the amoralist is, and explain the threat he poses to morality. In addition, I suggest that there are two different standpoints from which one can debate the amoralist. First, one can argue for or against the very existence of such a character. And second, if we accept that such a person exists, what can we do about it? In this respect, I will move beyond those arguments which suggest that it is intuitively impossible for one to be an amoralist, since it is far more interesting to investigate

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<sup>9</sup> David Brink (1988: 46-50) asserts that Thrasymachus' position manifests amorality.



whether we can make the amoralist less resistant to moral claims, rather than to define him out of existence.

### 1.2.1 Who is the amoralist?

Acting against one's moral judgement – or acting against what one believes is morally right – results in immoral action. In this respect, the amoralist, roughly speaking, is someone who is indifferent to moral judgements: he refuses to act in light of his moral judgement, and he therefore performs immoral actions.

One might manifest immoral behaviour due to insufficient motivation, or due to a lack of moral knowledge. However, my point here is not to determine whether or not the amoralists' actions are immoral, but instead to examine the challenge he poses to morality.<sup>10</sup> My claim is that amoralism is a distinct form of moral skepticism which transcends the debate between right and wrong, and undermines the question of whether there is always a reason to act morally (that is, to ask for a justification of morality). But how are we to understand the amoralist? Consider the following example:

Oliver has had a good moral upbringing. From the early stages of his life, his family have made him aware that he should always deliberate whether his actions are morally right or wrong. He has developed his skills to express and defend his moral views, and thus he volunteers to act as a moral consultant for a couple of charities regarding poverty and environmental issues.

So far, according to the example, there is nothing wrong with Oliver's behaviour. He has been morally educated, and he can therefore distinguish between right and wrong. He has had a good grasp of moral terms, and has practised and applied moral principles and rules without difficulty. In addition, he has always been motivated by his moral judgements, since he claims that there is no point in expressing a moral judgement without being committed to act accordingly.

The example proceeds. Oliver has become a lawyer and he has been working for a law firm for a long time. His colleagues admire his dedication to morality, and they look at him as a moral exemplar. Recently, there was a fraud in the law firm, which if it

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<sup>10</sup> If the amoralist performs morally wrong actions, this manifests immoral behaviour. The fact, however, that he is an amoralist does not guarantee that all his actions will necessarily be immoral. He might perform immoral actions if it is in his interest to do so. Raz (1997) points out that the amoralist might act morally due to moral luck.

became known to the public it will be harmful for the company and its shareholders. Oliver has known about it for some time, but he did not do anything. Recently, he began questioning whether there is any reason to perform moral actions. So, when his colleagues asked him why he did not tell the truth about the fraud, he replied: why should I be moral? He added that moral issues leave him cold, and he looks for a justification to act morally. At the moment, he is indifferent to any issue relating to morality, since he cannot find adequate justification to support his concern about moral issues.

The purpose of my example is to describe amoral wrongdoing; that is (roughly speaking), indifference to what is morally right or wrong. Indifference might be due either to the agent's ignorance of what is morally right, or to the agent's bad moral values (Milo 1982 and Raz 1997). Nonetheless, none of the latter claims account for Oliver's amoral behaviour, since he claims that he knows he should have told the truth, but was not motivated to do so. Consequently, amoral behaviour is not rooted in his ignorance.

Additionally, Oliver has good moral values, because he has had a good moral education. He did not change his moral values as a result of not telling the truth about the fraud in the law firm; he was indifferent to the morality of the action, and was therefore not motivated to act in the light of his moral judgement.

What one should not forget is that, if Oliver had bad moral values, he would manifest not only indifference but also evil behaviour, perhaps accusing those people in the law firm he dislikes with the fraud.<sup>11</sup> On this reading, one might claim that amoral wrongdoing is tantamount to psychopathy, holding that those who manifest amorality are psychopaths (Milo 1982). This explanation, however, is insufficient, for two reasons. First, it is not plausible to hold that those who remain unmoved by their moral judgements are necessarily psychopaths. And second, this would not allow any space to explore whether it is possible to 'convince' the amoralist to be less resistant to moral claims (Williams 1972 and Raz 1997). If psychopaths manifest amoral behaviour, it is a different question entirely, and it is not my purpose here to thoroughly appraise it.

Hence, the amoralist is aware of the wrongness of his actions, but he does not have bad moral values. On this reading, the problem seems to be that his moral values

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<sup>11</sup> Here, I imply a distinction between amoral and immoral agents. I take immoral agents to be those who pursue evil actions. Following Dancy (1993), I accept that 'evil people are those who are attracted by evil for its own sake. They can tell the difference between right and wrong well enough too; but they take the wrongness of an action as a reason for doing it and the rightness of an action as a reason for leaving it undone'.

do not play any role in the construction of his moral judgements. To put it differently, his moral beliefs form no part of his motivation. This might happen for two reasons.

Recall my example again. First, Oliver did not tell the truth about the fraud case because he knew what was right, but could not any longer see that this is a compelling consideration. Consequently, he was unable to direct his motivation. Second, he did not tell the truth because he had known that the fraud would be beneficial to him. So, his motivation is shaped and informed by his self-interest, and he therefore manifests indifference to the fraud case.

So far, I have tried to shed some light on the sources of amoral wrongdoing, in order to understand how it is possible for one to be an amoralist. In what follows, I will turn my attention to the threat that the amoralist poses to morality. Before that, I feel it is important to draw a distinction between different kinds of amoral wrongdoing, since this will help to define the type of amoral behaviour that concerns me.

Following Sytsma (1995), we can distinguish four kinds of amoral behaviour. The first kind involves agents who seem to be completely unaware of moral considerations, are incapable of moral deliberation and moral judgements. As a result, these agents lack moral motivation, since they do not form moral judgements. The second kind deals with agents who, although they are aware of the moral considerations of others, may be incapable of having some response to (and perception of) others. This is what is called conventional moral indifference. The third kind has to do with agents who are able to acknowledge that others' actions are morally wrong, but are not moved by their judgements about others' actions. Finally, the fourth kind includes those agents who, although they are capable of holding their own moral judgements, remain unmoved by them.

Although all cases demonstrate amoral wrongdoing (in the sense that agents are indifferent to moral demands), it is the only the fourth case which interests me here. The first and the second kinds of amoral behaviour do not seem to pose any threat to morality, since agents are either incapable of moral deliberation (and holding a moral judgement), or unable to formulate a response to others' moral considerations. They seem to lack understanding of what it means to deliberate about morality, and to act accordingly. Consequently, they do not cast any doubt on the authority of moral demands. For instance, we cannot blame someone for not closing the door if they do not understand what the expression 'close the door' means.

The third case, although it seems to pose some threat to morality (since agents who manifest the amoral behaviour in question have some understanding of the actions

of others), contains agents who do not seem to relate moral judgements to their own deliberations. So, there is a missing link between how they judge the actions of others, and how they judge their own actions. Although one might claim here that this instance of amoral behaviour undermines the authority of moral requirements, this is a rather strong claim. It might be the case that those agents can be motivated by their own moral judgements concerning their own actions, and thus they seem to understand what means to act morally. However, the fact that they are not moved by their judgements about the actions of others shows that they are simply ignorant of the other-regarding character of moral demands (to a certain extent). Moralists can put up with this kind of case, since what they have to do is to provide the link between one's own moral judgement, and one's moral judgement about others. To recap, for the first and the second kind of amoral wrongdoing, either there is no moral deliberation and moral judgement (and therefore no consequent motivation); or there is no deliberative response to what is right or wrong (and consequently no motivation). According to the third kind of amoral wrongdoing, to acknowledge that others' actions are morally wrong does not issue motivation. This does not mean, however, that agents who manifest the third kind of amoral behaviour are not morally motivated. They are motivated to do the right thing, but their judgement regarding the actions of others does not have any motivational efficacy.<sup>12</sup>

The fourth kind of amoral wrongdoing is more interesting, however, since those agents who hold distinctly moral judgements and yet remain unmoved by them seem to be 'missing something'. If they are right, the authority of moral demands is undermined.

Recall my example again. Oliver recognizes that he should tell the truth about the fraud case that occurred at the law firm in which he works, but he does not do so. There is something missing between Oliver's recognition that he should tell the truth, and the action of telling the truth itself. What is missing from his motivation is a reason to act according to his moral judgement. He is searching for a reason to justify why he should act morally. Although he recognizes that there is a moral reason to tell the truth, he still calls for a justification of his moral reason to do so. But how are we to understand this?

For any action we perform, we are asked to give a reason which shows why we acted the way we did. For instance, if a person goes to the dentist, he might claim that he went to the dentist because he had a toothache. His having a toothache expresses his

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<sup>12</sup> Perhaps, if it is shown to them that there is no difference between their judging their own actions and the actions of others, they will be motivated by both kinds of judgements.

reason for going to the dentist. In the same respect, the amoralist asks for a reason which shows why he should act morally. However, in the case of moral reasons, things appear to be different, since according to common sense about morality, the recognition of moral reasons entails motivation, and therefore there is no need to ask for a reason to act morally. Hence, on this reading, the amoralist is someone who acknowledges moral reasons but does not feel their weight, and he therefore asks for a justification to act morally.

My example shows that, at the very least, the amoralist is a possibility; and if this is the case, we should consider whether it is possible to make him less resistant to morality. Nevertheless, before we undertake this task, it is necessary to explore a couple of arguments which doubt the possibility of the amoralist.

We cannot ground the justification of morality in any arbitrary system, and therefore we look for those facets which can provide the ground in question. Rationality and prudence appear to be the most attractive ones. It seems, though, that prudence can be taken as a justification for morality only because it can be related to rules of rationality (Dreier 1997).<sup>13</sup>

However, the very distinction between hypothetical and categorical imperatives that Kant draws, aims to show that the justification of morality can be given only by rules of rationality, and it is therefore compelling. According to Kant, we cannot justify our moral actions by appealing to self-interest or the contingent emotions that we have. Self-interest and emotions can issue only from hypothetical imperatives, which explain our actions but do not provide reasons to justify our behaviour. By contrast, categorical imperatives are compelling, since they apply to us independent of our desires or our contingent urges of self-interest.

To issue a categorical imperative, for Kant, is to recognize that there is a moral reason to act a certain way. This reason has universal application, and therefore one cannot exclude oneself from this. Either you accept that you act in the light of categorical imperative, or you do not accept. In this respect (for Kant), it is nonsense to suggest that, while I acknowledge that there is a moral reason to act, this reason does not apply to me, and I therefore need to look for a justification to act in light of the reason in question. If one recognises a moral reason, one has already issued a

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<sup>13</sup> Dreier (1997) points out that Nagel (1970), in his *The Possibility of Altruism*, suggests such an account of prudence.

categorical imperative which, by definition, has categorical and universal application. On this reading, the amoralist is impossibility for theorists like Kant.

So, what follows from this is that moral principles are necessarily magnetic. One cannot escape them, since by uttering a moral judgement one is 'pulled' by the magnetic force of moral terms to act accordingly. Arguing on similar lines, Hare (1952), in *The Language of Morals*, claims that there could not be a person who sincerely judges that lying is wrong and who recognizes what utterances of his would constitute lies, and who then goes ahead and utters these lies.

If we accept Kant and Hare's points of view about the universal application of moral principles, the amoralist is an impossibility. However, there seem to be a problem with these arguments.

Firstly, the argument appears to be circular. The position is outlined as follows: if moral judgements have magnetic force, there cannot be amoralists. There cannot be amoralists because moral judgements have the force in question. It is like saying that smoking 30 cigarettes a day will cause lung cancer, and then saying that all who suffer from lung cancer used to smoke 30 cigarettes a day. The necessity of motivational efficacy in moral judgement, complemented by the universal application of moral judgements, is not sufficient to define the amoralist out of existence. Most obviously, the fact that there are people who act against their own moral judgement provides strong evidence that amoralists exist.

Secondly, it is more intuitively plausible to say that there are amoralists, who are in their very nature self-interested. If this is the case, however, there seems to be a good reason for rejecting the universal power of moral judgements.

McIntyre (1981), in his criticism of modern moral philosophy, convincingly argues that the view that moral judgement is universally applicable (a distinctive feature of modern morality) is alien to most ancient cultures. Here, the idea of the individual self (as opposed to the universal application of moral judgement) is central to the understanding of good and bad. Agents recognize how to act well: reflecting on their lives and their own sense of self appears to provide at least a starting point for practical deliberation. In this respect, someone can be indifferent to morality insofar as he looks for a justification which can be related to his self-interest. So, the universality of moral judgements appears to be undermined.

Furthermore, it is also arbitrary to make the claim that morality is universal, if we think of morality as a human institution which recognizes various principles,

including our relations with those who are closely connected to ourselves. Bernard Williams outlines this idea nicely, providing the example of a man who faces a dilemma between saving his wife and a stranger, both drowning in the sea. Williams claims that if we follow Kant in this case, we have to apply the categorical imperative test, and then issue a moral judgement which will shape and inform our action. He points out that this is 'one thought too many', since we are asking this man to ignore his relationship with his wife. In this respect, the universality of morality does not seem to allow any space for those who are close to us. Hence, if the universality of morality is to be undermined, there can be an amoralist who acts morally when it suits his self-interest, and who can legitimately ask why he should act a certain way when the action is not related to his self-interest.<sup>14</sup>

Positions like Kant's and Hare's are sometime referred to as 'internalism' – the ideas that moral principles have magnetic force. Some further remarks on this general idea of internalism would therefore be in order. Advocates of internalism hold that the magnetic force of moral judgements is built into the judgements themselves, and thus one cannot sincerely hold a moral judgement and remain unmoved by it. As a result, they contend that the amoralist is an impossibility. Externalists, on the other hand, claim that there is no necessary relation between moral judgement and motivation, and it is therefore possible for one to be an amoralist. But how are we to understand this difference? Following Nagel (1970):

Internalism is the view that the presence of motivation for acting morally is guaranteed by the truth of ethical propositions themselves. On this view the motivation must be so tied to the meaning, or truth, of ethical statements that when in particular case someone is (or perhaps merely believes he is) morally required to do something, it follows that he has motivation for doing it. Externalism holds, on the other hand, that the necessary motivation is not supplied by ethical principles and judgements themselves, and that an additional psychological sanction is required to motivate our compliance ... Internalism's appeal derives from the conviction that one cannot accept or assert sincerely any ethical proposition without accepting at least a *prima facie* motivation for action in accordance with it.

According to internalists, the force of moral judgements appears to be overriding and inescapable. Hence, one cannot claim that, in spite of seeing that action *x* is morally right, it is not relevant to one's situation. Moral judgements have normative force and

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<sup>14</sup> I do not say here that the amoralist performs moral actions out of self-interest, but that his reasons to act morally might be rooted in self-interest. This case at least suggests that there might be people who are indifferent to moral judgements, and are self-interested. That is to say that they are at least capable of responding to reasons, such as those for their own interests.

motivating power independent of whether they are connected to one's circumstances or not. In this respect, Kant is an advocate of the internalist position.

If there is an amoralist, this threatens the internalist position, since the relationship between moral judgement and motivation is undermined. Since, for internalists, to recognize that something is morally right and to be motivated by it is the same thing, amoralists cannot exist. Externalists, on the other hand, who hold that there is a distinction between saying that something is morally right and being motivated by it, are proven right by the existence of the amoralist.

Nevertheless, as I pointed out in the introduction of the thesis, there are two questions that one can pose concerning the case of the amoralist: first, whether such a person exists; and second, if he exists, what we can do to make him less resistant to moral claims?

Since I am interested in the second question, I accept that it is extremely plausible – intuitively plausible – for one to be an amoralist. Recall my example again. Oliver has had a good moral education – he recognizes moral principles and rules – but he is not motivated to act in the light of his moral judgements, since he asks for a justification to do so. He looks for a reason to act morally. The example raises the possibility that it is at least intuitively plausible for one to be indifferent to one's moral judgements.

But even if it could be shown that amoralists do not exist in the very strictest sense of the word, empirical evidence suggests that there are agents who are indifferent to moral judgements. Consider leaders of regimes in different parts of the world, who are morally indifferent but who act morally from time to time, either accidentally or because it serves their own interest. Can internalists define these characters out of existence? Whether amoralists fit into a precise category is not the crucial question, here. Rather, internalists must prove that there is no such thing as an amoralist. In this respect, the onus is still very much on the internalists to establish their point, given the intuitive plausibility of describing cases as ones where an agent genuinely accepts that X is wrong, but this has no 'magnetic' pull for him. I think, Sigrun Svavarsdottir (1999: 180-181) nicely puts why internalists have the burden to justify why the amoralist is impossibility. She writes:



By casting us in the role of observers trying to understand Patrick's conduct<sup>15</sup>, I have shifted our perspective from a philosophical investigation of moral judgements to an empirical investigation of observable behaviour. In this context, the conflicting externalist and internalist intuitions are triggered by the question whether a certain hypothesis is in the running as an explanation of the behaviour. This has enabled me to appeal to a methodological principle governing empirical investigations to shift the burden of argument onto the internalists. In order to make my point as forcefully as possible, I have concentrated on a case in which the epistemic possibility in dispute seems to me not only one of the hypotheses that need to be considered, but actually the most plausible one, given the information provided about the agent's past and present behaviour. But that intuition need not be universally shared for my point to go through: *it is motivational internalists who are restricting the range of hypotheses that are in the running for explaining Patrick's conduct, so the burden is on them to justify that restriction.*

Hence, the question which seems to be more interesting (and which I will try to answer in this thesis) is: if amorality exist, what ought we to say to them? On this reading, I think that we need to explore those procedures which might make them responsive to moral reasons. Furthermore, if it could be shown that there is such a procedure which can make the amoralist less resistant to moral claims, morality appears to be strengthened. If we can show that it is possible to defend morality from such an attack (by showing to the amoralist that he should take the step back into morality), it seems that morality can 'win over' one of its enemies. A system which is revised to defend itself is stronger than the system which used to be vulnerable to attack. Moreover, if morality can 'win over' the amoralist, we can demonstrate that to utter moral judgements is something much more important than stating the difference between true and false; it is, instead, a matter integral to our everyday lives. So, by taking the amoralist's attack on morality seriously, we accept that moral considerations play an important role in our practical deliberations.

### 1.3. Egoism

Common sense beliefs about morality entail three interrelated positions. The first is that morality is necessarily other-regarding, that is, moral actions are those which take into consideration equally others' interests.<sup>16</sup> Secondly, morality is a normative discourse and it therefore introduces good reasons for actions at least for those who adhere to morality. Thirdly, moral judgements that are expressed sincerely encapsulate motivational force which reveals that there is a necessary connection between one's

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<sup>15</sup> Svavarsdottir provides an example according to which Patrick manifests amorality and here she refers to his 'conduct' implying his amoral behaviour.

<sup>16</sup> That is to say that morality is altruistically construed.

judgement and one's motivation to act morally.<sup>17</sup> In this respect, the moral judgement 'one ought to do x' implies that one takes heed of others' interests equally, and that there are good reasons for one to be motivated to do x. On this approach, egoism is held to be antagonistic to morality so long as, roughly defined, it suggests that self-interest is what regulates human behaviour. Although the line of argument behind egoism appeals to the notion of self-interest, different kinds of egoism entail different interpretation of the operation of self-interest in one's conduct.

My aim, in this section, is to shed some light on the three different kinds of egoism, psychological, ethical, rational, and demonstrate that, unlike the amoralist, they do not undermine the authority of moral demands.

Although moral actions demonstrate unselfish behaviour it is plausible for psychological egoism to question whether it is possible for one to act unselfishly. According to psychological egoism, human motivation is necessarily driven by one's desires and interests and thus unselfish actions are impossible (Rachels 1999).

Psychological egoism appears to be attractive insofar as it appeals to the human nature. It holds that agents' self-interest consists of goals and ends that they wish to achieve. For one to achieve these ends it is necessary to satisfy one's desires so long as desires promote one's self-interest and in this sense are means to ends. In addition to that, desires are necessarily motivating states, they encapsulate motivational force and they thus necessarily move agents. Granted that desires promote one's self-interest by motivating to act accordingly, it seems right for psychological egoism to adhere that any action against one's self-interest is illegitimate.

Hence, psychological egoism is the view which explains human motivation appealing to self-interest claiming that agents are naturally selfish. If psychological egoism is true, then moral behaviour seems to be implausible so long as people ought to do what is psychologically impossible. It seems then that psychological egoism threatens morality. Recalling the three positions concerning morality: first, it is other-regarding; second, it is normative; third, moral judgements entail motivational force; psychological egoism objects the first position that others' interests regulate one's moral motivation. The amoralist, however, does not aim to undermine the other-regarding character of morality. His indifference might manifest that he does not take into consideration the interests of others, but this does not mean that he is always self-

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<sup>17</sup> This is where the appeal of internalism depends insofar as it seems to sustain one of the common held beliefs concerning morality. But I will have more to say about internalism in chapter 3.

interested. On this reading, I do not need to thoroughly appraise psychological egoism, since it does not call for a justification of morality.<sup>18</sup> I would like now to turn my attention to ethical and rational egoism correspondingly.

Although ethical egoism like psychological egoism appeals to the notion of self-interest, unlike the latter which is a view concerning human motivation, the former is a doctrine about human conduct. Ethical egoism is a normative doctrine according to which agents ought to regulate their behaviour in the light of their self-interest (Rachels 1999). Agents have good reasons for action insofar as they are shaped and informed by their self-interest which indicates what is the right thing to do. In this respect, every agent has reason to promote his own self-interest since this is the ultimate duty and this is what renders his actions right. If all agents are guided by self-interest, everybody will be better off.

It would seem plausible to hold that psychological and ethical egoism shares the same position in virtue of the pursuing of one's self-interest. Nevertheless, there are two different positions. Psychological egoism is a view about human motivation, whereas ethical egoism is a normative thesis about the rightness of actions. An ethical egoist can defend that psychological egoism is true insofar as he might hold that human motivation is directed by self-interest and thus one is justified to act accordingly. Psychological egoism, however, is neither necessary nor sufficient for ethical egoism. It might be the case that the first is implausible but the second true, insofar as self-interested actions do not reveal that human motivation is naturally egoistic (Gert 1998). The challenge that ethical egoism poses to morality so long as it holds that what determines the rightness of actions is whether are driven by self-interest or not.

Rational egoism now is a doctrine concerning the reasons that one has for action according to which it is rationally required for one to promote one's self-interest (Shafer-Landau 2004). This bears upon the common sense belief about one's rationality. It is widely believed that if one knows the means that will bring about one's ends it would be irrational for one not to act in the light of the means in question. Rational egoism suggests that agents ends and goals are what constitute their self-interest, and the best way to achieve one's ends is to promote one's self-interest. In this respect, self-interest supplies one with reasons to act in order to satisfy one's ends, and for one to be rational means that one is capable to respond to reasons. Failure to respond to reasons is tantamount to irrationality, and for rational egoists for one to be irrational implies that

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<sup>18</sup> This is the position that Callicles holds in *Gorgias* in order to attack the Socratic account of justice.

one ignores one's interest. In this respect, they hold that capacity rationality bears upon the role that self-interest plays in one's deliberation, that is self-interest entails justifying reasons for action to which one has to respond.

It seems that rational egoism poses a serious threat to morality so long as it holds the view that it is irrational to be moral. Recall the three assumptions that lie behind common sense beliefs about morality. Rational egoism replaces the other-regarding feature of morality with self-interest, and relates reasons for action and the motivational force of one's judgements with self-interest. What seems to be appealing with rational egoism is the idea that reasons are related to self-interest. It is difficult for one to reject the idea that one does not care about his interest and thus does not act according to it. So, moral actions are possible if they are part of one's self-interest. There seem to be two solutions to the challenge of rational egoism. The first is to try to argue that morality and self-interest coincide which Plato introduces. And the second is to deny that morality should be related with self-interest, that is to deny that self-interested reasons silence other reasons. The second solution seems to be more attractive so long as it demonstrates that rational egoism manifests the same flaw with ethical egoism (Shafer-Landau 2004). Rational egoists like ethical egoists should justify why one has a good reason to give priority to one's reasons that come from one's self-interest. Both they can provide answers but they are arbitrary and thus cannot defend their views adequately.

In this respect, neither ethical egoism nor rational egoism pose the same sceptical threat to morality like amoralism. Ethical egoism seeks to replace morality with self-interest, whereas amoralism is indifferent to moral demands. In addition, rational egoism aims to show that it is rational to act in the light of one's self-interest. The amoralist might be self-interested and this is how we can show that he is at least rational, but this does not mean that he holds an egoistic position.<sup>19</sup>

On this reading, one could propose that we can justify morality to the amoralist by appealing to his self-interest. I will be discussing this view in Chapter Two and I will also shed some light on Nagel's idea in Chapter Four who implies that the step to ethical egoism might be the first threshold to morality for the amoralist. Nonetheless, I argue that both accounts fail to justify morality, since they seem to reduce moral requirements to self-interest.

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<sup>19</sup> I should note here that Williams (1972) calls the amoralist an 'egoist' but he does not claim that the amoralist holds an egoistic position.

We saw that egoism expresses sceptical doubts about morality holding that either it is not compatible with human nature, or it is not the right point of view to endorse reasons for actions, or it is contrary to one's rationality to act morally. Nevertheless, there are other views in the philosophical terrain which cast shadows over morality, holding, roughly, that it is not possible to have moral knowledge and thus we should abandon morality altogether.

#### **1.4. Moral Scepticism**

Central to the debate about morality is the division between those who do and those who do not advocate some form of moral scepticism. Moral sceptics express their doubts about morality. Unlike egoists who aim to discredit the other-regarding character of morality, moral sceptics call into question the justificational basis of morality claiming that there cannot be certain moral knowledge and in this respect it is impossible to have an objective ethic. In what follows my aim is to explain different versions of moral scepticism in order to show firstly that its different kinds cast different kinds of doubts on morality. The implications of this upon amoralism, a kind of moral scepticism, will be discussed in the last part of this section.

The sceptic has been an alarming figure for those philosophers who are involved with the problem of knowledge because he claims that questions about what we know and how we are able to know are pseudoquestions, so that it is impossible to get any knowledge. The sceptic claims that we are not justified to hold any true belief about the world since it is impossible to guarantee our knowledge about it. If we think that we have a belief, for example, that tea is a herb, the sceptic suggests that we cannot hold such a belief because there is no justification for it. Our belief that tea is a herb will be justified only if we can provide such evidence which shows that tea is a herb. And our belief in question will be true only if this belief, that tea is a herb, is a real representation of the world. Nevertheless, if we come to believe that the sceptic is right, then we call into question our claim that tea is a herb.

According to the sceptic, no belief such as tea is a herb is justified because we are not able to know whether tea is a herb. On this approach, the question which raises is what answer one would expect to the question whether tea is a herb or not. On one hand, a non-sceptic claims that his belief that tea is a herb is a justified belief because the science of botanology provides evidence for that. The sceptic, on the other hand, holds that he cannot answer the question whether tea is a herb. For the sceptic to be able

to provide an answer to the previous question means that he is able to hold a true and justified belief. This, however, is impossible for the sceptic insofar as he claims that we should not be certain about anything, and that there is no adequate evidence to confirm our beliefs about the world.

Considering our question about tea, the sceptic might urge that he cannot answer the question because he might have been deceived about the fact whether tea exists. It might be the case that tea is an illusion, and thus any answer to the question would be nonsensical since it would be absurd to ask justification for something that does not exist.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the sceptic might claim that even though he is certain that tea exists, there is no adequate evidence to confirm that tea is necessarily a herb. Hence, what remains for him is to suspend his judgement holding that it is impossible to know things and thus there is no need to hold judgements about things that we do not know. Nevertheless, one who is sceptic about tea being a herb does not necessarily mean that he holds sceptical views for other things, for instance, that dolphins are mammals. That is to say, that one can express sceptical doubts for something but this does not commit one to scepticism altogether. In a nutshell, scepticism holds that there cannot be justified beliefs.

One can manifest moral scepticism asserting that it is not possible to have moral beliefs because there is no such a thing as moral knowledge. Consider, for instance, the judgement 'one ought to keep one's promises'. One knows that the judgement in question is true and justified if keeping one's promises is morally right. To say that this is also morally wrong, would be contradictory and thus would make no sense to say to one that one ought to keep promises because it is both right and wrong.

The moral sceptic urges that it is not possible to distinguish between morally right and morally wrong insofar as there is no objective standard which would justify our beliefs concerning right and wrong. Therefore, moral knowledge does not exist, and there is no point to hold that actions are either right or wrong. Moral scepticism discredits morality, casting shadows over the very notion of moral knowledge which seems to regulate human conduct. Although what lies behind moral scepticism is the argument that there is no distinction between right and wrong and thus no moral knowledge, there seems to be different versions of moral scepticism.

On this approach, we can distinguish between moral justification scepticism and moral knowledge scepticism (Sinnot-Armstrong 1996). The first version of scepticism claims that nobody is justified believing in moral claims. For instance, the claim 'it is

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<sup>20</sup> I imply here Cartesian scepticism.

morally right to keep one's promises', is not justified because there is no evidence that guarantees the claim in question. The second version of scepticism, on the other hand, holds that nobody knows whether moral claims are true or false. Consider again the last example; 'it is morally right to keep one's promises'. According to moral knowledge scepticism, one cannot express a judgement about the truth or the falsity of this claim. To do that one should refer to some moral standard which would verify whether the content of the judgement is true or false. This also entails that there is moral knowledge since we would not be able to know moral standards. However, the moral sceptic in question denies the possibility of moral knowledge and he therefore objects that moral judgement can be either true or false.

Both versions of scepticism are interrelated. Taking into consideration that knowledge depends on justification, it seems that moral justification scepticism entails moral knowledge scepticism (Sinnot-Armstrong 1996). If one is not justified to believe that keeping one's promises is morally right, then one cannot adjudicate about the truth or the falsity of the moral judgement in question. In this respect, being sceptical about the justification of the judgements entails scepticism about whether it is possible to know that something is truly right or wrong. Moreover, doubts concerning the existence of moral knowledge raise two further implications. On one hand, it indicates that one's moral judgements do not provide any knowledge about what is morally right or wrong. Whereas, on the other hand, it proposes that moral convictions are not best thought of as beliefs, that is mental states which include cognitive content.

Here seems to be another kind of scepticism, moral nihilism. Moral nihilists do not accept the distinction between right and wrong so long as there is no standard outside in the world, which would confirm that it is true or false for a certain action to be morally right or wrong. Moral nihilists are divided between those who claim that moral judgements are necessarily mistaken, and those who hold that moral judgements cannot be appraised as true or false because they express affective responses to moral questions. Those who defend the first claim are moral error theorists, whereas those who advocate the second are noncognitivists (Shafer-Landau 2004). I will focus on noncognitivism (or linguistic moral scepticism according to Sinnot-Armstrong 1996) and I will not treat moral error theory.

Noncognitivists stress the distinction between fact and value holding that moral questions involve value and not facts (McNaughton 1988). In particular, they claim that we know the world through facts which we are able to observe. Consider the following

example. 'It rains outside'. One can confirm whether this happens or not, looking outside of the window, and thus one thinks is justified to claim that it rains outside. What the example indicates is that knowledge of the world depends on facts. If facts constitute representations of reality to which knowledge correspond, then whatever we know should involve facts. Consider now the following example. 'The flowers are beautiful', 'playing tennis is good'. According to noncognitivists, these examples do not report facts of the world but they manifest evaluations of things or actions (McNaughton 1988). The evaluations in question represent values which exist independently of the facts of the world. For instance, the value of beauty exists independently of the fact that flowers exist. The difference that lies beyond fact and value is that the former represent the world and thus is confirmed by reference to reality, whereas the latter does not represent the world and therefore is not subject to world-confirmation. On this reading, moral judgements do not report facts but they encapsulate moral evaluations of actions, and thus they cannot be appraised either true or false, because they do not reflect facts of reality. In addition to that there cannot be moral knowledge because values are not related with facts to which knowledge corresponds. Hence, for noncognitivists there is no moral reality which confirms morally right or wrong actions and thus moral knowledge insofar as moral judgements reflect values which are independent of the world. The denial of moral reality that is, their irrationalism, and moral knowledge is what marks the sceptical position for noncognitivists. Although noncognitivism rejects the possibility of moral knowledge, it manifests a weak form of moral scepticism (Shafer-Landau 2004). For noncognitivists, lack of moral knowledge neither entails that morality does not have any authority over us, nor that one has to suspend one's judgement over moral matters so long as nothing can be confirmed as right or wrong.

In this respect, moral judgements do not express moral beliefs. This would imply first that they include cognitive content, and second that they can be appraised as true or false. This, however, is impossible and thus noncognitivists hold that moral judgements are affective responses to moral issues. For instance, when one says that 'it is wrong to kill animals' this would be equivalent to 'booh for killing animals', or when one says 'it is good to give money to charity' is tantamount to 'hooray for giving money to charity.

For noncognitivists, moral judgements express feelings, emotions, and desires towards actions. No action can be judged as right or wrong independently of the response invoked in the agent who either performs or observes it. The affective



responses to actions are what noncognitivists call attitudes (McNaughton 1988 and Darwall 1998). So, moral judgements manifest the attitudes that one adopts towards certain actions. Granted that attitudes are constituted of conative states such as desires or emotions, cannot be either true or false insofar as there is no fact outside in the world that can justify my positive attitude towards coffee over my negative attitude towards tea. Furthermore, noncognitivists acknowledge that evaluative terms that is, moral terms involve a special kind of meaning which give a prescriptive character to moral judgements, and they claim that moral judgements entail motivational force. What renders moral judgments motivationally efficacious is the presence of motivating states such as desires and emotions.

To sum up, Noncognitivism is a doctrine which manifests sceptical about moral knowledge and moral reality. It claims that there is no such a thing as moral knowledge so long as there is nothing in the outside world which can confirm what is morally right or wrong. In this respect, moral judgements involve conative states and they thus express one's attitudes towards one's actions. Finally, moral judgements entail motivational force in virtue of the motivating states that they incorporate.<sup>21</sup> I will now turn my attention to another view which undermines morality that is relativism.

Amoralism unlike the kinds of moral scepticism I discussed so far in this chapter, does not make any claim concerning the content of moral judgement, or moral knowledge. Amoralists know the difference between right and wrong, but they are unmoved by their moral judgements. In this respect, their position raises implications concerning the content of moral judgements. However, I have stipulated in section 2 of the current chapter that I am not going to discuss those issues which doubt the plausibility of the amoralist. My aim is to answer what we can say to the amoralist to take him back to morality. Hence, amoralism is a kind of moral scepticism which does not undermine moral knowledge or the content of moral judgements.

So far, I have presented different kinds of sceptical attacks to morality. What lies behind these kinds of scepticism is the denial of the distinction between right and wrong and therefore moral knowledge I would like now to focus on what can undermine the

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<sup>21</sup> Different branches of noncognitivism appeal to the distinction between fact and value but they express different views about the content of moral judgements. So, we can distinguish amongst emotivism, prescriptivism and norm expressivism. According to emotivism moral judgements entail emotive meaning that is they incorporate feelings and attitudes, which are motivating states. And this is why moral terms entail motivation. Unlike emotivism, prescriptivism holds that moral judgements entail a 'state of the judge's will' that is more like a prescription. Finally, norm expressivism maintains that moral judgements express mental states of a distinctive kind that is, the state of accepting a norm. This states includes feelings and tendencies, which conform to the norm in question (Darwall 1998).

motivational force of moral judgement and show that it is possible to block their motivational power.

## **1.5. Accidie and Weakness of will**

### **1.5.1 Accidie**

Those agents who manifest accidie and weakness of will and fail to be motivated according to their moral judgements. Thus they are supposed to cast doubts about the motivational efficacy of moral judgements. In what follows, I will shed some light on accidie and weakness of will and I will investigate whether they cast shadows over the motivational efficacy of moral judgements and thus threat morality.

Accidie seems to be the phenomenon in which evaluation and motivation come completely apart; someone who suffers from accidie supposedly still accepts that various things are good or valuable, but is not motivated to pursue any of them (Tannenbaum 2004, Stocker 1978, Dreier 2001, Mele 2000). Consider the following example. Jimmy a successful lawyer used to be really concerned with morality. He used to help those who are in need, and thus he was charring the committee for the right of citizens of his county, and he also used to defend people's right writing in the local newspapers. In addition, he was concerned with poor people and thus he used to offer his services for free to those who are in need. His friends and his colleagues used to call him a 'moral saint' but he refused this title claiming that he was just concerned about people's well being. 15 years later Jimmy left his job due to retirement. Few months after leaving his job one of the clerks who was poor and Jimmy used to offer his help, asked him for some money, but Jimmy refused giving him. His old colleagues tried to explain his behaviour but they could not find a reason that warrants his action recalling his conduct to similar cases in the past. Jimmy said that he does not feel like helping people anymore.

What the example indicates is that Jimmy, being in the state of accidie does not reject a particular conception of the good in favour of other. For instance, he has not stopped helping others because he suddenly realised that this is not beneficial for his self-interest. Jimmy lacks the will to do anything he finds good or valuable. In this respect, it might be the case that even though he is persuaded that it is good for his self-interest to keep helping others, he will not do it. He seems to be unmotivated to act on any judgements which issue in good or valuable actions.

Furthermore, agents who suffer from accidie, manifest lack of motivation for some period of time, there is nothing in the example which says that Jimmy used to refuse helping others, and nothing to guarantee that he will keep doing that. It might be the case that he has little motivation to pursue what he would pursue if he were not in the state of accidie. In addition, Jimmy does not deny that he no longer understands the value of helping others in need, and this implies that agents in the state of accidie do not suffer from any cognitive failure. Jimmy acknowledges that it is valuable to help others and he also knows that it is in his power to pursue such an end, but at the moment he is not motivated to do it.

Nevertheless, individuals who suffer from accidie range from the average person who sometimes lacks motivation to brush his teeth, or those who suffer from clinical depression. What accidie seems to be is that agents lack the motivating state – desire in a broad sense – to do what they consider is good. According to Michael Stocker (1978), what appear to be absent is the desire and not any cognitive states such as beliefs.

Through accidie...through general apathy, through despair... and so on, one may feel less and less motivated to seek what is good. One's lessened desire need not signal, much less be the product of, the fact, or one's belief that, there is less good to be obtained or produced...Indeed, a frequent added defect of being in such 'depressions' is that one sees all the good to be won or saved and one lacks the will, interest, desire or strength.

Although the phenomenon of accidie does not indicate that those who suffer from it ignore the distinction between right and wrong and they deny moral knowledge, it threatens the practical aspect of morality. One of the common held beliefs about morality is that moral judgements are necessarily efficacious. That is, there is a tight connection between moral evaluation and motivation which means that if evaluation is present, motivation necessarily follows. The phenomenon of accidie, however, demonstrates that it is possible for some agents to be able to hold moral evaluations but they fail to be motivated accordingly because they lack the relevant desire, will, to act accordingly. In this respect, accidie casts a sceptical doubt about the motivational aspect of morality stressing the point that it is possible to for one to evaluate without motivation. The lack of motivation, however, is not related to one's doubts about whether evaluation should provide motivation or not. Agents who suffer from accidie know that their evaluative judgements provide sufficient motivation to act but they cannot do so at the moment, because they do not want to get involved with life.

There seem two choices available to theorists who claim that there is a tight connection between moral judgements and motivation and deny that accidie casts sceptical doubts over the motivational power of moral judgements. They can either

claim that moral judgements generally motivate except from cases of *accidie*. Or, they can concede that *accidie* casts sceptical doubts about the motivational efficacy of moral judgements, but this does not entail further doubts about the justificational basis of morality. Hence, the phenomenon of *accidie* challenge the connection between moral evaluation and motivation, but it does not discredit the relation altogether. So, although *accidie* is possible this does not entail that moral judgements lack motivational force. But what about weakness of will?

### 1.5.2 Weakness of Will

Weakness of will like *accidie* manifests failure in motivation not in virtue of lack of certain motivating states, but due to the lack of exercise of certain rational capacities. Those who suffer from weakness of will act contrary to their own moral judgements concerning what is better for them to do, while they could have chosen otherwise. Consider the following example. Richard judges that it is better for him not to drink than to drink. He faces a dilemma between those reasons which favour drinking, that is, it gives him pleasure, satisfies, a feeling which, left unsatisfied interferes with his ability to work; and those reasons which disfavour drinking, that is that drinking damages his health, and that any time he drinks he becomes vicious. Richard chooses to drink, although he could have chosen not to do so. Although Richard's case manifest weakness of will the question which rises is whether of weakness is possible.

Socrates, for instance, claims that there is no such a problem as weakness of will (*Protagoras*). He holds that nobody acts voluntarily badly that is, if one acts wrongly this happens due to ignorance. It would be absurd for one to know what is the best thing to do and yet not be motivated to do so. Therefore, Socrates claims that weakness of will is not a problem because it does not really exist. If one acts wrongly and against oneself, then this happens because one lacks knowledge of the relevant facts. Plato is in align with Socrates and thus denies that weakness of will can be a problem for practical reason. For Plato virtue is knowledge and vice is ignorance. In this respect, those who are not virtuous ignore what is the best for them and thus they are not motivated accordingly. Hence, there is no problem concerning the will. Recalling my example with Richard and his drinking, Socrates and Plato would claim that Richard fails to be motivated by what is the best for him, because he lacks some relevant knowledge about drinking and thus he is not motivated accordingly. Socrates' and Plato's claims leaves us with the view that there is no problem with weakness of will and possible failure in

motivation involves lack of knowledge of the relevant facts. The considerations so far adduced suggest that weakness of will is related to ignorance.

Aristotle, however, who shares Plato's line of argument that virtue is knowledge and vice is ignorance, he denies that weakness of will is related strictly to knowledge. Aristotle notices that it is possible for one to manifest moral failure that is, to fail to be motivated according to what is virtuous. In his discussion, he acknowledges a kind of moral failure which is called *akrasia*.<sup>22</sup> He distinguishes between two kinds of *akrasia*, 'impetuosity' and 'weakness' (1147b20). According to Aristotle, the weak person has deliberated rightly but he is not committed to the result of his deliberation, due to interference with feelings, whereas the impetuous person is guided by feelings and thus he has not deliberated adequately. So, it seems that the latter lacks certain knowledge and thus he does not deliberate.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, Aristotle also introduces practical syllogism in order to show how knowledge issues in action that is, to say how one's belief is related to one's motivation (1147a24-1147b2). Consider my earlier example about Richard's drinking how it is explained by Aristotle's practical syllogism. Richard could think; what contains alcohol is bad for me. Drinks contain alcohol so I ought not to drink. Or, what contains alcohol is pleasant. Drinks contain alcohol so these would be pleasant for me. Aristotle stresses the point that if weakness of will involves lack of knowledge Richard is *akratic* because he either does not know what is bad for him, or he ignores that drinks contain alcohol. Nevertheless, this is not the case because Richard is fully aware that drinks contain alcohol and that alcohol has bad effect on him. If Richard is fully informed about alcohol and capable of applying his knowledge as Aristotle supposes, then the problem shifts to the second syllogism. It seems that Richard acts in the light of what is pleasant. That is, he is pulled by what Aristotle calls appetite – his desire to drink alcohol – and he is incapable to exercise his capacity to resist to the appetite in question.<sup>24</sup> Hence, Richard manifests lack of self-control and fails to be motivated in the light of his best judgement when he is guided by his desires. So, Aristotle concludes that *akrasia* happens due to the agents' unreasonable desires and not in virtue of ignorance implying that moral failure is related to unreasonable desires. This leaves with the claim that lack

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<sup>22</sup> Aristotle calls it *akrasia*, but his translators use the term 'weakness of will' or 'incontinence' which do not really represent what *akrasia* means (Urmson 1988).

<sup>23</sup> The discussion about knowledge invokes further distinction about knowledge and its uses. There is a difference between having some knowledge and making use of it, and between knowledge of universal premises and particular premises, but it is not my purpose here to thoroughly discuss Aristotle's views on weakness of will.

<sup>24</sup> Appetite is a kind of desire that Aristotle involves in his discussion concerning the nature of desire.

of self-control upon one's desire lead to moral failure, and insofar as akrasia appeals to lack of self-control is necessarily an instance of moral failure.

Donald Davidson (1969) who popularised the debate about weakness of will disagrees with Aristotle and claims that weakness of will has to do with one's action and not necessarily with moral action. Davidson claims that there is no such a thing as weakness of will.

Davidson (1969) claims that there are two principles that rule the connection between practical judgement and motivation. According to the first, 'if an agent wants to do X more than he wants to do Y and he believes himself free to do either X or Y, then he will intentionally do X if he does either X or Y intentionally'. Whilst, according to the second, 'if an agent judges that it would be better to do X than to do Y, then he wants to do X more than he wants to do Y'. Granted that Davidson's premises are right, then it cannot be the case that someone like Richard could choose intentionally to drink although he knows that it would be better not to drink. Davidson suggests that Richard who manifests weakness of will believes that what he does is, in some respect, good or desirable to do, since he does it intentionally, i.e. for a reason.

Following his two principles Davidson holds that there are three judgements available to an agent. That is, on one hand given that drinking will be pleasant for him, it is better for him to do so, and on the other that drinking is the wrong thing to do. What the agent judges is that it is better not to drink (Milo 1982). Davidson implies an agent is confronted with two judgements one is conditional to what is better for him to do and one is unconditional. For Richard who exhibits weakness of will, Davidson claims that Richard judges unconditionally that it is better not to drink since he believes that this is harmful for him and he should act according to his judgement. However, Richard acts in the light of his conditional judgement that it is good for him to drink since it is pleasurable. Hence, Davidson concludes that Richard's action is impossible or irrational so long as he acts contrary to his unconditional judgement that is, what is the best for him.

Weakness of will like *accidie* manifests failure in motivation for different reasons. Agents who suffer from *accidie* lack certain motivational states and thus they cannot act in the light of their judgements, whilst those agents who undergo weakness of will are not able to exercise certain rational capacities. Such a rational capacity is to respond to what one considers as reasons for actions. For instance, Richard exhibits weakness of will so long as he acknowledges that drinking is bad for him but he does

not respond accordingly. If he lacked any motivating states, one would urge that he lacks the desire to be healthy. But Richard certainly does not lack such a desire or is ignorant about what drinking might cause to his health. He appears to be unable to act on his best judgement, and this is what marks weakness of will.

At the risk of being repetitive, weakness of will like *accidie* poses a threat to practical aspect of morality, casting sceptical doubts about whether moral judgements are necessarily motivating or not. Both phenomena show some evidence that moral judgements might not be always motivating, but they do not aim to discredit the intellectual basis of morality, urging that there is no moral knowledge or that there is no such a thing as morality. Some theorists (Korsgaard 1996), however, do not accept that it is plausible to doubt the practical aspect of morality without doubting the intellectual aspect. In this respect, *accidie* and weakness of will cast doubt on both aspects of morality, and those who manifest it are remain unmoved by their moral judgements because they do not understand the content of moral judgements. Hence, either they are incapable of holding moral judgements, or they are irrational. A less vigorous view claims that moral judgements are always motivating except from cases of *accidie* and weakness of will.

On this approach, both phenomena manifest moral weakness insofar as agents who suffer from them appear to be unable to pursue what is good for them and avoid wrongdoing. Nevertheless, they do not question whether they should pursue what is good; they just manifest temporal failure to be motivated by it. The amoral agent, however, who like those who suffer from *accidie* and weakness of will remains unmoved by his moral judgement raises such a question and thus is believed to cast doubts on the justificational basis of morality. Although *accidie*, weakness of will and

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have shown that different sceptical views challenge different aspects of morality. In the first section, I presented Plato's discussion of the possible challenge to justice and I focused on Thrasymachus' argument. I argued that he holds a descriptive account of justice which accommodates his amoral scepticism. Plato's discussion indicates amoral scepticism is possible and that it is different from other kinds of sceptical doubts over morality.

In the second section, I defined the who is the amoralist and I set the question that I will be discussing in the thesis. I claimed that the amoralist is someone who is indifferent to moral demands and the therefore remains unmoved by his moral

judgements. In this respect, the amoralist is someone who calls for a justification of morality. I also distinguished between two questions which are related to amoralism. First, investigates whether it is possible for one to be an amoralist. Second, if it is possible for one to be an amoralist what we can say to take him back to morality. I claimed that since it is at least intuitively plausible for one to be amoralist, the latter question is more interesting. In addition, if we provide justification to the amoralist, then morality appears to be stronger. In the meantime, I cleared the grounds from the obstructions and I explained why I will not discuss the internalism and externalism debate. More precisely, I pointed out that internalists have the burden to prove why the amoralist is impossibility, since there are people who actually remain unmoved by their moral judgements.

Furthermore in the third section I explicated the sceptical challenge that egoism pose to morality, and I claimed that there are three kinds of egoism which cast slightly different doubts against morality. Psychological egoism is a view concerning the nature of human motivation according to which it is natural for one to be motivated only by one's own interests. Ethical egoism is the normative doctrine according to which it is right for everybody to pursue their own interests. And finally, rational egoism is the doctrine that holds that it is rational for one to promote one's self-interest. These kinds of egoism aim to discredit the other-regarding character of morality so long as they focus on self-interest. Although egoism appears to be a challenge for morality, it is different from amoralism. The egoist's point of view appears to be attractive, since one can argue that it might be possible to show to the amoralist that his self-interest will be advanced if he acts morally. I will be discussing this view in my next chapter.

In the fourth section, I focused on moral scepticism and I claimed that there are different positions which cast shadows over morality appealing to the denial of the distinction between right and wrong and moral knowledge. So, I explained moral knowledge and moral justification scepticism according to which it is not plausible to know what is right or wrong. In addition, I shed some light on moral nihilism and its kind, noncognitivism. I claimed that although they do not reject morality altogether, they hold that our moral judgements incorporate some attitude towards to what is right or wrong and that our moral judgements do not report facts about moral reality since the latter does not exist.

In the fifth section I discussed those phenomena which concern failure in moral motivation such as accidie and weakness of will. I have shown that accidie is the phenomenon according to which it is possible for one to fail to be motivated by one's



judgements so long as one lacks the corresponding motivating states. Those who suffer from weakness of will also fail to be motivated by their judgement but this happens because they lack self-control and they are incapable of exercising certain rational capacities. Both phenomena do not doubt the intellectual aspect of morality but they demonstrate that it is plausible to hold that moral judgements are not necessarily motivationally efficacious, and they thus challenge the practical aspect of morality. But how are to understand the relation of the amorality to the rest of the views and theses which appear to challenge morality?

Although it is possible the amoralist to exhibit egoistic behaviour she does not deny to act morally in virtue of her self-interest. Any kind of egoism tries to discredit the other-regarding character of morality and propose that what should direct our actions is self-interest. Either because this is closer to our nature, or it is the right thing to do for our well being, or it is the rational thing to do. Nevertheless, egoism in contrast with amorality suggests that we should abandon morality and engage the self-interest point of view. Amorality does not suggest that we should remain unmoved by moral judgements in order to change our point of view concerning our actions. The question that amorality proposes is whether one should be moral, which implies that if it is provided sufficient justification, the amoralist will be motivated by her moral judgements.

Amorality is also different from moral justification and moral knowledge scepticism. Both kinds of this scepticism undermine the idea that it is possible to have moral knowledge and thus justified moral beliefs. Amorality does not imply that one lacks moral knowledge. I have shown that it is plausible for one to know what is morally right and wrong and to believe that moral knowledge exists but to remain unmoved by one's moral judgements. That is to say that amorality does not entail moral knowledge scepticism. It might be also held that if moral knowledge scepticism is true, then the version of amorality I favour seems to be false because amoral agents claim that they know what is morally right and wrong that is, they adhere that moral knowledge is possible. If amoralists did not know what is right or wrong, then they would not be justified to ask why one should be moral, a question which moral knowledge sceptics do not set. In contrary their question is how we can be moral if there is no moral knowledge.

Nevertheless, amorality is not compatible with moral nihilism. Noncognitivists who argue that moral judgements entail attitudes and they are necessarily motivating states so long as they encapsulate conative states such as desires claim that amorality is

incoherent. In particular, they deny that it is possible for one to remain by one's judgements, and they think that the amoralist's question is nonsensical so long as one cannot ask justification to act morally. It might be possible for noncognitivists to accept the definition of amorality I proposed according to which it exhibits insensitivity to others' that is lack of a conative state to act in the interests of others. Noncognitivists, however, do not accept the proposal in question because moral actions entail necessarily some attitude and thus motivation. Their doubts stress that moral judgement cannot be assessed as true or false because there is no moral knowledge, a claim that we have seen the amoral agents reject.

Finally, although amorality manifest failure in moral motivation like *accidie* and weakness of will, it questions the justification of morality whereas the other two phenomena do not and they appear to be emotional distortions. We have seen that those who suffer from *accidie* remain unmoved by their moral judgements because they lack sufficient motivation. Those who suffer from weakness of will fail to be motivated by their moral judgements since they fail to exercise rational capacities. Amoralists, however, fail to act in the light of moral judgements because they do not see any reason why they ought to do so.

The alleged difference amongst the three kinds of failure in motivation is that those who suffer from *accidie* or weakness of will should be provided with the missing motivating states, whereas amoralists need to be persuaded in order to be motivated accordingly. Hence, the sceptical challenge that amorality questions the limits of motivational force of moral judgements without denying that motivational force is impossible. He is ready to act morally if she finds the adequate justification. To show whether this can happen, we ought to provide any possible answers to the amoralist's question and investigate whether she can be really provided with a justification to act morally. In what follows I will examine whether we can appeal to the amoralist's self-interest in order to justify morality to her.<sup>25</sup>

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## Chapter 2

### Self-Interest and the Amoralist

#### **Introduction**

In the preceding chapter, I explored those views and theses which pose a sceptical challenge to morality. They either undermine the other-regarding character of morality, or they question whether there is moral knowledge since moral judgements might express feelings and not beliefs. I argued that amorality poses a different threat to morality from the rest of the sceptical challenges insofar as it calls for a reason to act morally that is, justification of morality.

I also proposed that we should take the amoralist seriously and attempt to convince him to be less resistant to moral claims. The proposal in question entails two interrelated conditions. Firstly, the amoralist is a rational agent who can be persuaded by reasoning. Secondly, it is necessary to find an element in the amoralist's motivational set which can be related to moral judgement. My primary aim in this chapter is to investigate an argument that sets the background for the relation between the amoralist's motivation and morality, focusing on self-interest.

In the last chapter, I presented a figure of the amoralist who although does not take into consideration the interests of others, he, at least, cares for his own interests. He is motivated to act in the light of her moral judgements only if they supply her with reasons which promote his self-interest. This line of argument implies two questions. Firstly, whether self-interest constitutes the motivating element of moral judgement in virtue of which the latter carry motivating force. And secondly, if morality is advantageous to for one's self-interest, what kind of reasons for action endorses for those who comply with its requirements.

Although both questions are interrelated they do not have the same implications for amorality. It is one thing to claim that moral judgements might express one's self-interest, and another to hold that morality is advantageous to one's self-interest. The former explains why moral judgements motivate, whereas the latter why one has reason to act morally. For instance, I might be motivated to give famine relief because this makes me feeling good about myself. On the other hand, I might claim that giving famine relief is something right because this will result in tax reduction. In this chapter, I turn my attention to the question whether self-interest can provide to the amoralist the first step to the moral stance. Before, I answer this question, I need however to clear the way from obstructions concerning the relation between self-interest and morality.

So, in the first part of the chapter I intend to explain away the moralists' assumption that self-interest and morality are necessarily in conflict. To do so, I will explain the role of self-interest in motivation arguing that to act out of self-interest is to act rationally. And I will also explore the view that self-interested behaviour is not necessarily incompatible with morality focusing on the example of prudence, and arguing that not all self-interested actions manifest egoistic behaviour. If my reasoning is successful, I will show that since the amoralist acts out of self-interest is a rational agent and thus we can engage with him in an argument. In addition, if self-interest does not mark necessarily egoistic behaviour, there is some space to argue that one might take the first step to moral realm through self-interest.

In this respect, in the second part of the chapter, I will explicate the relation between the amoralist's self-interest and morality. My intention is to challenge his rationality exploring whether he can hold consistently his indifference to others and his self-interested attitude. I will do so, by investigating his answers to the question whether it is all right for him if others act as he does. I will turn my attention to two of the answers that are available to him. The first involves his consistency, whereas the second has to do his justification of his position.

If I am right my conclusion will be that the amoralist is a rational agent, and thus we can try to justify morality to him. Nevertheless, self-interest might appear to be a sign of rationality, it does not warrant moral actions.

## **2.1 Self-interest and the challenge of the amoralist**

Moralists hold that those agents who are indifferent to the interests of others, like amoral agents, they thus miss a significant constituent of their lives (Raz 1997) because they stand outside the realm of morality. This claim entails two different but interrelated views. Firstly, morality is tantamount to taking into consideration the interests of others. And secondly, that there is a necessary relation between morality and one's well being. The necessity of the relation in question lies in the common sense belief that we share society with those whom live together and cooperate. We can live in harmony with them if we act in the light of other-regarding reasons (Williams 1972). In this respect, amoral agents cannot have dissent relations with others. For instance, it appears to be impossible for an amoral agent to be involved in a true friendship since the latter entails a commitment to friends' interests. If they do not have honest relations with others, they cannot lead a meaningful life. So, moralists put forward the idea that

moral life is rewarding since it contributes to one's wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> But can we doubt the necessity of the connection between morality and the good or rewarding life?

Susan Wolf (Wolf 1982) in her influential article 'Moral Saints', argue that our beliefs about the nature of morality reflect the claim that the latter is necessarily other-regarding and thus it calls for excessive demands on moral agents. More precisely, Wolf, providing the moral exemplar of Mother Theresa, contends that those who hold that morality is substantively other-regarding, the example of Mother Theresa would be the ideal towards one would strive. To bolster her claim, she questions whether parents would advice their children to follow Mother Theresa's example. She points out that although they admire Mother Theresa's moral performance, they would not consider that their children would have a good life, if they lived like her. Therefore, the alleged link between the other-regarding character of morality and good life is undermined.

Wolf's argument attacks two views concerning the nature of morality. Firstly, it calls into question the other-regarding character of moral requirements since this portrays them to be excessively demanding. In addition, if moral requirements yield other-regarding duties, this entails that moral actions are incompatible with one's self-interest. This claim, however, contradicts the principle of practical reason according to which, one is rational insofar as one acts in the light of one's interest. If this is the case, we should concede to the dualism of practical reason according to which, there are two different sources of motivation morality and self-interest. On this reading, we cannot locate the motivating element of moral judgement to self-interest and thus we cannot show how morality has a grip on agents.

Secondly, Wolf's argument discredits the idea that morality and self-interest are necessarily in conflict since they might coincide, or they might be in conflict contingently. If one is interested in living a good life, one should pursue it. But, if morality is a significant part of living a good life and the former is not part of one's interest, it is not possible for morality and good life to coincide. This echoes Platonic views about ethics since Plato argues in *Gorgias* and later in the *Republic* that being good benefits one as a person. I think, however, that Wolf is far from being a Platonist, because she does not aim to link morality and self-interest in this sense. Discussion about the relation between the good life and the morality would not entail an other-

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<sup>1</sup> One should be careful, since neither I say that self-interested motives warrant moral actions, nor I imply that the latter are worth pursuing only if they contribute to one's well being.

regarding nature of morality, and it would not present the good life only in terms of advantage for those who lack an interest in it.<sup>2</sup>

Wolf argues contrary to the established view by moralists a constituent of one's wellbeing is to be moral. Although she does not draw a conceptual distinction between morality and wellbeing, she objects the idea that morality is necessarily other-regarding and it is also in one's interest to act morally because this is good for one.<sup>3</sup> But why is it interesting to turn our attention to the relation between self-interest and morality?

If, however, we accept that moral considerations are necessarily other-regarding and thus incompatible with self-interest, some moralists might be right to hold that the amoralist stands outside of the realm of morality. Moral judgements cannot have a grip on them, and they lack a significant constituent of their lives that is.

Nevertheless, if we do not concede the necessary conflict between morality and self-interest, we come across a more interesting case of the amoralist who is not deprived from any goods such as dissent relations with others. According to Raz (1997) such a figure poses a stronger challenge to morality. If he does not miss anything by escaping his moral duties, there seems to be nothing to justify morality to him.

So, if it were good for the amoralist's self-interest to be indifferent to others, it would be contradictory to claim that it is to his interest to care about others. In what follows, I will try to unfold this view arguing that it appears to be contradictory only if we concede the moralist's point of view according to which morality and self-interest are necessarily in conflict. Before that, however, I feel that I should shed some light on self-interest and its role in motivation.

## 2.2 Self-interest and motivation

To show that the amoralist is rational, we need firstly to demonstrate that self-interest constitutes rational motivation and secondly that the amoralist is able to pursue his self-interest consistently. Therefore, it is necessary to shed some light on self-interest and its role in motivation. Consider the following example.

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<sup>2</sup> Wolf's discussion stems from the idea that those who claim that one of the distinctive features of morality is its other-regarding character, such as Kant and his advocates, ignore that the question of the good life is not necessarily part of this kind of picture of morality. And she thus argues from the virtue ethics point of view, according to which, what is distinctive about ethical behaviour is the question how one should live and not how one respond to obligations to others. This, however, does not mean that those who ask the former question are motivated by self-interest. This is the fallacy that some moralists commit when they argue that virtue ethics depend mostly on self-interest. In the last chapter of the thesis, I will try to explain away the moralist's argument defending the proposition that acting from the virtue ethics point of view is not to act in the light of one's interest.

<sup>3</sup> I explain Wolf's argument since my argument in the whole thesis depends on the idea that morality and self-interest are not necessarily in conflict.

Jim enjoys sports and believes that it is good for him to take as many exercises as possible. He plays tennis twice a week with his friends, and during the weekend if there is no obligation with his family. At the end of the game, Jim and his friends go for a drink at the sports club to discuss about tennis and organise the schedule for next week's game. Although Jim is a skilful tennis player he happens to lose some matches to John, one of his friends. Jim is what we call a 'bad loser' and thus he gets angry and sometimes he offends some of his friends. He reconsiders whether he should keep playing tennis because he realizes that if he does not stop getting angry anytime he misses a match, this will be unbearable to his friends.

Jim is in front of a dilemma since he does not know what he should do. He either both keeps playing tennis and stays calm, or quits tennis because he cannot stand defeats and his misbehaviour to his friends. It seems that both actions promote Jim's self-interest since both actions appear to be beneficial to him. If he keeps playing tennis, this will contribute to his wellbeing insofar as it is good for his health to take exercises and it is also good to spend his time by performing an activity that he likes. On the other hand, if he quits tennis, this will also be to his benefit. He will not be losing his temper and thus he will be in good terms with his friends. One expects that Jim would choose the action that would be more beneficial to him. But if we assume that both actions contribute equally to his wellbeing, he seems to be in no man's land.

In what follows, I will try to explain away the assumption that both actions contribute equally to Jim's self-interest and I will argue that only the first action can warrant the promotion of his self-interest.

Common sense holds that moral actions are distinguished from self-interested ones because the former take into considerations the others, whereas the latter aim to satisfy primarily one's personal ends. This claim sounds too strong because it denies the possibility that people who have self-interested ends can perform moral actions. We expect, however, people to have certain self-interested ends. For instance, we believe that people care about their health, education, natural environment, human relations such as family and friends. In addition, people care about the development of their talents and their capacities which will help them to achieve personal success. In this respect, those who pursue their self-interested ends are benefited because they realise their ends and thus life can go for them as best as possible.

Hence, the viewpoint of self-interest yields reasons for action. Agents who have self-interested ends face choiceworthy alternatives. They deliberate what to do that is, to consider which of the alternatives is required to fulfil what will realise best their ends. Their action has to meet certain standards according to which the action will satisfy most the ends in question. If their actions comply with this requirement, which is to satisfy fully the end in question, they are justified to pursue this action that is, they have a reason to act. The reason in question is normative since if the agent does not act in the light of the requirement which is yielded by certain criteria, he acts wrongly and thus against his self-interest (Copp 1997). On this interpretation, the agent who acts against his best reason acts irrationally.

Its normative force depends on the fact that the action in question counts as favourable amongst the alternatives which satisfy the agent's self-interest. So, agents who are fully informed about their self-interested ends, have a normative reason to do what will fulfil these ends and thus will make their lives to go as best as possible. From this point of view, self-interest is a component of practical rationality since it is a viewpoint that provides agents with reasons for actions. Those reasons, which support the choices will make their lives to go as best as possible for them (Parfit, 1984).

Recall again my example. I assume that Jim's two choices will contribute equally to his self-interest. Consider his first choice. If Jim keeps playing tennis and accepts that part of playing a game is to loose irrespectively of one's skills, he will probably understand that he does not have any good reason to get angry anytime he looses. He will appreciate the game of tennis better, he will keep taking exercises, which is good for his health, and he will enjoy being with his friends in good terms. Consequently, this will make his life to go as best as possible for him.

Consider now his second choice. Jim decides to quit tennis in order to find harmony within and keep his friends. Nevertheless, he misses taking exercises and thus, he switches from tennis to running. So, now he can still take exercises and enjoy his time with his friends. Does the second choice contribute to his self-interest equally with the first one?

As stated above, self-interest yields reasons for action. Those reasons are justified insofar as they comply with certain standards which warrant actions that advance Jim's self-interest. There is a reason for action only if the action in question will promote his interest and thus will make his life to go as best as possible for him. On this view, Jim's first choice provides him with a reason to act since he will keep playing



tennis, he will develop his capacity to manage his temper and realize that part of any game like tennis is the possibility of defeat. Each of these contribute to his interest and make his life to go better since Jim likes sport and believes it is good for his health. Furthermore, he values friendship and also thinks that one will be a better person if he fully develops his personal capacities.

On the other hand, his second choice does not provide a good reason for action insofar as it does not really promote his self-interest. According to his second choice, Jim will quit playing tennis and thus he will miss something that enjoys doing. Additionally, he will not develop his capacity to be in control of his temper when this is necessary. Nevertheless, he will achieve to be in good terms with his friends and take exercises by running. The second choice does not fully promote Jim's self-interest because it demands sacrifices which do not seem to promote his life as best as possible.

In this respect, Jim is justified to act in the light of his first choice since it is the one which advances his self-interest and makes his life to go better than the second choice. On which grounds, Jim who cares about his interest is justified to adhere to the second choice and not to the first, insofar as the latter satisfies his interest better than the former?

If he acts according to his second choice, he will act contrary to his reason performing an action which does not count favourable from the normative point of view of self-interest. Therefore, Jim is not justified to act in the light of his second choice.

This leaves with the claim that self-interest is a component of practical rationality because it imposes rational requirements on actions to which agents ought to respond (Copp 1997). Moralists, however, might object this view arguing that self-interest is tantamount to preference and desire satisfaction (Parfit 1984 and Rogers 1992). If preferences and desires cannot be justified from any normative point of view, they cannot impose rational requirements on actions.

To illustrate this point, recall again my example concerning Jim's two choices. According to moralists, Jim's dilemma depends on which preference or desire Jim aims to satisfy. If he aims to satisfy his preference or desire to play tennis and take under control his temper, he has a reason to do so. If, on the other hand, Jim intends to fulfil his desire to quit tennis, change sport activity and thus keeps his friends, he also has a reason to do so. What gives him a reason to act depends on the degree of pleasure or satisfaction he will get either from the first or the second choice. This, however, does not provide sufficient justification for his actions.

Nevertheless, as it stated above to act in the light of self-interest is to promote those actions which will make one's life to go as best as possible, and it seems that to satisfy one's desire or preferences is to some extent to contribute to one's wellbeing. Moralists would not object that preference or desire satisfaction is what makes one's life to go better. They, however, deny that self-interest is a viewpoint which will enable Jim to deliberate about the actions would contribute more to his life independently of the degree of pleasure that either of the choices would bring about. That is, self-interest does not support any reason for action with adequate justification because it cannot impose requirements on one's desire or preferences insofar as self-interest is merely preference or desire satisfaction. It cannot be both a standard which provides justification for reasons for action and the reason itself that is, preference or desire.

This narrow conception of self-interest to which moralist concede, it lies on the assumption that self-interest and morality are necessarily in conflict. If moralists reject this assumption, they might not identify self-interest with preference satisfaction. Two choices are available to moralists if they decide to get rid of the alleged assumption.

On one hand, they can claim that although self-interest is narrowed to desire or preference satisfaction, it might motivate other-regarding actions that is, moral behaviour. On this reading, however, they should reject their ideal of pure moral motivation according to which, one is moral if one is motivated only by other-regarding motives. To relate moral motivation with desire or preference satisfaction is to acknowledge that there is no pure moral motivation and this would be contradictory to their thesis. Therefore, they should reject this view, if they are to be consistent. It seems then that moralists should stick with their view that self-interest is nothing more than desire or preference satisfaction.

On the other hand, if they try to reject the alleged assumption denying the desire-based status of self-interest and hold that the latter is a constituent of practical rationality and thus endorses rational requirements, they need to explain why moral requirements are different from self-interested requirements insofar as they are both rational and thus normative. On this reading, they should suggest a normative criterion that is different from both morality and self-interest. This, however, would involve the idea that morality calls for a sanction to support the overriding force of its requirements and I think this view makes the moralist's position to appear weaker. Hence, moralists have to stick with their assumption if they are not ready to change their views about self-interest.

### 2.3. Self-interest and Egoism

Independently of whether moralists reject their assumption, it is far from evident that the latter states that there is a necessary relation between self-interest and egoism. So, those who act in the light of self-interest are necessarily egoists because they are interested in advancing their own interests. Undoubtedly, self-interest shapes and informs egoistic behaviour to a certain extent. This claim, however, neither says that those who act for self-interested reasons are egoists, nor implies that they challenge the other-regarding character of moral considerations. In what follows, I will attempt to shed some light on the alleged relation between egoism and self-interest, arguing that that to act out of self-interest reasons is not tantamount to egoism.

Once again, recall my last example. Jim faces a dilemma either to keep playing tennis and take control over his temper if he loses, or to quit it and keep his friendship. My claim was that Jim acting in the light of self-interested reasons will choose the first option because it advances his self-interest that is to make his life to go as best as possible for him. If we accept that to be an egoist is to pursue one's own interest, Jim must be an egoist. But there seems to be nothing in his behaviour to reveal egoism. Now, what exactly do we mean when we say, for instance, that Jim is an egoist.

It has seemed to many people that egoistic action involves two conditions. The first is to perform only those actions which are good only for you, even if they are in conflict with the interests of others. And the second is to exclude the interests of others from your practical considerations. On this reading, what counts as a reason for action is only your interest since you never treat others as your reason for action (Hill 1992). If this is the case, Jim acts out of self-interest, but this does not necessarily mean that he acts selfishly. But what is the difference that we are alluding here?

Let me stick with my example. I claimed that Jim has a self-interested reason to keep playing tennis and control his temper if he happens to lose. This option will make his life to go as best possible for him, but it does not mark egoistic behaviour. He would behave egoistically, if he asserted that he enjoys playing tennis and he does not care whether his friends are offended by his misconduct to them. This would demonstrate egoism since he does not take into consideration his friends' interests.

Hence, to act out of self-interest does not result in indifference to others. To draw such a conclusion, one should adhere to the moralists' assumption that morality and self-interest are always in conflict, but at the moment I can see no strong reason why one should do so.

Moralists would have been right asserting that Jim is an egoist, if not only did he care about his self-interest, but also was he self-denying.<sup>4</sup> I think that Parfit rightly suggest that self-interested actions are not necessarily compatible with self-denying ones. The differences lies behind the claim what makes one's life to go as best as possible and what makes one's life to go worse. On this reading, one is self-denying if one never pursues what will make his life to go worse. Whereas, one acts out of self-interest, if the actions in question make one's life to go as best as possible. So, an agent who is self-denying will never act against his self-interest although this might make his life to go as best as possible in the future.

Recall again my example. Jim faces two options. He can either keep playing tennis and control his temper if he happens to loose. Or, he can switch to running and deny controlling his temper. His first option demonstrates that he acts out of self-interest, whilst his second that he is self-denying.

Following the first option, Jim will be able to develop his skills on tennis; he will also develop his character by respecting his friends irrespectively the results of any tennis game. This will make his life to go as best as possible since he will enjoy still playing tennis and he will be strengthening and sustaining his friendship. Following the second option, he will switch from tennis to running and he will never manage to control his temper. He appears to be self-denying since he believes that if he keeps playing tennis he should accept that defeat is part of the game, and this appears to be worse for his life.

If Jim is self-denying, his behaviour manifests egoism, since what is the most important for him is that his life does not go worse at any costs. Hence, he does not treat his friends' interests as reasons for action, and thus he does not care whether he respects them. So, the distinction between being self-interested and self-denying allows space for the assumption that self-interest is in conflict with morality. Nevertheless, it does not warrant that the conflict in question is necessary, and it does not justify the view those who act out of self-interest pose a sceptical challenge to morality. In what follows, I will try to unpack this sensitive claim by shedding some light on different kinds of egoism.

So far, I have tried to show that self-interest is not tantamount to egoism. If it were the case, then all self-interested actions would cast doubt on the other-regarding character of morality. Different kinds of egoism which appear to pose a sceptical

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<sup>4</sup> Derek Parfit (1984) in *Reasons and Persons* introduces this terminology while he explains the view that self-interest theory is a theory of rationality arguing that it is one thing to be self-interested and another to be self-denying. And that the latter is what makes self-interest theory being self-defeated. It is not my intention here to explain Parfit's views exhaustively on self-interest, but I use his terminology to bolster my view that self-interest should not necessarily be identified with egoism.

challenge to morality might entail self-interested actions, but the relation between self-interest and those views is not necessary.

For instance, psychological egoism is roughly the view that agents in virtue of their nature act in the light of self-interest and thus they behave egoistically. But those who act out of self-interest like Jim in my example they do not need to adhere psychological egoism. Jim has a reason to promote his self-interest making his life to go as best as possible for him but he does not claim that this is part of his nature. It might provide an explanatory basis for his action, but it does not provide any justification for his actions. Therefore, not all self-interested action manifest relation to psychological egoism, and they do not seek to undermine the other-regarding character of morality.

Furthermore, ethical egoism is the theory according to which one is moral only if one promotes what is in one's interest and thus everyone has a reason to promote one's interests. On this reading, none of Jim's actions mark ethical egoism. He makes a choice to promote his self-interest, but he does not have any reason to hold that anybody else should do the same. For example, Jim might value to develop his character and become a better person, but this does not mean that Richard – who believes that defects in one's personality are somehow attractive – should do the same.

Finally, rational egoism is roughly the view that it is rational to pursue one's self-interest because everyone will be better off. Although this claim appears to be compatible with acting in the light of self-interest, it does not necessarily reflect that self-interest is tantamount with rational egoism. Consider Jim's case again. He makes his choice deliberating what would make his life to go for him as best as possible independently of whether this should be example for others to do the same for their well being.

If he were a rational egoist what would support his reason for action is the idea that actions out of self-interest are necessary for his well being which does not entail that his life will go as best as possible. If, for instance, his actions were self-denying, he could still be a rational egoist but he might not pursue what will make his life to go as best as possible for him. Hence, although it appears to be plausible to relate self-interest and rational egoism it is rather a mistake to assume that all self-interested actions cast doubt on the other-regarding character of morality.

If the relation between self-interest and egoism does not harbour difficulties for the justification of morality can we hold the same for the connection between the former and prudence?

### 2.3.1 Self-interest and Prudence

Moralists hold that prudence is based on self-interest and thus prudential reasons cannot justify moral behaviour. Our first thoughts might be that self-interest is a component of prudence and thus moralists are right. But on second thoughts one might wonder whether moralists overlook the difference between promoting one's self-interest and acting prudentially. In what follows, my aim is to explain away the moralists' doubts concerning the relation between prudence and self-interest.

At this point, I wish to introduce the difference between acting in the light of self-interest and acting prudentially. To act out of self-interest is to make one's life to as best as possible, whereas to act prudentially is to promote one's interest taking into consideration the effects that one's action have for one's future (Nagel 1970 and Parfit 1984). Undoubtedly prudential actions incorporate self-interest since what makes one's life to go as best as possible might be compatible with what is good for one in long term. Prudence, however, does not depend on selfish motives and it is not tantamount to egoism, because egoistic actions do not necessarily benefit the agent in the long term. Consider again my example. Jim chooses to keep playing tennis and control his temper. His action is shaped and informed by self-interest, but it is also prudential. Granted that engaging in a pleasurable activity, and controlling one's temper will benefit his health and will develop his personality, his self-interested action is also prudential. Nevertheless, the question that arises is whether self-interest always warrants prudential actions.

In the same example, however, he has a second choice which appears to promote his self-interest, but it does not mark prudential behaviour. So, if he follows his second choice, he will suppress his desire to play tennis and he will not get rid of his bad temper. In this case, Jim promotes his self-interest but he does not act prudentially because he does not take into consideration how those actions which will contribute to his well being in the future. Comparing Jim's two different choices, I think that it is evident that it is one thing to say that one acts out of self-interest, and another to act in the light of prudential considerations. The former do not concern with whether actions benefit agents' in the long term, whereas the latter do.

On this reading, moralists focus on the claim that prudence is based on self-interest, but they do not seem to accept the distinction between self-interest on one hand, and prudence on the other. One might have a prudential reason to act morally since this will make his life better. Or, one might sacrifice his current career to

guarantee one's moral attitudes in the future. This view, however, does not comply with moralists' strong assumption that morality and self-interest are necessarily in conflict. This also entails their claim concerning 'pure' motivation according to which, moral actions cannot be yielded by a non-moral point of view which does not encapsulate the other-regarding character of moral considerations. Hence, prudence cannot support moral actions.<sup>5</sup>

Moralists might put forward a complaint contending that my example does not justify the distinction between self-interest and prudence and it cannot show that prudence can yield moral reasons. I have stated that Jim's first option pursues his self-interest, and it also demonstrates prudence. By keep playing tennis and controlling his temper, makes his life better in the long term, since it sustains his health and his friendship with those who involve in the game. Moralists could claim that there is no real distinction between self-interest and prudence. Both standpoints are not other-regarding and thus they cannot warrant moral reasons.

Furthermore, they hold that Jim's action to sustain his friendship does not mark moral behaviour. Jim's reason to respect his friends is not moral since he is interested in sustaining the friendship for his own good. Therefore, he decides to control his temper because this promotes his self-interest. It is a mere accident that the action in question takes into consideration his friends' interests.

I think that the moralists' objection seems to be toothless for two interrelated reasons. Firstly, if self-interest might yield moral actions accidentally, this entails that morality and self-interest are not in conflict necessarily. There might be cases where they coincide and thus the moralists' strong claim concerning the necessity of the conflict is undermined.

Secondly, that Jim's self-interested or prudent motives resulted in a moral action neither demonstrates that Jim respects his friends solely out of self-interest, nor says that he respects these people because they are *his* friends. That somebody's action benefits oneself, this does not reveal necessarily selfish motivation. It seems that if Jim chose the second option that is, to quit tennis without taking control over his mood would probably manifest disrespect to his friends. As I mentioned earlier, this might have worsen his temper to the extent that he could not stand his friends disagreeing with

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<sup>5</sup> The idea that prudential reasons advances one's self-interest comes from the ideal of the prudent man in Aristotle's ethics. According to Aristotle, the *prudent* man that is, the man who is virtuous is benefited by acting virtuously insofar as virtues are something good in themselves. But this leads to the misunderstanding that virtue ethics is based on self-interested motivation. I will treat an objection against this claim in my last chapter arguing that the fact that virtues are beneficiary for the virtuous agent does not mark selfish behaviour.

him. Moralists should remember that Jim's action does not provide any justification to argue that morality is advantageous to those who will consider it as part of their self-interest. It only demonstrates that self-interest can be related to morality. Hence, Jim's action is against morality only if we presuppose the moralists' claim that morality and self-interest are necessarily incompatible. But we have seen that this claim is too strong.

So far, my aim has been twofold. Firstly, I tried to show that self-interest is a component of practical rationality, which yields reasons for action. And secondly, that self-interest is not necessarily in conflict with morality and thus we might try to convince the amoralist that self-interest might provide him with reasons to be moral.

Towards this aim, I argued that self-interest yields reasons for action which do not mark egoistic behaviour, although egoism depends on selfish motives. Moreover, I contended that self-interest is different from prudence. And I argued that prudence which is related to self-interest might provide one with reasons to be moral. If this is the case, the moralists' assumption that self-interest and morality are incompatible is rather unpersuasive.

This leaves us with two claims. Firstly, those who act in the light of self-interest are rational and thus we can engage with them in an argument. And secondly, self-interest might yield reasons for one to be moral, since morality and self-interest are not mutually exclusive. Conceding that the first claim is true, we need to focus on the second claim investigating whether this is plausible. So, in what follows, I will try to unfold the implications of the second claim.

## **2.4 Is the amoralist a rational agent?**

In the preceding chapter, I sketched a picture of the amoralist according to which, although he is indifferent to the interests of others, he still acts out of self-interest. Consequently, he cares about those who are related to him such as his family, friends, and he also cares to develop his talents and his capacities. That is to say that he is interested in whatever is related to him (Williams 1972 and 1973, Raz 1997).

If this is the case, it appears that the amoralist is perfectly rational since to act in the light of self-interest is to act rationally (Parfit 1986). This conclusion, however, demands sensitive unpacking. If the amoralist is rational, this, at least, allows us to engage in an argument with him to persuade him to act in accordance with his moral judgements (Williams 1973). Furthermore, if it is shown that the amoralist is rational, this will explain away the argument from internalism about moral motivation.



Advocates of this view claim that moral judgements are necessarily motivating for those who sincerely hold them, and thus the amoral agent, either he makes insincere judgements, or he is irrational (Hare 1956 and Smith 1994). But if the amoralist can be rational acting out of self-interest, they seem to overlook the possibility that he can be convinced to take a step to the moral stance. In what follows, I aim to take a more critical look at the amoralist's rationality. To illustrate my point I will use the following example.

Jim does not usually pay taxes and national insurance fees. In public conversations, however, he suggests that others should pay taxes and national insurance fees. His friends disapprove of his stance because he concedes that citizens ought to pay taxes, but he does not comply with his judgement. They, thus, decided to confront him. Firstly, they tried to explain to him what does mean that citizens *ought* to pay taxes and national insurance fees in case he does not really grasp the normative meaning of the word. And secondly, they put forward the question whether it is all right for him if others do not pay taxes and national insurance fees. In addition, they point out that if this were the case, health care system, education and public transport would collapse.

His friends aim to show either that Jim does not have a good grasp of the moral language. Or, that he cannot consistently hold his indifferent behaviour to others. Granted that Jim makes sincerely moral judgements, he can provide two answers to their question. Firstly, he can reply that it is all right if others do not pay taxes and national insurance fees. Secondly, that it is not all right if others do not pay taxes. In what follows, my intention is to investigate firstly whether the amoralist can hold consistently his amoral behaviour. And secondly, whether his self-interest can warrant moral conduct. If Jim is consistent with his views and his self-interest does not provide him with the first step to moral stance, this will show that we cannot persuade the amoralist to be less resistant to moral claims by appealing to his self-interest. Let me unfold the first answer.

#### **2.4.1 The amoralist accepts that it is all right for him if others act as he does**

Jim concedes that if he has a reason not to pay taxes, others have also a reason to act similarly. What is striking here is that Jim seems to adhere the moralists' view concerning the other-regarding character of morality. This view entails that one should see oneself as equal amongst others and therefore one should treat others' interests equally with one's own. In this respect, we construe the moral point of view as a standpoint which yields reasons that we share with others. To assert that taxes should be

paid, one shares that it is right to pay taxes and advises others to do so (Schmidtz 1997). Furthermore, to act for a moral reason is to conform to the general features of reasons such as universality. So, if there is a reason for one to pay taxes in certain circumstances, the same reasons exist for others under the same circumstances (Nagel 1970).

Nevertheless, for the amoralist to concede that he shares the same viewpoint and consequently the same reasons for action with others appears to be inconsistent. The alleged inconsistency lies in two interrelated points. Firstly, if he accepts that others have reasons not to pay taxes is to say that others should promote their interests as he does. This leads us to the second point. Others should pursue what is in their interest even if the latter is against his own interest. One should remember here that the amoralist is only benefited if others keep paying taxes, since he will be harmed by the collapse of the health care system or public transport. On this reading, the amoralist undermines his own view since he claims that it is all right if others do not pay taxes which will probably result against to his self-interest. Hence, moralists are right to claim, here, that the amoralist holds inconsistent views and he is thus an irrational agent.

Before I explore whether the amoralist can escape inconsistency and thus the moralists' objection, I would like to explain why inconsistency is not really a problem for the amoralist.

Inconsistency reveals irrationality. On one hand, the amoralist claims that he ought to  $\phi$  in order to get A which is in his interest. On the other hand, he claims that you ought to  $\phi$  in order to get B, which is in your interest. However, your getting B prevents him from his getting A. In this respect, to promote one's interest implies that one will not share those reasons for action, which prevent one from pursuing one's interest. It seems that the amoralist pays a little price for what he practices (Williams 1972). If one is an amoralist and thus advances one's self-interest on the pain of inconsistency, I do not see why such an agent would be convinced to change his views concerning morality. One could say that one does not care whether one holds inconsistent views or not, insofar as one gets what serves one's interest.

As a moment of reflection reveals, the amoralist can escape the charge of inconsistency and remain consistent with his views. One should not forget that Jim is indifferent to morality and thus can deny answering the question 'is it all right?' The question involves moral reasoning. It presupposes the other-regarding character of

morality and the consequent view that moral reasons are reasons that we can share.<sup>6</sup> Hence, to set the question is it all right if others act as you do, is to ask whether you share the same reasons with everyone else that about an action which ought to be done. For those who adhere to the moral viewpoint, there is only one answer available that is, yes, it is all right if others act as I do.

For those, however, like Jim who are amoralist, they cannot give the same answer if they are to remain consistent with their views. If amoralist give a positive answer to the question, they seem to welcome actions against their own interests. At the risk of being repetitive, to answer the question 'is it all right?' is to firstly accept that there is a moral viewpoint and secondly that this viewpoint endorses action-guiding reasons. Although Jim might concede that there is such a viewpoint, he doubts that it can yield action-guiding reasons. Therefore, he can answer that is not going to moralise concerning the issue of paying taxes since he is indifferent to morality.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, there seems to be a different route to avoid inconsistency. For Jim to claim that it is all right if others do not pay their taxes, neither says, nor implies that he will encourage them to do so. We can distinguish two interpretations of his answer.

On one hand, if he utters that it is all right if others do not pay their taxes, it seems that he gives an advice in the sense that this is how citizens ought to behave. In this respect, his answer is associated with the moral viewpoint insofar as when we express a moral judgement is to hold that there is a reason to act that we should share. Hence, the content of the judgement 'it is all right to avoid tax paying' abides both Jim who expresses it and those who receive it.

If, however, we accept that this interpretation saves the amoralist from inconsistency, an objection quickly suggests itself. If Jim expresses the judgement that it is all right if others do not pay their taxes and he also believes that they will not

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<sup>6</sup> The question is it all right if others act as you do, reflects the Kantian doctrine of Categorical Imperative. According to the first formula of Kant's Categorical Imperative, one before acts should think whether one's action could be universalised. That is, you should 'act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law' (Kant, 1785). In this sense, the question is it all right asks one whether one's action can be universalised and thus give reason to everyone else to perform the same action. Hence, the question 'is it all right' is posed by those who are rationalists about morality that is, they hold that moral requirements are rational requirements. And by asking this question to the amoralist, they intend to show that the amoralist's inability to respond to moral requirements demonstrates failure in rationality.

<sup>7</sup> I would like to note here that the question is it all right if others act as you do, does not appeal to the feelings of sympathy that the amoralist might have for others. On this interpretation, the question does not ask from the amoralist to imagine whether he could feel sympathy for those whose interests are not treated equally by him, and thus to change his views. It aims to reveal the inconsistency that the amoralist's position entails since he does not acknowledge that if he has a reason to promote his reasons, others have the same reason as well. As a result, the amoralist's position entails irrationality. I will treat whether the amoralist's sympathies can play role in his moral judgement and motivation in the next chapter.

follow his judgements, either he has a false belief. Or, he does not think that his judgement provides an advice that others should share, since he does not think that the judgement in question provides advice to others.

In the first case, he holds the false belief that others will not follow his judgement. This, however, does not mean that he escapes inconsistency. To make a judgement which comes from the moral viewpoint, and to have the false belief that others will not follow it does not affect the content of the judgement in question.

Now, Jim's claim that moral judgement does not provide advice corresponds to the second interpretation of his judgement that it is all right if others do not pay taxes. According to this interpretation, he expresses a judgement but he does not wish others to follow it. It might be the case that he makes the judgement in question to show that he is tolerant and that others have the same reason to act as he does. This, however, does not mean that he holds the judgement in question meaning that all citizens share the same reason to pay taxes. Although it appears that Jim escapes inconsistency since he claims that it is fine with if others act as he does, his answer can be undermined by the argument of the inverted commas use of moral terms.

Hare (1955) put forward an argument according to which, the normative force of moral judgements is related to the prescriptive meaning of moral terms that the former entail. On this reading, if one utters that 'animals should not be killed', one has to act accordingly. He notices that there might be agents who express moral judgements but they remain unmoved by them. Hare claims that this point does not call into doubt the prescriptive meaning of moral language. In contrast, he argues that those agents make moral judgments but they use moral terms in inverted commas. So, if one utters 'animals 'should' not be killed', he does not imply that there is something wrong with killing animals. Those agents either cannot understand the prescriptive meaning of moral terms, or they are cynics and they do not comply with morality at all.<sup>8</sup> Hence, if we accept Hare's view, the amoralist cannot escape inconsistency. He, either holds his judgement sincerely and he should act accordingly otherwise he is inconsistent. Or, his answer is expressed in inverted commas.

This leaves us with the claim that it is difficult for the amoralist to escape the charge of inconsistency. And if he does so, his position is vulnerable to Hare's attack

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<sup>8</sup> According to Hare, moral judgements are practical that is, entail action, in virtue of the prescribing force of moral terms such as 'good' or 'right'. And this is what is distinctive about moral language. In the recent years Michael Smith (1994) have attempted to articulate an argument against the amoralist's capability to hold genuine moral judgements which depends on Hare's view about the inverted commas use of moral terms. Smith provides an argument from analogy according to which, amoralists like blind people who cannot really make colour judgements, they cannot hold genuine moral judgements.

concerning the prescriptive force of moral judgements. Nevertheless, there seems to be an escape for the amoralist. Assuming that Jim is a reflexive amoralist but not a transparent agent (McCord 1989), he can claim that it is all right for others not to pay taxes. This, however, does not commit him to explain to others what he really implies when he makes this judgement. In this respect, Jim is aware that the judgement in question provides advice to others to act as he does. However, he is not a transparent person and thus nobody can see that he does not really share the view that they ought to promote their own interests even if it is against his own. He seems to think that so long as I tell them that I would approve a similar behaviour they realise that I do not aim to act against their own interests and thus I respect them. This, however, does not imply that Jim will do everything possible to discourage them from advancing their interests in case they conflict with his own.

So far, I have focused on the first answer which is available to the amoralist replying to the question whether it is all right for others to avoid tax paying as he does. I have argued that although the question aims to reveal his inconsistency and thus his irrationality, the amoralist can remain untouched. Either, he can practice what he does on the pain of inconsistency without changing his views concerning morality. Or, he can remain consistent advancing his self-interest. In addition, I have shown that the amoralist is someone who can still understand moral requirements but he does not respond to them escaping two different charges. The first involves his rationality. And the second has to do with the prescriptive force of moral language. I would like now to turn my attention to his second answer.

#### **2.4.2 The amoralist does not accept that it is all right for him if others act as he does**

According to the second answer, Jim can judge that it is not all right for him if others do not pay their taxes. That is that he does not acknowledge that he should share the same reasons for action and thus he needs to qualify why he makes this judgement. To put it alternatively, he has to provide some justification, which shows that although he has reasons not to pay taxes, others have reasons to pay their taxes.

Two answers appear to be available to him. The first is that it is not all right for him if others do not pay because his case is different from others. He believes that the tax system is unfair and he should not be charged the same amount of money with those who earn more than him. The second answer is to say that it is not all right if others do not pay because his interest is more valuable than the interests of others. To the further

question what makes his self-interest more valuable than others', he replies that it is *his*. Let me unfold the implications of Jim's answers.

According to the first answer, Jim makes the following judgement: it is not all right with me if others do not pay their taxes. What the judgement entails is that Jim does not share with others his reason not to pay taxes. His reason not to pay taxes comes from his different circumstances in which he finds himself. What provides him with a reason not to pay his taxes is that the tax system is unfair and he is charged equally with those who have more income than him. He believes that if he complains by not paying his taxes the state will take into consideration that there is some problem and it might solve it. On this reading, Jim realises that avoiding paying taxes affects the efficacy of public health, education and public transport. He, however, thinks that between public goods and his self-interest, the latter should be prior to the former. He does not do so because he thinks that his self-interest is more valuable than public goods. What explains his action is that his self-interest is undermined and he thus should take any action which will stop that.

This claim serves to recommend to Jim that there is a reason not to pay the taxes. This justifies his action, and he would justify the action for anyone else who is in the same circumstances with his. Jim, however, knows that his friends, do not have any problem with the tax system and thus he judges that it is not all right for him if others do not pay their taxes. In this case, to affirm that it is all right would be against his interest, insofar as people who can afford to pay will avoid doing so. Hence, Jim's first answer provides a legitimate justification for his action and it does not result in inconsistency.

Although the first answer justifies Jim's judgement that it is not all right with him if others do not pay their taxes, the second does not do so. According to the second answer, Jim claims that it is not all right if others do not pay their taxes as he does, because his self-interest is more valuable than theirs. In this case, Jim appears to believe that his self-interest is firstly more important than the public goods that tax paying entails. And secondly, it is more important than the self-interest of others who pay their taxes but they share the public goods with someone like Jim who does not pay.

He needs to provide a distinctive property which makes his self-interest more important than anyone else's. His claim is that it is more valuable because it is *his*. Such an answer does not provide any legitimate justification, it is rather arbitrary since the fact that it is *his* self-interest might explain why he attaches value to it, but it does not justify what makes it more significant than others'. On this reading, the amoralist is not only inconsistent, but also irrational since he provides arbitrary justification to pursue

his interest and not to treat equally the interests of others. I will use an example to illustrate the difference between the two answers that Jim might give.

Richard goes to the fruit market every other Saturday since he does not want to spend every Saturday shopping and he usually manages to shop for 2 weeks. Now, Simon goes to fruit market only every third Saturday of the month independently of whether he needs to buy fruits earlier or not. Richard's case reflects Jim's first answer according to which his reasons for actions are justified. Richard's decision to go to fruit market is justified on the grounds he does not want to waste his time shopping every Saturday. Simon's case, on the other hand, corresponds to Jim's second answer which he lacks legitimate justification. If we ask Simon why he prefers to go to fruit market every third Saturday of every month he will respond that it is because it is the third Saturday of the month. This answer without further qualification – i.e. it is the only Saturday I am free from work – is arbitrary since it does not provide any justificatory grounds. To claim that you prefer the third Saturday of every month to fruit market just because it is the third Saturday of the month might justify only whimsical behaviour.

The same happens with Jim's answer that others should not act as he does, because what his self-interest is more important than their just because it is *his*.<sup>9</sup> So, if the amoralist chooses the second answer and judges that it is not all right if others do not pay their taxes because his interest is more important than their without justification, he appears to be irrational. But as I noted earlier, the amoralist can always escape from the question claiming that it involves moral reasoning and being indifferent to morality, he does not see any good reason to provide an answer.

## Conclusion

Let me trace my steps. In this chapter, I articulated an argument to show that the amoralist is not an irrational agent and thus we can engage in an argument with him in order to convince him to be less resistant to moral claims. In addition, I argued that although he can defend consistently his self-interest attitude, self-interest does not warrant moral actions.

In the first part of the chapter, I clarified the moralists' position that morality is incompatible with self-interest focusing on Wolf's argument. Furthermore, I argued that self-interest is a point of view of practical rationality and thus it yields rational requirements. Consequently, the amoralist who acts in the light of his self-interest is a

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<sup>9</sup> Parfit (1984) provides some similar examples to argue about the alleged irrationality that self-interest theory might entail.

rational agent. In the meantime, I explained away the difference between self-interest, egoism and prudence aiming to show that self-interest yields reasons which might justify moral behaviour.

In the second part, I tried to challenge the conclusion of the argument of the preceding part according to which if the amoralist acts out of self-interested reasons, he is a rational agent. I explored a variety of answers to the question whether it is all right with the amoralist if others act as he does that is, to be disinterested to others. The amoralist can answer either affirmatively or negatively. In both cases, I tried to show that it is possible for him to remain consistent with his view insofar as he does not answer the question, or he provides legitimate justification for his reason to act. But where does this leave us?

To claim that the amoralist is a rational agent is to say he can respond to moral requirements which reflect rational requirements, and therefore morality can be justified to those who are amoralists. What is necessary is to find a grip, which will relate their interests with moral judgements (Foot 1958 and Phillips 1965) that is, morality is advantageous to the amoralist's self-interest (Gauthier 1967). Hence, rationalists about the nature of morality should leave behind them the view that morality and self-interest are necessarily in conflict. In contrast, they should concede that the conflict between the two viewpoints is not necessary but contingent. Nevertheless, to claim that rationalists will engage in an argument with the amoralist to justify morality to him, it entails firstly that they will accept that self-interest yields reasons which are normative equally to the ones that morality endorses. And secondly, that they admit that self-interest can be the motivating element of moral judgement which will sustain moral motivation. If moralists, however, do so they undermine their own position since this is not compatible with their views about morality.

Although I argued that moralists are rather mistaken to hold that self-interest and morality are necessarily in conflict, I did not put forward an argument which shows that self-interest can guarantee moral actions. In this respect, I am rather in align with moralists since self-interested behaviour might result in moral motivation but this is only accidental. To argue that self-interest warrants moral motivation we need to set those requirements which make the relation between morality and self-interest necessary. My aim, however, in this chapter was to investigate whether self-interest might be related to morality at least contingently. Thus I did not argue that self-interest warrants moral motivation, although it might supply it.



Consequently, if the amoralist happens to act morally due to his self-interested attitude this cannot guarantee moral motivation. Insofar as self-interest cannot justify morality to the amoralist, in the next chapter I will turn my attention to psychological mechanism of sympathy in order to explore whether we can justify morality to the amoralist by expanding his sympathies.

## Chapter 3

### Expanding the amoralist's sympathies<sup>1</sup>

#### **Introduction**

Bernard Williams (1972: 1-24 and 1973:250-265) claims that the amoralist may, by expanding his sympathies, be persuaded to be less resistant to moral claims. Following a Humean account of practical reason, it is argued that the amoralist can have a reason to be moral if it is shown that the objects of some of his desires concern others. That is, he will behave morally towards those for whom he has some sympathy. Although Williams' argument appears to be convincing (since it provides a step for the amoralist to enter into morality), it fails both to justify morality and, most troubling of all, to necessitate moral motivation for the amoralist. I will focus on the latter because Williams suggests that if there is a justification for morality, it should be related necessarily to motivation.

In the first section of this chapter, my aim is to show that (despite the fact that Williams sketches a framework for the operation of sympathy in moral motivation, referring to Hume's idea about it) Williams does not provide a clear idea of the relation between sympathy and moral judgement. As a result, his account of sympathy is rather ambiguous, since sympathy can be understood either as a motivating element of moral judgement, or as a process through which one can correct one's previous motivations. Firstly, I shed some light on what sympathy is. Secondly, I examine the mechanism of sympathy, and ask whether it is possible to provide motivating reasons for actions. And finally, I examine whether sympathy can be a precondition of morality and its consequent relation to moral judgement. Finally, I will analyse the debate between motivating and justificatory reasons, which will be helpful in understanding Williams's complicated argument.

In the second section, I explain Williams' theory of practical reason which focuses on the motivational aspect of reasons for action that is their ability to explain one's action. According to Williams, a consideration counts as a reason for action only if it is a consideration on which one could act. For such a consideration to be motivating, it should either incorporate a motivating state (that is, a desire in the wider sense), or it should be related to one's motivating set via a *sound deliberative route*. In

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<sup>1</sup> Part of this chapter has been presented under the title 'Reason and Sympathy' at the 32<sup>nd</sup> *Conference on Value Inquiry*, Louisiana State University, Baton-Rouge, USA, April 2005, and at the *Neuchatel-Bern Rationality, Emotions and Morality Conference*, University of Neuchatel, October 2005.

this respect, reasons which are capable of motivation are also normative in virtue of their relation to rational deliberation, and it is thus possible for one to shift from motivating to normative reasons. If Williams' account of reasons is true, there are no external reasons for action; reasons are not related to one's motivational set. On this reading, the amoralist will be persuaded to act morally only if it is shown that he has internal reasons to act morally. I claim that this seems possible according to Williams if we expand the amoralist's sympathies. That is to say, if we correct the amoralist's existing sympathies via deliberation, acquiring a new motivation which produces an internal reason for action. I argue that if this is the case, there will be two possibilities:

Firstly, the internal reasons produced will not be sufficiently normative, because to correct one's sympathies is not enough to produce normative reasons for action; there is no such standard which guarantees what the appropriate degree of sympathy is. Secondly, if the corrected account of sympathy generates a reason for action, this will be an external reason according to Williams' theory of practical reason, since it is a reason which is acquired through the belief that a certain degree of sympathy is not enough to produce moral action. In this respect, it is the belief that generates a new reason for action, and not the agents' existing motivating set.

My conclusion will be that Williams' theory of practical reason and his account of sympathy are incompatible. If he accepts that a corrected account of sympathy is sufficiently normative, the reason produced is external one; whereas, if he accepts that the corrected account is not sufficiently normative, then it cannot warrant moral motivation.

### **3. Sympathy**

#### **3.1 Towards a definition of sympathy**

Williams accepts that it is possible for one to be an amoralist and thus remain unmoved by his moral judgements. Although such an agent poses a sceptical threat to morality, Williams treats the amoralist's scepticism as a starting point in order to illustrate the peculiar nature of morality. Insofar as the amoralist's threat undermines the normative character and the motivating power of moral judgements, a successful answer to this scepticism will reveal what is this element in virtue of which moral judgements have normative and motivating force. In this respect, Williams argues that if such an element can be found, it should be something that the amoralist cannot deny its motivating force, and thus he will stop being resistant to moral claims. Hence, this

element can be a precondition of morality in the sense that it grounds the guiding force of moral judgements.

Williams claims that since moral judgement entail motivation, the amoralist's judgements are deprived of a certain motivating element. In this respect, he suggests that if for one to be moral is to care about others, the motivating element that the amoralist's judgements lack is sympathy. Hence, he concludes that the amoralist can be less resistant to moral claims only if we expand his sympathies. His conclusion depends on two conditions: firstly, that moral judgements motivate in virtue of a motivating state; and secondly, that the amoralist can be persuaded to be motivated morally because he is a rational agent. So, his problem is with his motivating states and not with his understanding of morality.

Nevertheless, if we attribute the motivating element of moral judgements to sympathy, it seems that we seek to explain the motivating force of moral judgements by an element which has some motivating grip on agents. In this respect, one could claim that there is no real difference between self-interest and sympathy, since both provide motivation. For instance, we might feel sympathy for our friends because we benefit from their friendship. That is, we express our sympathy because we think it is the right thing to do in order to sustain the friendship, and not because we care about them. If sympathy is a motivating state which is strictly related to self-interest, it can be argued that it is motivating in virtue of its connection to self-interest. This claim, however, is not true, since sympathy is an autonomous motivating state, and it is not connected to self-interest. Thus we draw the distinctions between actions which are done out of self-interest and those which are done out of sympathy, in the sense that the latter sometimes conflict with the former.

Williams points out the distinctive motivating power of sympathy, claiming that the problem with the amoralist is his egoistic desires. He argues that there are two kinds of desires: I-desires and non-I desires. I-desires are those whose objects are related necessarily to the agent who expresses the desire. For instance, when I say I want an ice cream, the object of my desire, which is an ice cream, is related directly and necessarily to me insofar as it will be satisfied only if I have an ice cream. If someone else has an ice cream, the object of my desire remains unfulfilled.

On the other hand, non-I desires are those whose objects are not connected to the agent who expresses them. For example, when I utter the phrase I want you to buy a safe car, the object of the desire in question is not related to me. The goal of the desire

which I express will be fulfilled only if you buy a safe care, and this goal is not connected to me, in the sense that if I do not know you and I am not related to you at any sense, I merely express a disinterested desire. Hence, the amoralist is capable of expressing only I-desires and incapable of non-I desires. Williams implies that disinterested desires are those which manifest sympathy, and he further argues that if we expand the amoralist's sympathies, we will make the shift from I-desire to non-I desires. So far, we have seen that although sympathy is an idiosyncratic feeling, it is disinterested, and thus its motivating status does not depend on other motivating elements such as self-interest. But what does it mean for sympathy to be a motivating state? We simply imply that because it is an emotion, it is necessarily motivating, but this is not necessarily true, since sometimes we have feelings that do not motivate us to do anything. Some of these feelings are supposed to be identical with sympathy.

For instance, when we say that we sympathize with the victims of the earthquake in Japan, or with someone who had an accident or failed his exams, it is tantamount to saying that we feel sorry for their circumstances. What we mean is that we are aware of their circumstances, and that we hope these things will not happen again in the future. What one should notice here is that our feeling sorry for these people does not necessarily imply that we are moved to help them. To say that I am sorry about the victims of an earthquake does not mean that I am moved to give some money to an appeal on their behalf. Hence, if we consider sympathy merely as an expression of sorrow or pity, we deprive it from its distinctive feature, which is the practical concern for others. To express practical concern for others is different from a mere fellow feeling, which I express when I utter that I am sorry for the earthquake victims in Japan. To have a fellow feeling is to acknowledge that someone suffers under certain circumstances, but to have a practical concern for others is both to know that others suffer and take action to help them because they are in need. If sympathy is to be presented as the motivating element of moral judgement, it should be understood as a practical concern for others.

Let me retrace my steps for a moment. So far, I have explained why sympathy should be separated both from self-interest and from feelings such as sorrow or pity. I suggest that sympathy should be understood as a practical concern for others, since it plays a role in moral motivation. The question that remains to be answered, though, is how sympathy operates in moral motivation.

### 3.1.1 Sympathy and Motivation

In what follows I claim that Williams' account of sympathy depends to a large extent on Hume's idea of sympathy, but his account is rather vague concerning the relation between moral evaluation and sympathy. Beginning from Hume's idea of sympathy, I will try to explain complications with it of his mechanism of sympathy, and illuminate its role in motivation.

As stated above, for sympathy to play a role in moral motivation it must be related neither with self-interest nor with fellow feeling, but should instead be understood as a practical concern for others. In this respect, to sympathise with someone entails that we are moved to help the person who is in need independently of whether or not our action will be beneficiary to us. Sympathy is central to Hume's understanding of moral motivation, and thus it cannot be understood separately from his theory of practical reason. I will refer only to those parts of his theory of practical reason which are relevant for my discussion about sympathy, since it is not my purpose here to fully explain and assess Hume's theory of practical reason.

Hume draws a sharp distinction between theoretical and practical reason because he believes that they fulfil different aims. The former aims to provide knowledge about the facts of the world by making inferences. The latter aims to generate action by directing our passions; that is, desires in a wider sense. Consequently, practical reason is capable of motivation insofar as desires are motivating states, whereas theoretical reason does not involve motivation since beliefs are not motivationally efficacious.<sup>2</sup> If sympathy plays a role in moral motivation, it cannot simply be a cognitive fellow feeling that corresponds to the belief that someone suffers. Beliefs cannot be motivationally efficacious and thus sympathy should be understood as a motivating state such as desire, which necessarily entails motivation.

Although Hume holds that beliefs cannot generate action, his account of motivation depends on a pair of a belief and desire. So, for Hume, to have a motivating reason to act is to have a desire and a relevant belief. For instance, that I am motivated to type on my computer is a result of the desire that I want to type and the belief that I know that what is in front of me is a computer, which I can use in order to type. If I did not have the desire to type, my belief that what is in front of me is a computer would not

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<sup>2</sup> The distinction between motivating and non-motivating states is related to the debate concerning the direction of fit. Michael Smith (1994:111-119) has suggested that the difference between beliefs and desires is located in the different direction of fit that these two states have. Beliefs aim at truth and they thus have the world-to-mind direction, whereas desires do not aim at truth and they have the mind-to-world direction. Jonathan Dancy (1993: 2-3 and 27-34) makes a similar point to Smith.

suffice to motivate me to type, and thus desire is both necessary and sufficient for motivation, whereas belief is necessary but not sufficient.

Hence, although practical and theoretical reason are distinguished, it seems that Hume holds that beliefs which are constituents of theoretical reason play a role in the generation of action only if they related to a desire. Beliefs are necessary for the generation of action since they inform desires about their objects. Recalling again my example, if I have the desire to type, but I do not have the belief that what is in front of me is a computer; I will not be motivated to switch it on and type. Now, if sympathy is related to moral motivation, Hume's account of motivation leaves some space for the operation of the belief in motivation, and thus it might be the case that sympathy can be understood as a cognitive fellow feeling. Nevertheless, Hume's account of motivation assigns a role to belief insofar as the latter is connected to some desire. In this respect, sympathy incorporates the presence of a cognitive element according to which one is aware that someone suffers, but this should be related to a non-cognitive element in order to result in motivation.

So far, I have tried to locate sympathy in Hume's account of practical reason. If sympathy is related to generation of action it should be a product of practical reason, and it is thus a motivating state. Nevertheless, sympathy entails a cognitive element, which informs is about the state of others. If this is the case, we seem to hold an account of sympathy as contradictory, since it cannot be both a cognitive and a non-cognitive element. In what follows, I will show that sympathy, according to Hume, is conceived as a mechanism via which we communicate our feelings and opinions with others. Sympathy makes possible the transmission of feelings amongst people, and we are thus motivated by experiencing what others feel.

To hold that sympathy is merely a motivating state, which contributes to the generation of action, is a rather narrowed conception of Hume's account of sympathy. It appears to be a mechanism on which moral behaviour is built, in the sense that we are capable of being morally motivated because we have sympathetic feelings for others. Although Hume does not explicitly claim that moral judgements express our sentiments or feelings, he believes that our moral motivation is driven by the sentiments we feel in each case. Actions cannot be right or wrong, but they rather exhibit virtue or vice. Those actions which manifest virtue generate pleasure since virtue is pleasure, whereas those actions which demonstrate vice bring about disgust. For one to call an action virtuous or vicious means firstly that one feels pleasure or disgust about it. Secondly, it means that one is aware that a certain action (if it is virtuous) brings about pleasure to the agent

who performs it, or (if it is vicious) causes disgust to the agent who commits it. We morally approve of those actions which are virtuous and we morally disapprove of those actions that are vicious. To be able to make a judgement between what is virtuous or vicious (what brings about pleasure or disgust), we have to be capable to feel the pleasure that virtue brings about, and the disgust that vice entails. We are capable of experiencing these feelings and then acting accordingly because of our natural tendency towards sympathy.

Hence, sympathy not only makes us aware of the feelings of others; it also transmits these feelings to us, and we are thus able to determine whether an action (or a character) is virtuous or vicious. Insofar as virtue and vice bring about certain feelings, we are motivated according to the feelings we experience.

The mechanism of sympathy depends partly on Hume's account of knowledge, concerned as it is with the relation between impressions and ideas. We have the idea of someone's feeling of pleasure since we are aware that he experiences pleasure doing a virtuous action. The idea of this feeling is transferred to us as an impression of this feeling; we are able to experience it because we have had a similar experience in the past. So, having formed a faint copy of someone else's feeling, we can feel the same and thus can claim that we feel sympathetic towards him. Hence, sympathy appears to be a mechanism which depends on imagination. Since we cannot experience exactly the same feelings as others, we are able to feel similar feelings only by imagining how it would be to have the same feeling. According to Baillie (2000: 57), 'sympathy is the capacity to simulate what others are experiencing, when we see or think of them. It is an operation of the imagination whereby a primary impression (such as behaviour indicating pain or pleasure) leads to an idea regarding other's experience, which is transformed into an impression of pain or pleasure in correspondence with the observed states. Sympathy is not something we 'do' intentionally but takes place involuntarily on the natural unreflective level'. And he continues saying that '[I]t is not the product of reason such as the making of inductive inferences about someone's inner state on the basis of her behaviour, nor the deliberate manipulation of the imagination to put oneself in others' shoes'.

I would like to stress some points from Baillie's explanation of Hume's account of sympathy, which corresponds in some sense to the stages of the development of sympathy. The first point is that we become aware of someone else's feelings by transforming an impression into an idea. This entails the two conditions concerning the



relation between impressions and ideas: that is, force and vivacity. The more vivacious our idea of the others' feelings, the stronger the impression we experience. To experience someone else's feelings is to imagine how it would be to have a similar feeling. What one should remember is that it is not sufficient, in order to sympathise with someone, to acknowledge that he experiences certain feelings. This will be tantamount to a belief which is cognitive and thus motivationally inert. What the mechanism of sympathy does is to drive our motivation to corresponding actions by making us aware of others' feelings. This can only succeed if, when imagining how others feel, we put ourselves in their position under the same circumstances (in the sense that we do not compare our situation with them, but instead try to experience feelings from their perspective). This claim is not the same as saying one should act as if one were in another person's position. In the present case, imagining being in someone else's shoes is to attempt to experience the same feelings as realistically as possible. In this respect, imagination is not related to reflection, but to the transformation of feelings which result necessarily in motivation, according to Hume's theory of practical reason.

As stated above, the development of sympathy can be represented by the following stages. Firstly, one should be aware of the others' feelings. Secondly, one is capable (via imagination) of experiencing others' feelings without comparing one's own circumstances. And finally, one sympathises with others since one can experience the same feelings, and can thus be motivated by these feelings.

Nevertheless, Hume rightly notices that the mechanism of sympathy is partial and distorting, because it depends on resemblance, contiguity and causation. These are conditions which regulate the operation of sympathy, and they thus shape our moral behaviour. We are capable of feeling sympathy with others because we resemble them. Consequently, it is acceptable (for instance) to feel sympathy for fellow human beings but not for animals, since we do not believe that we resemble with animals. Furthermore, we might sympathise with those we think we resemble more than with others. So, we might feel sympathy for our friends or members of our family, without necessarily feeling sympathy (or rather, the same degree of sympathy) for those we do not resemble, such as our neighbours.

Moreover, it is acceptable to have a stronger degree of sympathy with those who are contiguous to us, such as our family or friends. Or, for those we think are contiguous to us and not others. For example, I might feel sympathy for the victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, having recently visited the city and spent time with some of its

people. But I might not feel the same degree of sympathy, or any sympathy at all, for the earthquake victims in Japan, because I never visited Japan and I do not have any contacts there.

Hence, our sympathy is restricted or expanded according to resemblance and contiguity. This claim, however, raises implication about the relation between sympathy and moral judgement. If our moral behaviour depends on the degree of sympathy we feel (regulated by resemblance and contiguity), it does not comply with the consistency and uniform character that moral judgements are supposed to manifest. We might express different moral judgements for the same kinds of action or character according to how much sympathy we have for the individual concerned (which, of course, depends on the degree of resemblance and contiguity we have with the agents involved). For instance, to say that I sympathise with the victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, but do not sympathise with the earthquake victims in Japan, appears to be unjustified. Insofar as I am aware that both disasters arouse feelings of pity, I should sympathise with victims in both cases. However, my sympathy for the Hurricane Katrina victims is stronger because I recently visited the place; hence these people are contiguous me, whereas people in Japan are not. So, the result of my moral judgement is that I am motivated to help those I know, but am not motivated to help those I do not. Although Hume's moral theory does not imply that objectivity is a requirement of moral judgements, he seems to understand that the operation of sympathy is defective. He claims that this can be corrected by an account of sympathy which depends on judgements from a common and steady point of view. I will have to say more about it shortly, since this is an argument directly related to Williams' discussion of the amoralist, even if Williams himself makes no explicit reference to it.

To summarise, then, I have indicated that sympathy is a mechanism of the imagination, through which we can experience others' feelings from their point of view. This enables us to make moral judgements and motivate ourselves accordingly. Moral judgements which are generated through the medium of sympathy are necessarily motivating, and thus sympathy should also be understood as a motivating state. If the mechanism of sympathy were dependant on reflection, moral judgements would not motivate and would therefore be inconsistent with Hume's account of practical reason and moral theory.

### 3.1.2 Does Williams follow Hume's account of sympathy?

Having outlined the operation of sympathy, I would like to turn my attention to Williams' claim (concerning sympathy) that the expansion of the amoralist's sympathies is sufficient to make him less resistant to moral claims. To assess his argument, it is necessary to shed some light on his account of sympathy. My claim will be that his account of sympathy is broadly Humean, in the sense that his suggestion depends on Hume's argument about sympathy, but he does not follow his account on correcting the operation of sympathy. This part is fundamental if we understand sympathy as a precondition for morality, since it provides a justificatory basis for morality which the mechanism of sympathy lacks.

Williams, like Hume, assumes the natural tendency of sympathy. He describes the amoral agent as someone who must have sympathies, but whose sympathies are markedly restricted in comparison to those we would call moralists. It seems that, for Williams, sympathy is a precondition of morality. He strengthens this point by holding that those who manifest lack of sympathy are psychopaths, and in contrary to the amoralists, there is no need to justify morality to the former since they stand outside of morality.<sup>3</sup>

Conceding, however, that the amoralist has some restricted sympathies, Williams appears to accept that sympathy depends on resemblance and contiguity. He claims elsewhere that there is no need to justify morally whether we have a reason to save the life of a family member instead of a stranger. This is consistent with his Humean view about sympathy, since we sympathise more with those who resemble us and with those who are close to us. To sympathise with someone does not require justification, but we ought to justify why we have restricted sympathies. Although resemblance and contiguity regulate the degrees of our sympathy are not sufficient to support the idea that sympathy is a precondition of morality, since they do not aim to expand one's sympathies. So, if an agent makes a moral judgement under the condition of resemblance and contiguity, he will be motivated to act morally only towards those

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<sup>3</sup> If we accept Williams' claim, we have to construe the amoralist as someone who is part of the moral circle. This claim raises two interrelated implications about the relation between moral judgement and motivation. The first is that the amoralist is someone who understands the content of moral judgement; he has the ability to make and hold them. If this is the case, the second implication follows that the problem with the amoralist has to do with his motivating states, but he can acquire new motivation since he has already some sympathetic feelings, according to Williams. Both implications reveal Williams' account of moral motivation and his strategy to explain away amorality. I will provide an argument concerning Williams' idea about the acquisition of new moral motivation shortly, but I want to make clear that his conception of the amoral agent is related to his views about the relationship between moral judgement and motivation.

whom he thinks he resembles and is close to. To act morally, however, is to take into consideration the interests of others' without further qualification, which, at the very least, depend either on one's self-interest or on limiting conditions like resemblance and contiguity.

Outlining Hume's account of sympathy I pointed out that it is not regulated by self-interest. Williams accepts this condition, although he holds that the amoral agent has restricted sympathies in virtue of his selfish desires, and he seems to imply that the conditions of resemblance and contiguity might be distorted by self-interest. On the one hand, it is consistent with the Humean conception of sympathy for the amoralist to have restricted sympathies for those who resemble and are contiguous to him. On the other hand, it seems that these two conditions are narrowed by self-interest, in the sense that he must have restricted sympathies for those whose existence benefits him. Hence, the amoralist's mechanism of sympathy does not operate efficiently, and thus the motivating power of his moral judgements is blocked.

Moreover, Williams holds that sympathy is an operation of the imagination, claiming that 'to expand the amoralist's sympathies is to expand his imagination'. His claim, however, allows for two divergent interpretations of the connection between sympathy and imagination. According to the first, imagination is constitutive of the mechanism of sympathy, whereas according to the second, imagination can be understood as a corrective process of the restricted sympathies.

So, the first interpretation as stated above holds that sympathy is a mechanism, which depends on imagination. He accepts that to sympathise with someone is to imagine how one would feel, if one were the other person. For instance, to sympathise with the Hurricane Katrina victims means that I imagine how it is to be them under these circumstances; I experience what they feel. So, I can simulate the victims' feelings and thus I am also capable of making moral judgements, which gain motivational power thanks to my transformed feelings. If I am not able to imagine, I cannot sympathise and thus my moral judgements will not be motivating; that is to say, they will not be moral judgements anymore. This claim makes an explicit reference to Hume's perception of the mechanism of sympathy, to the extent that the mechanism of sympathy does not work in the absence of the imagination. Sympathy, however, depends on resemblance and contiguity, and I have already shown that these conditions might restrict one's sympathies.

The alleged restriction leads to the second interpretation of imagination as a corrective process of one's restricted sympathies. This seems to be the relation between

sympathy and imagination that Williams holds in the case of the amoral agent. According to Williams, the amoral agent has restricted sympathies due to the fact that he is motivated to act morally only if this complies with his selfish desires. Williams claims that the move to a moral stance for the amoralist will be motivated by his non-selfish desires. This will be possible via the exercise of imagination. So, the amoralist's restricted sympathies will be expanded only if he exercises enough of his imagination.

Independent of whether his claim is successful, imagination corrects sympathy. One, however, might argue here that if Williams accepts Hume's view that sympathy depends on imagination, the first and the second interpretation cannot be both true. It is one thing to argue that imagination is constitutive of sympathy, and another to suggest that it is a corrective process of imagination. For the both interpretations to be true, the amoralist's restricted sympathies which depend on his imagination must be corrected by his imagination. This sounds rather absurd, since it holds that imagination can be corrected by *imagination*. To correct something means that there should be some standard which shows that it is wrong; that this or that should be changed. The standard, which indicates the mistake, cannot be the same as the process, which generated the mistake in the first place.

Nevertheless, the objection is not valid and thus Williams is right to hold that imagination is constitutive of sympathy, and that restricted sympathies can be corrected by expansive imagination. For the two interpretations between sympathy and imagination to be compatible it should be the case they do not contradict each other. That is, if imagination is constitutive of sympathy, it cannot be at the same time a corrective process of sympathy. Think of the following analogy. One needs to have a good understanding of the subject in order to write a good essay. If one writes bad essays, one lacks good understanding of the subject. He can write better essays by improving his understanding of the subject, since his poor understanding of the subject can be corrected by a better understanding. Nevertheless, to claim that I have a better understanding of the subject than you used to have before, you do not imply that you correct your 'understanding' with 'understanding'. This would be a tautology. One should not forget that the concept of understanding depends on degrees, according to which one has a better understanding of a subject from someone else for a variety of reasons. When we make a judgement about one's understanding, we appeal to the degrees of one's understanding. One might have poor understanding today but the same person might have a better understanding of a subject in two weeks' time. Hence, in some cases, to correct one's understanding of a subject is to begin from a certain degree

of understanding in order to reach a higher degree of understanding. Similarly, to make a move from one's restricted sympathies to the expanded ones is not to correct imagination itself. Restricted sympathies reveal a low degree of imagination. Imagination which is constitutive of sympathy can be a corrective process, since it does not correct sympathy as such, but the degree of it.<sup>4</sup>

Williams accepts that sympathy is a precondition of morality, since he considers those who are completely deprived of sympathy to be psychopaths (thus standing outside the moral circle). Furthermore, he holds that through sympathy it is possible to justify morality to the amoralist; to persuade him to be less resistant to moral claims. He does not, however, seem to accept Hume's view that we are capable of expressing moral judgements due to a corrective account of sympathy, rooted in 'a general and steady' point of view.

Hume holds that our moral judgements are products of our sentiments, rooted to a general and steady point of view. Hume thinks that each of us individually occupy a personal point of view, and that the judgements we express are products of that point of view. He appears to believe that all of us must be able to hold consistent moral judgement, since otherwise it would be impossible to communicate with each other. He argues that moral judgements are consistent, since we can correct our sentiments via a general point of view. If, however, we accept that the general and steady point of view is what corrects our moral judgements, it is difficult to allocate the corrective operation of sympathy which is stated above. The question which needs answering is whether there is a connection between sympathy and the general, steady point of view.

Consider the following example. When I express the judgement that John is a very anxious person, I judge John's character on the basis of his feelings which can be transmitted to us via sympathy. Hence, since I am aware of John's action and I have had experienced anxiety myself, I am capable of making the judgement that John is an anxious person. You, however, have a different judgement about John, and you believe that he is a calm person, since these are the feelings that his actions arouse (and are transmitted via sympathy to you); so you are able to make your judgement about John.

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<sup>4</sup> A different analogy that can also illustrate my point involves the relation between virtue and well being. Insofar as virtue is constitutive of well being, I can claim that if I am not courageous enough, I cannot achieve well being. Comparing, however, myself with someone who manifests less courage than me, I can claim that I live a better life than this person. In this respect, courage is a matter of degree and it contributes to one's well being. The more courageous one is, the closer to well being one is. The same is true of sympathy: the more expanded one's sympathies are, the closer to morality one is, according to Williams.

It is obvious that if I judge John to be an anxious person, and you judge that he is a calm person, our judgements are in conflict and they cannot be both true. For one to be anxious means that one, at least, lacks calmness.

According to Hume, moral judgements concern characters or actions, and since morality is a shared system of evaluation, moral judgements should be consistent. Under this condition, agents are able to communicate their judgements without contradiction. For me and you to reach the same judgement about John's character, we should be able to judge the character in question from a general and steady point of view. In other words, we ought to be able to form our judgements independent of the relation that John might bear to us. It might be the case that I always meet John when he has problems with his family, and he is thus always anxious. And it might be the case that you always meet him in his work, where he is calm and happy. To judge his character from the general and steady point of view, we need to make a shift from our relation to John, and observe the feelings that his actions arouse independent of the time or moment we meet him; independent too of our feelings at that certain time of day. The resulted corrected judgement will be a moral judgement, which will be motivationally efficacious.

So far, however, sympathy does not seem to be part of the corrective operation of the general and steady point of view. There are two alternatives concerning the role of sympathy in this process. Firstly, it is absent and there is no point discussing it. Secondly, sympathy plays some role in forming our judgement from the general point of view. The second option, in direct contrast to the first, leaves open two possibilities: sympathy is either corrected itself by the general and steady point of view, or it is part of the process leading to the general point of view. But are these last two possibilities compatible? I will answer this question, but first I need to explain why the first option is untenable.

I do not think that we can concede the first alternative since this would mean that sympathy does not play any role in the formation of moral judgements, and this will be contradictory to what Hume claims. The mechanism of sympathy is central to Hume's argument because we are capable to making moral judgements; or, to put it another way, we can communicate our feelings and opinions with others thanks to our shared sympathy. If we do not accept the link between sympathy and moral judgement, we dismiss Hume's theory of morality. For example, according to Hume, I cannot judge

that John is anxious or calm unless I have sympathy for John. So, if the first alternative is not open to us, we should turn our attention to the second one.

The second option says that if sympathy is related to the general point of view, it is either corrected through this point of view, or it is part of making the step to the general point of view. That is to say, we are capable of judging characters and actions from this point thanks to the sympathy we feel. These two possibilities are rather incompatible, since sympathy cannot be constitutive of the general point of view and at the same time be subject to it. To illustrate my point I recall my last example.

I judge that John is anxious. It is true that according to Hume's theory of morality, I am capable of forming this judgement in virtue of the sympathy I feel towards John. Sympathising with his feelings, I can imagine what it is like to be anxious, and thus I make the judgement that John is anxious. Introducing the general and steady point of view, Hume seems to imply that although sympathy is a necessary constituent of moral judgements, it is not always sufficient, since our sympathy depends on our personal point of view. To make a moral judgement which will not conflict with the judgements of others, one adopts the general point of view. Hence, sympathy is still operating, but on this occasion it is corrected by the general point of view. I sympathise with John not because he is closer to me or because I happen to know him. I sympathise because I can feel his anxiety independent of other conditions. This is enough to lead me to make a judgement about his character. On this reading of the relationship between sympathy and the general point of view, sympathy is subject to correction by the point of view in question, since it is insufficient to provide judgements which will not be conflicting. One should not forget that morality is a system of shared evaluations, and this can be achieved if we adopt a point of view which does not include our vantage point.

But if we construe the relation between sympathy and the general, steady point of view in the way I have suggested, one might claim that we are capable of reaching the general point of view simply because of the sympathy we feel towards others. So, to express the judgement 'John is anxious' from the general point of view means that I feel sympathy for John, and this is why I can make this judgement through the general point of view. Consequently, to lack sympathy is to be unable to make a moral judgement, since moral judgements are rooted in the general view (according to Hume), which depends on sympathy.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I assume here that Williams would not accept that sympathy is a prerequisite of the general point of view, insofar as this would prevent one from making a moral judgement if one lacks sympathy.



Furthermore, if sympathy is constitutive of the general point of view, it needs to be shown what kind of states the general point of view involves. As I suggested earlier, sympathy is a mechanism of imagination, according to which it is possible to communicate feelings with others. To perceive a person's feelings is to imagine how they feel and, depending on my own experience of similar feelings, I can make a judgement about others and their actions. This judgement incorporates motivating force insofar as it contains motivationally active states such as feelings. In this respect, if one claims that sympathy is constitutive of the general point of view, the latter should also contain motivating states such as feelings, which one can experience independent of one's relation to others. So, to make the judgement "John is anxious" from the general point of view is to say that John's feelings have been communicated (via sympathy) to me, and this enables me to move beyond my own point of view to a general one, and to form the judgement that John is anxious. My judgement expresses those feelings that have been generated by the general point of view. But if this is the case, it is necessary to explain the difference between those feelings that sympathy communicates to us and those which are produced by the general point of view. If the latter feelings are the former ones, corrected or improved, we return to the first option (according to which sympathy is subject to correction by the steady point of view). Alternatively, if they are not corrected feelings, it seems that sympathy provides some feelings which are necessary for the formation of the general point of view. The problem here is the following: Hume introduces the general point of view in order to explain how it is possible for moral judgements – which depend on feelings; which are necessarily subjective states – to have a consistent character. If we assign to the general point of view a special character of feelings that result in moral judgement, we need to say what kind of feelings these are. Insofar as we cannot justify our claim about this special kind of feelings, it seems that we cannot hold that the general point of view generates different feelings from those that sympathy entails.

I do not think that we can claim that sympathy is constitutive of the general point of view any longer, since this provides an incorrect picture of the general point of view, incompatible with Hume's intentions concerning it. Hence, we are left only with the first choice, according to which the general point of view corrects the feelings that are produced by sympathy.

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According to Williams, the amoralist who lacks sympathy is not motivated to act morally, but he is capable of making moral judgements.

Nevertheless, the first option is somewhat problematic. If we accept that the general point of view corrects or improves one's feelings, enabling us to make moral judgements, the question is whether one's judgements depend on beliefs or desires. To argue for this conclusion is to explain away Hume's views on reason and motivation, according to which motivation is aroused only by passions – that is, desires, in a wider sense – and it is not affected by reason at all. Reason is restricted to inductive inferences about reality. Consider my previous example:

Feeling sympathy towards John, I can experience his feelings and judge that he is anxious. Nevertheless, John is a friend of mine whom I have known for a long time, and I have been always sympathetic to him, irrespective of his circumstances. My judgement that John is anxious can be corrected if I assume the general point of view. One should not forget that sympathy depends on contiguity and resemblance. That John is a friend of mine strengthens my sympathy for him, but this does not necessarily entail that my judgement (that he is anxious) corresponds to his circumstances. It might be the case that I have these feelings towards him only because he is a close friend. This, of course, does not prevent me from expressing my judgement, but it will not be a moral judgement that anyone could make about him. Entering the general point of view, I can investigate whether I have these feelings only because John is a friend of mine, or because he is in such a state that he is really anxious. This suggestion introduces two new conditions into Hume's picture about the general point of view: objectivity and normativity. The general point of view appears, from my example, to be a viewpoint which operates as an independent standard, issues judgements about character irrespective of my situation, and this restricts the subjectivism which my judgements through sympathy entail. It also introduces normativity, since it proposes that there should be a standard according to which some judgements are mistaken, and others are correct. The general point of view is what corrects mistaken judgements, and thus new judgements comply with the normative standard.

Insofar as feelings and desires cannot be subject to normativity, the new moral judgements (which are rooted in the general point of view) are beliefs about how we should feel. So, my judgement about John should have the form, 'I believe that John is anxious'. The difference between my first and the second judgement is that, in the second judgement, my feelings about John have been confirmed through the general point of view. I have these feelings towards John because I believe I should have them.

I think, however, that if we accept that the general and steady point of view issues beliefs about how we should feel, and thus how we should behave, Hume's account of motivation is undermined. We are motivated by moral judgements that incorporate beliefs which are motivationally inactive, whereas, according to Hume's account of motivation, moral judgements are capable of motivation because they incorporate desires which are motivationally efficacious. Rachel Cohon (1997: 839-850) argues that if we construe the general and steady point of view as a viewpoint that endorses beliefs, we misconceive Hume's idea concerning the general and steady point of view. The latter filters, or corrects, passions aroused by sympathy. Consequently, our moral judgements incorporate these corrected feelings (and not beliefs) and thus provide us with motivation. On this reading, Hume's account of motivation is not undermined by his idea concerning the general and steady point of view, on which we base our moral judgements.

I am not going to say more about Hume's mechanism of sympathy, since my aim here is not to fully assess his ideas about it, but to illustrate how the mechanism of sympathy operates in moral motivation (in order to investigate Williams's claim that the amoralist can be persuaded to be less resistant to moral claims by expanding his sympathies). Nevertheless, before I move to Williams's argument, I would like to point out that although Williams accepts that sympathy depends on imagination, he does not seem to share Hume's views about the general and steady point of view, in virtue of which we are capable of forming moral judgements. In his argument concerning the amoralist, Williams appears to believe that the expansion of his sympathies is sufficient in itself to move the amoralist to act morally. For Williams, the amoralist can form moral judgements, but remains unmoved by them due to a fault in his motivating states.

Let me retrace my steps for a moment. In this section, I have attempted to do three things. Firstly, I explained the notion of sympathy and its operation in moral motivation by referring to Hume's theory, according to which sympathy is a mechanism of imagination that transmits others' feelings to us, and enables us to make moral judgements. It depends on the condition of contiguity, resemblance and causation, and it is thus subject to correction. Secondly, I demonstrated that Williams's account of sympathy is rooted explicitly in Hume's ideas, and this is why it is necessary to illuminate Hume's views about it. And finally, I have shown that Williams does not seem to account for the role of sympathy in moral motivation (Hume's idea concerning the 'general and steady' point of view), which is responsible for the consistency of our

moral judgements. In what follows, I will shed some light on Williams's theory of practical reason, and I will argue that his account of sympathy according to which the amoralist can be persuaded to act morally is not compatible with his theory of practical reason. But before that, I wish to shed some light on what does count as a reason to act, since this will be helpful in understanding Williams's argument concerning internal reasons.

### 3.1.3 Reasons for action

To determine whether moral reasons can be justified to the amoralist, I think it is necessary to investigate what it means to have a reason to act, since moral reasons are practical reasons (or reasons for action). Agents usually have some basis for action. When one asks why you did  $x$ , one expects an answer which explains/justifies why you performed the action in question. Consider the following request for reasons for action. If I ask you why you brush your teeth, you might reply with one of the following: because I care about the health of my teeth; or because I want to have a shiny smile. The clauses which are introduced by the term 'because' are those considerations which explain why you brush your teeth, or what has justified brushing your teeth.<sup>6</sup> Thomas Nagel defines reason for action, with a property or predicate  $R$ , such that 'for all persons  $p$  and events  $A$ , if  $R$  is true of  $A$ , then  $p$  has prima facie reason to promote  $A$ ' (Nagel 1970: 47). So, if it is true that either you care about the health of your teeth, or you want to have a shiny smile, then you have a reason to brush your teeth.

Independent of Nagel's general condition concerning reasons for action, the discussion involves further particulars, such as who can have reasons for action; how one can identify whether one has them; and whether this reason is relevant to one's circumstances. In addition, it involves the directive force of reasoning; the overridingness in cases of conflict between reasons, and the motivational efficacy that reason manifest (Hampton 1998: 44-125). Consider again the reasons for brushing one's teeth. When you respond to the question "why do you brush your teeth?" by asserting that you care about the health of your teeth, or you want to have a shiny smile, you appear to be capable of having a reason to act. In other words, you understand that certain considerations might indicate or explain a certain action, and by responding to them, you act accordingly. Applying reason to each situation shows that you are

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<sup>6</sup> There is a distinction between reasons which explain one's action, and those which justify one's action, since not all reasons of the former kind can justify one's action. I will have more to say about this distinction shortly.

rational. But it is also necessary to identify what makes certain considerations reasons for you to act. You might, for example, claim that although your reason to brush your teeth is because you want to have shiny smile. On this reading, it might not be your reason to act the fact that you believe that if you do not brush your teeth regularly you will need to visit the dentist. So, there might be a standard according to which reasons for action are identified as one's own, and these can be identified either internally or externally.<sup>7</sup> In the first case, your desire to have shiny smile is interpreted as a standard, which identifies your reason for action internally. Whereas, in the case of your belief that if you do not brush your teeth you will need to go to the dentist, the standard which identifies your action is an external one. Nevertheless, it is not necessarily the case that every reason for action plays a part in deciding the actions you perform. For instance, your reason for brushing your teeth is to have a shiny smile when you go out, but the same reason does not apply when you brush your teeth before you go to bed.

Furthermore, to determine which reasons are relevant to one's circumstances, one must consider the notion of overridingness: that is, one must choose those reasons for action which are the most decisive in the relevant case. For instance, if you consider the reasons for brushing your teeth, your care for their health might override your desire to have a shiny smile. In addition, the latter reason (the desire to have a shiny smile) can be satisfied by using a whitening cream – not a toothpaste – and in this case, it seems that to have a shiny smile is not really a decisive reason to brush your teeth.

Reasons for action explain and justify one's action. They explain action by being motivationally efficacious, since it is only when an action occurs that we look for reasons as to why it took place. If there is no motivation, there is no need to ask for such an explanation, since there seems to be nothing to be explained. Nevertheless, as stated above, reasons not only explain but also justify. They indicate which considerations are for and which are against the action, and as such they determine what action should be taken. Hence, their justificatory power comes from the fact that they direct us to the best actions available to us. It seems, then, that there is a tension between the operation of those reasons which explain action, and those which justify, since not all reasons of the first kind are reasons of the second kind. Consider again my example of brushing your teeth. Do I make the same claim when I say there is a reason to brush your teeth, as compared to when I say that you have a reason to brush your teeth? The answer is no.

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<sup>7</sup> Bernard Williams, in 'Internal and External Reasons', provides an argument according to which something is one's internal reason for action under the condition that is related to one's motivational set. In this respect, reasons for action count only those things which are related to one's desires, interests or personal projects.

The first question seeks those reasons which justify your action. It might be the case that there is such a reason, since you went to the dentist's and he told you that in order to keep your teeth healthy you ought to brush them. On the other hand, the second question looks for those reasons which explain your action. Your desire to have a shiny smile explains why you brush your teeth, but it does not justify it, since you can have a bright smile by using a whitening cream. Hence, your desire might explain why you performed the action, but it does not justify it. But how are we to understand the difference between explanatory and justificatory reasons when, often, justificatory reasons both justify and explain action, whereas motivating reasons only serve to explain actions? In what follows, I will illustrate the difference between motivating and justificatory reasons by providing examples of both, and will also examine their distinctive features.<sup>8</sup> I will firstly treat motivating and then justificatory reasons.

### **3.1.3a Motivating/Explanatory Reasons for Action**

As stated above, reasons serve to explain conduct (Darwall 1983: 25-42), but explanatory reasons do not justify our behaviour. Consider the following example.

What Jim enjoys most is good food and red wine. If he goes out during the weekend, he prefers to visit places which offer good food and red wine. Last Saturday, he visited 'The Black Duck', which is known for delicious meals and extraordinary red wine. Jim enjoyed it so much that he decided to visit the restaurant once every month.

The first thing that one would ask is why Jim visits this place once every month. To put it another way: what motivates him to visit Black Duck on a regular basis? Some might say that it is because he is obsessed with good food and red wine, and that he visits the place for this reason. Some others might assert that it is his desire for good food and red wine which drives him to visit the place in question. Finally, some others might claim that he likes the decoration of the restaurant, and it is actually this which motivates him to be there.<sup>9</sup> Although these answers appear to constitute Jim's reasons for action, they do not provide a full picture of Jim's motivating reason.

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<sup>8</sup> Some philosophers refer to justificatory/normative reasons with the term grounding reasons (Bond 1983).

<sup>9</sup> I could claim that Jim's reason for visiting 'Black Duck' once a month is because he is bored of looking for new places to enjoy dinner. I think, however, that if such a claim is presented as a reason which explains his action it would defeat my example, since I take it that someone who desires and enjoys good food and red wine is always on the look-out for things which will excite his taste. His boredom can appear as explanatory reason for action only if it blocks the motivational efficacy of his desire to enjoy good food and red wine.

Darwall (1983) claims that an agent's reason for action is a consideration awareness of which will lead him to act for what the reason exists. Darwall's definition of what counts as a reason to act has two parts. Firstly, for something to be a consideration, one must be aware of it. And secondly, if it is true that this consideration is one's reason for action, it must be shown how it plays a role in one's motivation. Consider again what motivates Jim to visit 'The Black Duck' once every month. According to the example, it is the case that 'The Black Duck' offers delicious food and extraordinary red wine. And this seems to support Jim's action to visit the place, insofar as Jim has the desire for good food and wine. So, considering 'The Black Duck' to be a restaurant with delicious meals and extraordinary red wine guarantees that Jim's visiting it will satisfy his desire for good food and wine. It seems, then, that the consideration which constitutes Jim's reason to visit a certain place is that this place offers delicious meals and extraordinary wine.

This consideration, however, lacks the sufficient motivating force to move Jim, if Jim lacks the relevant desire for good food and red wine. That is to say, that Jim is motivated to visit 'The Black Duck' once every month only insofar as he has the desire for good food and red wine, whose end can be satisfied by visiting the restaurant in question. Let me unfold these claims. To say that 'The Black Duck' provides delicious food and extraordinary red wine is a consideration which constitutes Jim's motivating reason to act. This is to say that Jim has a desire for good food and wine and he believes that his desire will be fulfilled by visiting the restaurant in question.

What this claim underlines is that it is Jim's desire which motivates him, independent of whether he believes that 'The Black Duck' offers delicious food and extraordinary red wine. Imagine that Jim has a false belief (according to which 'The Black Duck' offers good food and good red wine): he will still be motivated to visit the place because he has a desire for good food and wine. Now, if his belief is true, he has again a motivating reason to visit, since the end of his desire will be satisfied. Hence, motivating reasons which explain our conduct are motivationally efficacious, in virtue of the presence of a motivating state – such as one's desire – broadly construed. This can either be one's inclination towards something (for instance, when we ask somebody why they switched off the radio, and they reply 'because I felt like it'); it can be motivation which is directed by emotion (such as one's fear of heights); or it might simply be one's appetites (such as one's desire to eat when hungry). This leaves us with the claim that reasons for action have motivating force thanks to the presence of a motivating state, such as a desire.

And it seems that if one does not acknowledge reasons as one's own, one is justified in saying that there is no reason to act. To put it alternatively, agents acknowledge reasons for action which are grounded in their motives; that is to say, their desires. For instance, if Jim lacks the desire for good food and red wine, the fact that 'The Black Duck' is a restaurant offering good quality food and extraordinary wine does not in itself motivate him to visit. If someone says to him, "there is a nice place which offers good food and wine, and thus you have a reason to visit" (assuming that Jim lacks the relevant desire for good food and wine), Jim is justified in replying that this might be a reason for you, but this is not a reason for me. But is it true that all reasons for which we act are necessarily our reasons for action, and are thus related to one's motivating states?

To illustrate this point, I will draw again upon my example. Imagine the case that Jim does not know that 'The Black Duck' offers good food and red wine, even though he has the desire for good quality food and wine (he thus does not have a reason to be at 'The Black Duck', since he does not know about it). Furthermore, Jim has a certain desire, but he also carries the prejudice that he does not like eating at places whose name contains the word 'black'. In this case, he might claim that although 'The Black Duck' offers good quality food and red wine, this is not a reason for him to visit it, since it contains the word 'black' in its name. Finally, Jim might have the false belief that, despite the fact that 'The Black Duck' is a good restaurant, the service is unbearable. So, he is justified in asserting that it is not a reason for me to visit this place, since the service is poor. What I have tried to show here is that it would be rather a strong assumption to hold that the reasons one does something are necessarily one's own reasons, in the sense that they are related to one's motives or desires. This is not to say that one's own reasons for action cannot be reasons for which one does something, but rather that the relation between the two is not necessary. To make my claim clearer, I will provide another example.

Tim enjoys dining out. Every Friday and Saturday night he visits different restaurants. However, he visits only those restaurants that are recommended by the weekend guides which he buys. If he forgets to buy a weekend guide, he prefers to stay in and cook something at home.

The question I would like to focus on is why Tim visits the restaurants which are recommended by the weekend guides. It seems that Tim has a reason to visit those



restaurants recommended in the weekend guide insofar as they are supposed to be good restaurants. Nevertheless, someone might assert that, seeing as some of his friends have a good knowledge of restaurants in the area, does he have a reason to follow their advice? Tim has a reason to go to a restaurant if it is recommended in a weekend guide; if he does not have a weekend guide, he does not eat out. On this reading, Tim has a reason to eat out at a restaurant only if it is recommended by the weekend guides, and his reason does not appear to be connected to any of his motives or desires. In this case, it is evident that Tim has a reason for action which explains his action, but which is not connected to his motives. It might be part of his interest to follow what the weekend guide recommends about restaurants, but it seems that the recommendation is what explains his behaviour in this case.

At this point, it might help to restate some of the things I have tried to do, and some I have not. I have shed some light on motivating reasons (those reasons which explain one's conduct), claiming that a motivating reason for action consists of something being the case, which in turn provides evidence that a certain end (which the agent desires) will be satisfied. In addition to that, I have shown that motivating reasons are not necessarily one's reasons for action, since they are not necessarily tied to one's desires. I have not, however, said what the difference is between motivating and justificatory reasons, and is to this distinction which I now turn.

### **3.1.3b Justificatory/Normative Reasons**

In everyday language, when we draw upon reasons to explain our behaviour, we do not make the distinction between motivating and normative reasons. We do not claim that reason *x* for my doing *y* is a motivating one, whereas reason *z* for my doing *m* is normative. In this sense, we assume that all reasons for action serve to explain our conduct. As stated above, this is clearly the case for motivating reasons. Nevertheless, to cite our motivating reasons for action is to explain what happened. Once again, these reasons exist because something took place and as a result, we seek to find out what caused the action in question. But sometimes the issues of why we perform an action, as opposed to whether we are justified in performing it, appear to be very different questions. Consider the following example. Jim is usually a careful driver. When he returns from work he drives through an area which students walk home from school, and the speed limit is 30mph. He is very careful and never goes over the limit, since he knows that this might cause an accident, and the vast majority of the students come

from his area. If we ask what explains Jim's action, a possible answer might be because he does not want to give them an example of bad driving behaviour. Another reply could be, because he is afraid of causing an accident. These considerations seem to explain Jim's driving behaviour perfectly, but they do not justify it. What justifies his behaviour is that there is a sign on the road saying he should not exceed 30mph, and that, since he understands what the sign means, there is a reason for him to limit his speed. The difference between the former and the latter is that, if Jim was unconcerned about setting a bad example, or is unafraid of causing an accident, then it seems that there is no reason for him not to exceed 30mph. Motivating reasons can explain why it is the case that Jim manifests a certain driving behaviour, but they do not justify why Jim ought to have this driving behaviour under certain circumstances. But how are we to further examine the difference between the operation of motivating and normative reasons? Think of the following case:

Jane works for a pharmaceutical company. She is member of the committee which sets the prices concerning those medicines which are given to help people who suffer from AIDS. If the committee sets high prices, those medicines will not be available to undeveloped countries in which the number of people who suffer from AIDS is dangerously high; they need low price medicines in order to help their citizens immediately. So, Jane judges that there is a reason to suggest to the committee that they provide the AIDS medicine to countries in need for a lower price than they would for wealthier countries. In addition, the committee is aware that if they give those medicines at lower prices, the government are likely to offer them a tax bonus, and thus they will not lose any of their annual profits.

Someone might claim that Jane does not have any reason to make such a proposal, since she does not express her desire to help the poor countries. Nevertheless, independent of whether she has a desire to help those countries or not, it seems that there exists a reason to help them. Should we say that there is no reason for Jane to act in the light of her judgement, since nothing indicates a relation between the reason in question and her desires? If we answer 'yes', we automatically admit that reasons for action can be related only to one's desires. It might be the case that desires sometimes explain the motivational efficacy of reasons for action, but this does not mean that are

the same thing.<sup>10</sup> In what follows, I will show that there is a form of reason which is not related to one's desires.

The question about reasons for action is an investigation into why an agent acts the way he or she does. In my example, the consideration is that poor countries cannot afford to buy AIDS medicine in order to help a large amount of their citizens who suffer from the disease. What accompanies it is that, since Jane knows that this is the case, by suggesting that the price committee offer AIDS medicine to poor countries at lower prices, these countries will be helped to fight AIDS. And for Jane to make such a suggestion indicates that it is a course worth pursuing to help those in need. Hence, there is a reason for Jane to make a proposal to the price committee (in order to sell AIDS medicine to poor countries in lower price). So, if Jane believes that poor countries cannot afford to buy AIDS medicine at the current price; if she believes that by making a proposal to sell the medicines at lower prices the poor countries will be able to afford them; and if she also believes that it is a course worth pursuing to help the needy, then she is motivated to suggest that AIDS medicines should be offered to these countries at a lower price. Does her motivation suggest that what appears to be a reason for action is also a motivating one? The answer is no. A closer investigation of Jane's considerations will help us to understand why her reason for action is not a motivating reason.

Motivating reasons serve to explain action: in this case, there existed a balance of considerations that recommended to Jane that she ought to make the proposal to offer AIDS medicine to poor countries in lower prices. It is an established fact that poor countries cannot afford to pay the cost of AIDS medicine unless this is reduced. By offering the medicine at lower prices, these countries will be able to buy them and help those citizens who suffer from AIDS. If the medicines are not offered at a reduced price, those who are in need are going to go without treatment. In addition, by helping those who already suffer from AIDS, those countries will try to fight the spread of the disease. These considerations are in favour of suggesting to the price committee that they sell medicines at lower prices to poor countries. Hence, those considerations recommend or guide Jane to make such a proposal and thus justify her decision to do so. The difference between this kind of reason and motivating reasons is that the claim in this case exists independently of whether Jane believes that poor countries need the help or not. That is to say, that since it is a fact that poor countries cannot afford to buy the medicines in question, whether or not Jane believes that this is the case has no effect on

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<sup>10</sup> Darwall (1983) investigates the relation between reason and desire, claiming that reasons are given by facts and that desires cannot be reasons for action.

her reason claim. There is a reason to help these countries independently of her beliefs and desires. The fact that they are poor supports her reason and not her belief on whether they are poor or not. Recalling the discussion of motivating reasons, an agent has a motivating reason to act insofar as this reason is related somehow to his desires or to his understanding of the case. In the case of normative reasons, his desires or his interpretation of the world does not play any role, since what they provide reason for are the facts, and the considerations which are connected to them. The considerations recommend or do not recommend certain courses of action that agents perform.

In addition, those considerations rationally justify Jane's action, in the sense that they are sufficient to determine which course of action available is the best to perform overall. That Jane's reason justifies her action does not mean that it does not explain it. Granted that she acted on that reason it also serves to explain her conduct, but as stated above, it is only justificatory reasons which both justify and explain one's behaviour. Their power to guide or to command action depends on the normative aspect in which they are involved. That is to say, there is a standard according to which, amongst certain considerations, one satisfies this standard and thus recommends a certain course of action. In this respect, the action recommended by the force of these considerations is the best available to the agent which also meets a certain standard.

Hence, normative reasons are different kind of reasons from motivating. The former can both justify and explain action, whereas the latter can only explain action. If there is a difference between these kinds of reasons, the question that arises is what kind of reasons are moral reasons. Are moral reasons motivating reasons because moral judgements exhibit motivating force? Are moral reasons normative reasons, since they oblige us to follow certain demands recommending certain courses of action? What these questions reveal is that moral reasons demonstrate, on the one hand, rational necessity (since they guide us to action that we ought to follow), and on the other, motivational efficacy (which might be not be related to their normative aspect). But how are we to understand this dual operation of moral reasons?

### **3.1.3c The Doctrine of Internalism**

Internalism, roughly, is the view that moral judgements necessarily motivate those that hold them. Externalism is the denial of this view, since it holds that moral judgements need the sanction of an external factor in order to motivate agents to act morally. The debate concerning internalism and externalism is related to the justification of morality, since internalists claim that and externalist account of moral

motivation cannot accommodate the necessary guiding force of moral judgements which is what justifies morality. In this respect, the figure of the amoralist appears to be puzzling for the internalists, since they cannot accept that it is possible for one to hold a moral judgement and yet remain unmotivated by it.

On the contrary, externalists appeal to the example of the amoralist to bolster their argument that moral judgements do not necessarily entail motivating force, since if one is an amoralist, it is shown that moral judgements lack this power. Nevertheless, my concern with the debate between internalism and externalism is not about whether the amoralist exists, but how an understanding of internalism (on the basis of the distinction between motivating and normative reasons) can shed some light on whether moral reasons carry justificatory force and exhibit motivating power.

The internalists' claim that moral judgements necessarily motivate raises certain issues about the nature of moral judgements. Moral judgements express moral demands, in the sense that they indicate that certain actions ought to be done. If this is the case, moral judgements incorporate moral 'ought', which in turn guarantees rational 'ought'. In this respect, moral judgements appear to indicate that the best available action for an agent to take is that which morality requires.

The question that arises here is how moral judgements derive the normative force they exhibit, and whether this force is placed outside of morality, or is intrinsic to moral judgements. In addition, if the motivating power they exhibit is intrinsic, one must ask whether it depends on non-cognitive elements such as desires, feelings and emotions. Hence, internalists are concerned with what provides moral judgements with their normative force. Different kinds of internalism focus on different elements of moral judgements to explain their normative force. For instance, judgement internalists claim that those who sincerely hold moral judgements are necessarily motivated to act morally, since motivation is built into the moral terms that these judgements incorporate or imply.

Nevertheless, internalists are also concerned about the relation between reason and motivation; that is, how it is possible for moral reasons to motivate. In this case, internalists seek to find those elements which moral judgement might incorporate that can explain how it is possible for moral reasons to motivate. For instance, whether there is a relation between reasons and motivating states such as desires; or, if moral judgements are normative, how is it possible for the normative aspect to lapse with the motivating one? Hence, those like Williams, who claim that they are reason internalists, hold that internalism stands for a requirement of identification of reason. That is to say,

that something is a reason for action only if it is capable of motivation, and this is possible if and only if the reason is related somehow to one's motivating states such as desires, in a broad sense. On this interpretation, motivation is necessarily internal to moral judgements, since if moral judgement provide reasons for action, these are practical only if they are related to one's motivating states.

Hence, moral judgements should incorporate motivating states. If internalists can explain how it is possible for moral judgements to motivate, they should be also capable of providing an account which illuminates the changes in one's motivation. In other words, they should be able to explain how it is possible for a person to be motivated by a reason now, even though that same person was not motivated by it before. And this is how reason internalists engage with the amoralist, trying to investigate whether the amoralist can be motivated by moral reasons which do not have any appeal to him. If it is shown that the amoralist can be motivated by these kinds of reasons, then we can justify morality to him. And the alleged justification will depend on those elements of moral reasons which exhibit motivating force for the amoralist. To put it alternatively, if it is shown that moral judgement can motivate someone like the amoralist, then morality is justified to agents like him.<sup>11</sup>

Let me retrace my steps for a moment. So far, I have explained the differences between motivating and normative reasons. I claimed that motivating reasons serve to explain conduct, whereas normative reasons serve both to recommend or guide our actions and explain them. I also shed some light on the doctrine of internalism, and how this is related to the debate concerning the relation between reason and motivation. The explanation of internalism will help me to reconstruct Williams' argument about internal reasons, and argue that although sympathy as a motivating element can constitute a reason for one to act, it cannot guarantee moral motivation, and thus we cannot justify morality to the amoralist by appealing to his sympathies.

### **3.2 Williams's argument about internal reasons and the amoralist's sympathies**

Williams defends a theory of practical reason with two distinctive characteristics. Firstly, it depends on the Humean theory of motivation, according to which motivation is possible only if there is a conjunction between desire and relevant

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<sup>11</sup> This view sounds like externalism since it appeals to the example of the amoralist. Firstly, reason internalists do not appeal to the example of the amoralist to argue for their thesis about the relation between moral reason and motivation. And secondly, although there are some similarities between reason internalists and externalists, which I will explain shortly, they do not hold the same views concerning the necessary connection between moral judgements and moral motivation.

belief, where desire is motivationally efficacious and belief is not. Secondly, it manifests internalism concerning reasons for action.<sup>12</sup> According to Williams's internalism, a consideration is a reason for action if and only if an agent would be motivated by it; if he deliberated rationally and were aware of it. In what follows, I will outline his argument about reasons for action, demonstrating how it can be related to his views on the role of sympathy in moral motivation, before revealing some problems with this argument and the relation in question.

Williams's argument about reasons for action (related to his views concerning sympathy) can be outlined as follows:

For a consideration to be an internal reason for action it has to be related to the agent's motivational set via a sound deliberative route (rational practical deliberation).

For a consideration to be an internal reason for action, it has to figure in the agent's explanation of action.

An agent can acquire new motivation (that is, a new internal reason) only if this is rooted in the agent's pre-existed motivations.

Sympathy is a mechanism which depends on imagination, and which corrects the agent's desires.

Imagination is part of the sound deliberative route.

Hence, the amoralist who has I-desires can reach his non-I desires via expanding his restricted sympathies (Williams 1973: 258-259). In this respect, the amoralist will have an internal reason to act morally since his expanded sympathetic motivation is rooted to his restricted ones.

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<sup>12</sup> In contemporary literature, Williams's internalism is referred either as 'Reason Internalism', or 'Existence Internalism'. In what follows, I will refer to his internalist view as 'Reason Internalism'. I would like to note here that although his view concerning reasons for action is widely accepted to be internalist, Tom Baldwin claims that Williams' theory of reasons reflects externalism about motivation. I think that Williams argues for an internalist view of reasons for action, but I will point out later which parts his views are closer to those of externalists. This, however, does not entail that he supports externalism as regards reasons for action.

Although this argument seems to be sound, I will show that it is not. The problem is located in Williams's idea of internalism, and more specifically in his connecting of sympathy and the sound deliberative route.

### 3.2.1 Williams's *fork*

Williams defends a theory of practical reason which can be construed as Humean in a broad sense, since he argues for the necessary relation between one's reasons for action and one's motivating states. His theory can be represented as a fork with two prongs. Each prong corresponds to a different kind of reason for action, which meets certain conditions.

According to Williams' fork, if there are considerations which constitute reasons for action, they are expressed by the following statements: 'A has a reason to  $\phi$ ', or 'There is a reason for A to  $\phi$ '. The first statement corresponds to what Williams calls internal reason for action, whereas the second corresponds to what he calls external reason for action. The main difference between the two kinds of reasons is, roughly, that the former are related to the agent's motivating states, whereas the latter are not. In what follows, I will illuminate his account of internal reasons, referring to his view concerning external reasons whenever necessary for my argument.

As stated above, according to Williams' fork, if a consideration is to be a reason for action, this can be interpreted either as an internal reason, or as an external reason. Although he draws the distinction between kinds of reason, he appears to express a sceptical view concerning external reasons, since his aim is to show that if there are reasons for action, they are necessarily internal. But how are we to understand internal reasons for action?

For a consideration to be an internal reason for action, it needs to meet two conditions. The first is that a consideration can be a reason for action if and only if it is related to elements of one's motivating set. What Williams means here is that internal reasons can be provided only by motivating states such as desire in a wider sense. Nevertheless, this condition raises two further implications. Firstly, his account of reasons reflects the Humean theory of motivation.<sup>13</sup> And secondly, it gives priority to the explanatory force of reasons for action. I will deal with the former implication first. Williams (1981: 102) writes:

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<sup>13</sup> Williams, I think, points out rightly that since this is not exactly Hume's theory. Whether or not the theory is exactly one Hume himself would have accepted, it is a question that we cannot answer. Nevertheless, the theory that Williams defends is called in the contemporary literature the Humean Theory of Motivation.



The simplest model for the internal interpretation would be this: A has a reason to  $\phi$  iff A has some desire the satisfaction of which will be served by his  $\phi$ -ing. Alternatively, we might say...some desire, the satisfaction of which A believes will be served by his  $\phi$ -ing; this difference will concern us later. Such a model is sometimes ascribed to Hume, but since in fact Hume's own views are more complex than this, we might call it the *sub-Humean model*.

According to the Humean theory of motivation, motivation is possible only if a pair of a desire and a relevant belief is present. In this respect, desire is sufficient for motivation, whereas belief is insufficient on its own to produce motivation. For instance, that I am motivated to type this paper comes from my desire to write the paper in question, and the belief that the thing in front me is a computer which, if I turn it on, will allow me to type. If I lack the desire to write the paper, but have the belief that what is in front me is a computer, which I can use to type, I am not motivated to type, since I lack the relevant desire. Hence, I am right to utter that I have a reason to type only if I have a desire to write a paper. If I lack the relevant desire, I do not have a reason to act.

Williams, by introducing the Humean theory of motivation, aims to connect the motivational aspect of reason to a motivating state such as a desire in a wider sense. He assumes that there is a distinction between those reasons which are motivating and those that are normative.<sup>14</sup> Motivating reasons are capable of explanation, since they explain why one chose a certain course of action by appealing to one's motives. This claim suggests that, for a reason to be motivating that is, capable of explanation, the action should have taken place. If the action does not take place, there is nothing to be explained, and thus there cannot be a motivating reason for this action. For instance, when I am asked why I wrote this paper, I can claim that my motivating reason was my desire to submit it to a call for papers. If my writing the paper did not take place, I would not be able to claim that I had a motivating reason to write the paper, since I did not write it. Now, normative reasons are different from motivating reasons because, although they are capable of explaining action, a normative reason is true regardless of whether or not the action in question takes place. For example, if I say that there is a reason to brush my teeth because it is good for my health, the reason in question exists independent of whether I believe I have a reason to brush my teeth, or whether I brush them or not.

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<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of a Humean view of motivating reasons see Smith (1994: 92-11).

Williams holds that reasons for action are primarily motivating, in the sense that they provide explanations for the actions we perform. They are capable of motivation because they are rooted in motivationally efficacious states such as desires which, according to the Humean theory of motivation, are motivationally efficacious whereas beliefs are not. The explanation of our actions is ascertained by appealing to the motives we have each time we act. Hence, for Williams to originate the motivational aspect of reason in motivating states such as desires guarantees that reasons for action are necessarily motivating, and they carry explanatory force insofar as the presence of a motive explains why certain actions take place. On that reading, a reason for action cannot be true if it is not capable of explaining the action which it appears to have caused. Williams (1981: 102) writes:

This explanatory dimension is very important, and we shall come back to it more than once. If there are reasons for action, it must be that people sometimes act for those reasons, and if they do, their reasons must figure in some correct explanation of their action (it does not follow that they must figure in all correct explanation of their action).

So far, I have shown that for a consideration to be an internal reason, in Williams' sense, it has to correspond to an element of the agent's motivating set such as desire in a wider sense, and thus it should be capable of explanation. Nevertheless, this condition is not enough for a consideration to be an internal reason for action, since according to Williams, the nature of internal reasons for action depends on the relation between the reason question and the motivating state to which it corresponds. Hence, the two conditions that I pointed out at the beginning of the paper (necessary for a consideration to be an internal reason for action) are interrelated. Williams argues that a reason is internal only if it is related to the agent's motivating set via a deliberation or via a sound deliberative route. But how are we to understand deliberation in this context?

He writes (1981: 104):

But there are much wider possibilities for deliberation, such as: thinking how the satisfaction of elements in *S* can be combined, e.g. by time-ordering; where there is some irresolvable conflict among the elements of *S*, considering which one attaches most weight to (which, importantly, does not imply that there is some one commodity of which they provide varying amounts); or, again, finding constitutive solutions, such as deciding what would make for an entertaining evening, granted that one wants entertainment.

He also writes in (Williams 1995: 38):

The first thing to be said is negative: it does not merely involve perceiving means to an end that has already been formulated. There are many other possibilities, such as finding a specific form for a project that has been adopted in unspecific terms. Another possibility lies in the invention of alternatives. One of the most important things deliberation does, rather than thinking of means to a fixed end, is to think of another line of conduct altogether, as when someone succeeds in breaking out of a dilemma. Yet another line of deliberative thought lies in the perception of unexpected similarities.

In (Williams 1981:104), he points out the results of the deliberative process:

As a result of such processes an agent can come to see that he has reason to do something which he did not see he had reason to do at all. In this way, the deliberative process can add new actions for which there are internal reasons, just as it can also add new internal reasons for given actions. The deliberative process can also subtract elements from S. Reflection may lead the agent to see that some belief is false, and hence to realise that he has in fact no reason to do something he thought he had reason to do. More subtly, he may think he has reason to promote some development because he has not exercised his imagination enough about what it would be like if it came about.

Here, Williams argues that an internal reason for action is related to one's motivating states via deliberation. He does not make clear exactly what he means by deliberation, but he does point out some of the operations of the deliberative process he has in mind. By introducing the idea of the 'deliberative route', he aims to preserve the normative aspect of reasons for action. Reasons are necessarily normative, in the sense that they suggest a course of action which, if one is rational, one is expected to perform on the condition that one is not ignorant of the reason in question, and does not have false beliefs. In this respect, it seems that deliberation on one's motivating states implies a corrective operation according to which, if the agent deliberates on the relevant facts, he would be motivated to act accordingly. Hence, rational deliberation supports the normative aspect of reasons, since it offers a standard according to which one can investigate whether one has a reason to act or not. If, after deliberation, one concludes that one does not have a reason to act, one is not motivated, and vice versa.

Williams is an internalist as regards the relation between reason and motivation. Reason internalists hold that if one has a reason to act, one is necessarily motivated to act accordingly.<sup>15</sup> The necessity of the relation depends on the origins of reason which, according to Humean theory of motivation, are motivating states, necessarily entailing motivation. In addition, it seems that, for Williams, his views about the deliberative

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<sup>15</sup> In contemporary literature, there are a variety of views concerning internalism, such as motivating internalism, or judgement internalism etc. Since it is not my purpose here to attack internalism in general, I am not going to discuss the differences between Williams' internalism and other internalist views.



route must also be included in any account of the internalist. So, his internalism would be something like, 'I have a reason to act only if I deliberated rationally on the relevant facts, and would then be motivated to act accordingly'. But what is distinctive about Williams' internalism is its connection to his account of the deliberative process. He assumes that such a deliberative process can lead to motivation only if it is rooted in the agent's existing motivations. One's deliberation should begin from one's existing motivation, in order to reach new motivation. What this means is that an affective, such as a desire, can generate a new affective state (a new desire) for something via deliberation.

According to Williams, if I am thirsty and have the desire for a soft drink, but under proper deliberation accept that soft drinks are full of sugar (and thus change my mind and drink water instead); my deliberation is capable of providing my new desire for water, because I had a relevant desire for a soft drink. Hence, there is no deliberation if there is no pre-existing motivation. And thus Williams claims that the external reason theorists are incapable of explaining the change in motivation, since there is nothing in their account showing how (or why) pre-existing motives generate new ones (Williams 1981: 109).

Insofar as pre-existing motivations are a necessary and sufficient condition for one to deliberate, it seems that the normative aspect of reasons depends on their motivational aspect. If a reason cannot provide an explanation for a certain action, then it cannot be normative, since the considerations which constitute the reason in question are not related to one's motivating states. In this respect, the difference between motivating and normative reasons is that motivating reasons do not appear to be sufficiently deliberative. What adds the normative status to them is the presence of the sound deliberative route, which corrects pre-existing motivations. So, Williams' internalism is what makes possible the transformation from motivating reasons to normative ones. If reasons were not related to one's motivating set, deliberation would not be possible. Consequently, to claim that one has a reason to act is to say that, if one deliberated rationally, one would be motivated accordingly. But motivation is prior to deliberation.

Let me retrace my steps for a moment. So far, I have explained Williams' theory of practical reasons, and I have shown that it depends on two conditions. The first is the Humean theory of motivation, and the second is the operation of a sound deliberative route. The former counts for the motivational aspect of reasons, whereas the latter for

the normative. Nevertheless, although he implies a distinction between motivating and normative reasons, he introduces an internalist view concerning reasons, according to which motivating reasons are also normative. Insofar as we can deliberate from pre-existing motivations, which constitute our motivating reasons, the produced reasons after the deliberation are also normative. However, one should not forget that rational deliberation is possible in virtue of the agent's motivating states.

### 3.2.2 Sympathy and Reasons for action

One of the distinctive features of Williams' account of reasons for action is that it explains the changes in one's motivation. In what follows, I will shed some light on Williams' argument, according to which it is possible to persuade the amoralist to be less resistant to moral claims by expanding his sympathies. I will argue that this reflects the operation of his account of internal reason (according to which it is possible to change one's motivation), but his account of sympathy is not itself compatible with his theory of reasons for action.

Considering that Williams defends a Humean view of practical reason and motivation, we can assume that he holds a Humean account of morality. On that reading, it is possible to have moral feelings and thus to be motivated to act morally, in virtue of the presence of sympathy (Williams 1972: 25-26). As stated above, sympathy is a natural tendency that all humans share, and thus we can perceive the feelings that virtuous or vicious acts produce.

Williams accepts that there might be a person like the amoralist who remains unmoved by his moral judgements, but he understands the meaning of moral terms, and he is also capable of holding moral judgements.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the problem with the amoralist is not his rationality, since for Williams moral requirements do not appeal to one's rationality, but his motivations. He claims that the amoralist is someone who has restricted sympathies and thus he lacks moral motivation.

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<sup>16</sup> Williams here is different from other internalists, since the vast majority of internalist theorist do not accept that there is such a person like an amoralist (For instance, Michael Smith, who defends internalism, holds that the amoralist is practically irrational, 1994:60-68). Or, if it is possible for the amoralist to exist, he is either irrational or too incompetent to use moral language, and this is why he is not motivated by his moral judgements. The counter example of the amoralist it is used by externalists (those who hold that there is only contingent relation between moral judgement and motivation) to attack internalists who hold that the relation in question is necessary. Williams, however, unlike other internalists, aims to justify morality to the amoralist since he believes that it is possible for one to be an amoralist.

Williams points out the distinctive motivating power of sympathy, claiming that the problem with the amoralist is his egoistic desires. He argues that there are two kinds of desires, I-desires and non-I desires (Williams 1973: 261). I-desires are those whose objects are related necessarily to the agent who expresses the desire. For instance, when I say I want an ice-cream, the object of my desire (an ice-cream) is related directly and necessarily to me, insofar as it will be satisfied only if I have an ice-cream. If someone else has an ice-cream, the object of my desire remains unfulfilled. On the other hand, non-I desires are those whose objects are not connected to the agent who expresses them. For example, when I utter the phrase, "I want you to buy a safe car", the object of the desire in question is not related to me. The goal of the my expressed desire will only be fulfilled if you buy a safe car, and this goal is not connected to me because I do not know you and am not related to you in any sense; I just express a disinterested desire. Hence, the amoralist is capable of expressing only I-desires and incapable of non-I desires. Williams implies that disinterested desires are those which manifest sympathy, and he further claims that if we expand the amoralist's sympathies, he will make the shift from I-desire to non-I desires (Williams 1973: 263-265). The question which now arises is whether the amoralist can acquire new motivation and thus act morally.

Recall Williams' theory of reasons and his internalist view about reasons for action. As stated above, it is possible for an agent to alter his motivation if he deliberated correctly from his pre-existing motivations. In the case of the amoralist, we expect that the amoralist will alter his I-desires to non-I desires. This can be achieved via a sound deliberative route. Williams does not introduce any account of deliberation in the case of the amoralist, but he claims that he shifts from I-desires to non-I desires by expanding sympathies. It seems that we substitute deliberation with sympathy, but if we do so, we need to qualify our move. This, however, is not true since the operation of sympathy can be part of deliberation. One should not forget that deliberation includes the exercise of imagination (Williams 1981:105), and sympathy is an operation which depends on imagination.

Recalling Baillie's (2000: 57) definition of sympathy, 'sympathy is the capacity to simulate what others are experiencing, when we see or think of them. It is an operation of the imagination whereby a primary impression (such as behaviour indicating pain or pleasure) leads to an idea regarding other's experience, which is transformed into an impression of pain or pleasure in correspondence with the observed states. Sympathy is not something we 'do' intentionally but takes place involuntarily on the natural unreflective level'. And he continues saying that '[I]t is not the product of reason such

as the making of inductive inferences about someone's inner state on the basis of her behaviour, nor the deliberate manipulation of the imagination to put oneself in others' shoes'.

On that reading, sympathy appears to be a kind of deliberation which stems from the agent's existing motivations, which in turn produce a new motivation. Nevertheless, one should not forget that the new motivations are sufficiently deliberative and thus, according to Williams' theory of practical reason, they should correspond to normative reasons. So, sympathy appears to be a corrective operation, according to which one will alter his restricted sympathies. The result will be an account of expanded sympathies, and thus the amoralist will be motivated to act morally. The problem, however, is that sympathy is not sufficiently deliberative to account for the normative aspect of reasons.

The operation of sympathy depends on degrees. We might sympathise with some people, but we might not have the same sympathetic feelings for others independent of our own interests. So, while we might sympathise with our neighbours, we might not sympathise to the same degree with those who live five miles away from our house.

Consequently, to claim that we expand the amoralist's sympathies is to claim nothing more than an increase in the degree of sympathy he feels towards others. But for sympathy to count as a deliberative process that is, to support the normative aspect of reasons for actions, it needs to provide a standard from which one can judge why one should change from one motivation to the other. That is to say, sympathy needs to provide a justification for changing from I-desires to non-I desires. And we have seen that the only standard which sympathy can entail is a greater degree of sympathy. So, moving from existing sympathies to non-existing sympathies centres only on the standard of sympathy itself, and this is a rather weak condition to count as the normative aspect of reasons.

Hence, although Williams' account of sympathy is compatible with his internalism about reasons for action (since it suggests that we can move from restricted sympathies to expanded ones; pre-existing motivations to new ones), this does not count for the normative aspect of reasons, since to provide some correction without defining the standard upon which it rests is a weak condition for the normative aspect of reasons for actions. So, to acknowledge the priority of motivating reasons over normative, and to claim that normative reasons are necessarily internal (like motivating reasons), I do not know whether Williams is allowed to claim that his account of reasons entail the normative aspect.

## Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter, I have shed some light on the notion of sympathy and its role on moral motivation. Since my aim in this chapter has been to argue that Williams's account of sympathy cannot comply with his theory of practical reason, I traced his account in relation to Hume, and explained Hume's views on the psychological mechanism of sympathy, its relation to moral sentiments and its operation in moral motivation. Before I went on to explain Williams's argument about internal reasons, I explained the notions of motivating and normative reasons, and their relation to the doctrine of internalism, which will contribute to an understanding of Williams's argument.

In the second part of this chapter, I explained Williams' account of reasons for action, and I claimed that it depends on two interrelated conditions. The first is the Humean theory of motivation, according to which reasons are motivating in virtue of their relation to a motivating state. And the second is that internal reasons are related to the agent's motivating states via a sound deliberative route. These two conditions entail Williams's reason internalism, according to which one has a reason only if one deliberated rationally on the relevant facts, and one would be motivated to act accordingly. I pointed out that what is distinctive about his internalism is that the normative aspect of reasons depends on their ability to motivate and explain action.

Furthermore, I illustrated Williams' argument about amoralism. I argued that, although, according to his theory of reasons for action, it is possible to change the amoralist's motivation by expanding his sympathies, the operation of sympathy cannot convey the normative aspect of reasons, and it is thus incompatible with his theory of reasons for action.

But if sympathy is not sufficiently deliberative to count as the normative aspect of his theory of reasons for actions, it seems that Williams' argument about the persuasion of the amoralist fails. So, since the expansion of the amoralist's sympathies cannot sustain moral motivation because sympathy depends on degrees; and since, if we try to justify it (like Williams), it seems to lose its strictly motivating character, an alternative is needed. In what follows, I suggest that there is a third option, which might provide a justification of morality to the amoralist. This account depends on the idea that if moral considerations can be conceived of as practical considerations, then it is not difficult to persuade the amoralist to move closer to moral realm.



## Chapter 4

### Are moral considerations merely practical considerations?<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

In the preceding chapters, I have argued that we cannot justify morality to the amoralist either by appealing to his self-interest, or by expanding his sympathies. In addition, I have shown that, although an internalist account of reasons for action might suffice to explain the changes to one's motivational set (Williams 1981: 101-113), it cannot guarantee moral motivation. In this chapter, however, my aim is to shed some light on Raz's argument about the amoral agent, according to which the amoralist does not pose any threat to morality if we alter our views about the nature of practical reason.

In the first section, I will locate Raz's argument in the current debate, claiming that it treats the amoralist's challenge to morality differently from the arguments which I have so far presented in this thesis. I will briefly point out the three premises of his argument, explaining why it attacks the amoralist's sceptical threat to morality from a different point of view. The first premise is that a Kantian account of practical reason (and its corresponding construction of morality) is vulnerable to the amoralist's scepticism. The second premise is that, if we replace the Kantian account with a Humean account of practical reason (and its consequent view of morality), this can still be undermined by the amoralist, although it can provide a sort of solution.

The idea that lies behind these premises is that our current views about morality are shaped and informed by the alleged dualism of practical reason. That is to say, there are two different sources of motivation, located in two different standpoints, morality and self-interest. So, according to the third premise, if the Kantian and Humean views of practical reason are vulnerable to the amoralist's attack, Raz concludes that a classical conception of practical reason might escape the threat. He concludes that in this case, the amoralist cannot construct a valid point against morality, since his threat is a problem only for those whose morality depends on the dualism of practical reason. Hence, his argument is different because it neither tries to argue for or against the existence of the amoralist, nor investigates whether morality can be justified to him.

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<sup>1</sup> The major argument of this chapter was presented in the XI Durham-Bergen Philosophy Conference which was held at Durham's Department of Philosophy in November 2006. The paper was subsequently selected for publication in the proceedings of the conference.

Instead, he attempts to escape this sceptical threat by putting forward the idea that there is no such threat, so long as we do not misconceive how moral demands function.

In the second section, I will unfold the first and second premises of Raz's argument. So, in the first part, focusing on those who seek to root the normative element of moral judgement in the purity and the stringency of moral requirements, I claim that holding a Kantian account of practical reason (which holds that self-interest and morality are two different standpoints that generate different kinds of Imperatives), means one cannot escape the amoralist's challenge. According to Raz, they fail to explain how it is possible for an amoralist – who is located in the self-interested standpoint – to convert to morality, since they assert that morality and self-interest are necessarily in conflict.

In the second part, turning my attention to those who look for the motivating power of moral judgements in subjective states such as emotions and desires (in order to explain how moral demands have a grip on our behaviour), I assert that a Humean account of practical reason (which assigns a significant role to desires in our practical deliberations) does not provide a persuasive picture of morality. In this respect, Raz points out that such an account fails to accommodate the full power of normative reason. In addition, such an account is also shaped and informed by the dualism of practical reason, since it seeks to find which elements of the moral point of view can be related to one's personal projects.

Having explained those two premises (which enable Raz to reject the alleged dualism of practical reason and, consequently, the view that the amoralist casts doubts on the normative power of moral judgements), in the final section of this chapter I intend to challenge his conclusion. In this respect, I will show that his account of practical reason reflects a classical approach of practical deliberation (widely construed), according to which there is a correlation between moral demands and one's well-being. I will argue that Raz's account of practical reason is not sufficient in itself to provide the foundation for the rejection of the amoralist scepticism. There is still space for the amoralist to question whether one ought to live one's life in an ethical way.

If I am right, my conclusion will be that Raz's insistence upon a classical approach to practical reason is well-founded, at least insofar as it provides a foundation for an account of virtue ethics, which in turn might provide a justification for the amoralist to act morally (a view which I will investigate in the last chapter of this thesis).

#### 4.1 Putting the amoralist in ‘the right place’

Raz, in his paper ‘The Amoralist’ (1997: 369-398), illustrates the threat the amoralist poses to morality, but also suggests that we can escape it, so long as we reconsider the relation between practical reason and the requirements of morality. He points out that the normative force and the motivating element of moral judgements can be perfectly preserved if we concede that moral requirements are no different from any other requirements of practical reason. In what follows, my aim is to locate Raz’s argument in the current debate concerning the normative force of moral judgements, and the amoralist’s sceptical attack on it, claiming that Raz’s argument appears to be distinctive in two interrelated ways.

In the introduction to this thesis, I distinguished between two different but interrelated arguments regarding the amoralist. The first argument places the amoralist’s sceptical threat at the centre of the debate between internalists and externalists. To recap, internalists, roughly, hold that motivation and the action-guiding force of morality are built into moral judgement, and thus the relation between motivation and moral judgement is to a large extent necessary.

Externalists, on the other hand, deny the internalists’ claim, arguing that moral judgements are motivationally detached, and that the connection between motivation and moral judgement is rather contingent. Moral judgements manifest normative character because they are related to external facts of the world. In this respect, they are capable of motivation if they are accompanied by a general desire to be moral, or sympathy.<sup>2</sup> Externalists, providing the counterexample of the amoralist, claim that internalism cannot account for the motivating power of moral judgements because it does not explain possible failure in motivation.

Internalists, on the contrary, argue that if externalism is true, and it is possible for one to be an amoralist and sincerely hold moral judgements, then the normative character of morality is undermined, since there is nothing which can guarantee the necessary relation between moral judgement and motivation (which is an essential feature of moral judgement).<sup>3</sup> The debate between internalists and externalists does not

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed explanation of the internalist position, see chapters 2 and 3, in which I refer to different branches of internalism, focusing on ‘motivational’ and ‘reasons’ internalism correspondingly. Nevertheless, I would like to point out that the major difference amongst externalists involves the motivating element that accompanies moral judgements, and enables them to be motivationally efficacious. So, externalists like David O. Brink argue that moral judgements generate motivation if they are accompanied by the agent’s sympathy. Alternatively, externalists like S. Svasvardottir argue that moral judgements are motivating in virtue of the agent’s general desire to be moral.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noticed here that not all internalists shares the same view regarding the amoralist and his rationality. For instance, Michael Smith, who argues for ‘motivational’ internalism (1994: 60-77) claims

provide a robust enough response to the amoralist's question about whether there is a reason to be moral. Instead, it focuses on a slightly different question: that is, whether the normative character of morality is undermined if it is possible for one to be an amoralist. As I explained in the introduction to the thesis, this is one argument concerning the amoralist which aims to explain whether the motivating element and the normative power – unified or not – are built into moral judgement.

Nonetheless, I claimed that the second argument concerning the amoralist is more challenging, insofar as it begins from the hypothesis that it is possible for one to be an amoralist. The argument does not seek to question whether or not the amoralist has a valid point. Instead, it takes his challenge seriously and seeks to prove whether morality can be justified to him. In a nutshell, the latter argument is different from the former (concerning the internality or the externality of motivation) because it aims to investigate whether morality can have a grip on those agents who appear to stand outside of it.

In this respect, the latter argument explores whether there is any element which “pulls” agents to act morally, whereas the former aims to establish the relation between motivation and moral judgements. Although these questions are interrelated, it seems that the latter is prior to the former. Firstly, I think it is necessary to find out what motivates agents to act morally; and secondly, one must trace this motivation internally or externally. On this reading, it is one thing to say that self-interest might yield moral actions, and another to say that moral judgements are intrinsically motivating in virtue of their relation to self-interest. In the first case, I reveal the roots of moral actions, connecting the source of moral reasons to self-interest, whereas in the second I explain why moral judgements are motivationally efficacious. So, we need firstly to ask what counts as a moral reason, and secondly to investigate how this reason operates.

Turning my attention to the second argument about the amoralist, which seeks to find out whether there can be a justification of morality to the amoralist, I argued in chapters 2 and 3 that neither self-interest nor sympathy can provide a reason for the amoralist to step into the moral stance. Although sometimes either self-interest or sympathy might yield moral actions, they do not provide justificatory grounds for morality, and cannot guarantee moral motivation. One would expect that, insofar as we fail to justify morality to the amoralist by relating moral reasons to his self-interest and

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that the amoralist is ‘practically irrational. Bernard Williams who argues for ‘reasons’ internalism (1981: 101-113) accepts that the amoralist is a rational agent (1972: 251-265). In chapter 3, I demonstrated how Williams’ internalism accommodates the amoralist, arguing that his account of ‘reasons’ internalism could not sustain moral motivation.

by expanding his sympathies, we might need to argue for a third alternative; one which would combine the motivating power of self-interest and sympathy with the normative power of moral requirements. I am not aware of such an account, but I would like to turn my attention to what I understand as an alternative argument concerning the amoralist's sceptical challenge.

So far, the arguments which I have presented in chapters 2 and 3 explore whether self-interest or sympathy can yield moral reasons to the amoralist. This line of arguing depends on the view that morality is a distinct standpoint and there is something particular about it, such as the stringency or the overridingness of the requirements that it endorses. Thus self-interest and sympathy fail to generate moral reasons, since they cannot preserve what is peculiar and distinctive about the moral point of view. In other words, this view entails that there are two standpoints of reason for actions, morality and self-interest (or anything else which is loosely related to one's interest). This view results in the alleged dualism of practical reason; that is, the kind of reasons which advise us what to do have two sources of motivation – either morality or self-interest – which are necessarily in conflict.

If we construe the amoralist according to the dualism of practical reason, he appears to be somebody who is motivated only by his self-interest, and he will not be motivated by moral demands unless they advance his self-interest. Hence, morality cannot be justified to him because he needs to take the step from self-interest to morality, and this is not possible since the two standpoints in question are distinct and necessarily in conflict. An alternative, here, is to attack the alleged dualism of practical reason and its consequent construal of moral requirements, and thus explore whether morality is still vulnerable to the amoralist's sceptical attack. In this respect, the argument which Raz proposes redirects our attention from amorality to our conception of practical reason, stipulating that if we see what is wrong with our understanding of practical reason and morality, the amoralist's attack is toothless. But how are we to understand Raz's argument?

Raz (1997:368-372 and 392-398) holds that if we concede to dualism about practical reason, it seems that we have to accept: firstly, that the amoralist poses a serious threat to morality; and, secondly, that it is rather impossible to justify morality to him. To believe that the amoral agent stands in a realm different from and unconnected to morality is to claim that those who stand outside of morality cannot be given any justification. In addition, this claim reveals how difficult it is to answer the question of

why one has reason to be moral, and how hard it is to see whether such a question even makes sense. Raz's argument can be unfolded in three basic steps.

According to the first premise, a Kantian view of practical reason and its consequent construal of morality is successful if it can be shown that: firstly, morality and self-interest are two distinctive standpoints which are necessarily in conflict, and as a result generate different kind of reasons. Secondly, moral reasons (in virtue of their distinctive normative status) override any other reason. And thirdly, the moral point of view is necessarily impartial. Raz (1997:372-377 and 1999: 303-332) launches an attack on the Kantian view of practical reason, and tries to demonstrate that this premise cannot be successful, since one cannot successfully argue for the division between morality and self-interest (in the sense that advocates of Kant would like) and thus moral reasons cannot be necessarily prior to any other reasons. In this respect, Raz attacks those who claim that the amoralist cannot move from the self-interested point of view to morality, arguing that there is no need for such a move, since the two standpoints are not absolutely divided.

Having debunked the Kantian view of practical reason, Raz (1997:378-388) uses the second part of his argument to undermine the Humean account of practical reason and its construal of morality. Humeans are right about the structure of practical reason (and the operation of moral judgement) only if it is shown that moral reasons have motivating force if they are related to one's desires in a broad sense. He calls into question the Humean account of practical reason, arguing that the motivating power of reasons need not be related to one's desires. If this is the case: firstly, the normative power of reason is severely undermined; and secondly, there are reasons for action which agents follow that are not related to their desires. Hence, a Humean account of practical reason cannot provide a conclusive picture of the operation of reasons. So, although such an account holds that the amoralist can be persuaded to be less resistant to moral claims, it fails (according to Raz) to capture the deliberative power of practical – and thus of moral – reason.

Finally, if moral reasons are essentially reasons for action (that is, instances of practical reason), there is no need to justify them by appealing to their stringency or their special relation to one's desires. In this respect, Raz suggests an account of practical reason which reflects a broadly classical construal of practical reason, according to which moral considerations are also practical considerations. His account will be right only if it is shown that he provides a conception of morality which is not still vulnerable to the amoralist's attack. On this reading, Raz does not argue for the

justification of morality, but seeks to demonstrate that the amoralist's sceptical attack is groundless.

So far, I have briefly presented the arguments which involve the amoralist's threat to morality, and I have outlined the premises of Raz's argument in order to show why it is different from the rest, and thus why it is worth investigating. In addition, Raz's argument is interesting from another perspective (which has not been discussed as yet in this section), but I will get back to it in the conclusion of the current chapter. Before I reach my conclusion, I need to elaborate Raz's argument, and explain how it results in a classical conception of practical reason. I will do so by exploring the first and the second premises of his argument, along with the implications they entail.

## **4.2 The alleged dualism of practical reason and the nature of moral reasons**

As noted earlier, Raz aims to show that the amoralist does not pose a threat to morality if we concede that moral considerations are practical considerations. To do so, he needs to reject those views of practical reason which draw a distinction between moral reasons and practical reasons; that is, he needs to show that moral reasons are part of practical reason, but that there is something distinctive about their operation in our practical deliberations. So, in the first part of this section, I will focus on the first premise of his argument, which concerns the Kantian view of practical reason; and in the second part, I intend to shed some light on his second premise which involves the Humean view of practical reason.

Once again, according to the first premise, a Kantian view of practical reason and its consequent construal of morality is right if it can be shown that there is a clear distinction between self-interest and morality: the moral point of view is impersonal and thus impartial, and it generates reasons which override any reasons rooted in non-moral considerations. On this reading, a Kantian picture of morality seems to be susceptible to the amoralist's attack, and thus its advocates are offered two choices. On the one hand, it can be argued that it is not possible for one to be an amoralist, and thus morality is not vulnerable to the sceptical attack in question. On the other, it can be held that a Kantian picture of morality can accommodate the figure of the amoralist, and can justify morality to him.

Raz directs us to the second choice because it displays the relation between the Kantian view of practical reason and our conception of moral reasons. He focuses on Nagel, representative of the Kantian camp, who has recently put forward an argument

for the justification of morality to the amoralist.<sup>4</sup> According to Raz (1997: 372-377), Nagel argues that there are good reasons to believe that there is a gap between those who act morally and those who do not, like the amoralist. The idea of a gap reflects the common sense idea that dominates moral philosophy, according to which there are two distinctive standpoints – the moral point of view and the non-moral point of view – that are in tension with one another. What is often described as the non-moral point of view is self-interest. This reveals two interesting facets of the moral point of view. Firstly, moral actions necessarily do not pursue one's self-interest, and so that moral actions are in a sense self-sacrificial. And secondly, moral demands not only indicate what the right thing to do is; they also imply a prohibition on what goes against the right thing to do; that is, self-interest. I will have to say more about these two points as my argument progresses.

Although the amoralist, according to Nagel, stands outside the moral realm, and is interested only in those acts which advance his own self-interest, he can be convinced to be less resistant to moral claims if he adopts the impersonal point of view. In this respect, Nagel suggests that the step to the moral point of view is plausible, so long as he sees the world from an impersonal perspective. That is, one's self-interest does not play any role in one's deliberations about what to do. There are two questions that arise here: how and whether it is possible for the amoralist to move from the personal to the impersonal point of view (from self-interest to morality). Nagel (Raz 1997: 372-374) argues that this is possible via what is called moral development. His moral development involves three stages. The first is the stage of egoism, the second of utilitarianism and the third is moral point of view, which he calls the impersonal.<sup>5</sup> Nagel suggests that it is possible to move from one stage to the other and thus enter the moral realm, but it is rather difficult to show how this will happen. Raz points out certain difficulties with such an argument, not least the fact that persuading somebody to value others equally with himself represents a major challenge. In addition, this criticism opens a can of worms, since it not only points out a potential problem for Nagel's argument, but also attacks the ideas that lie beyond it. In what follows, I will unfold the

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<sup>4</sup> I am indebted to Professor Joseph Raz, who kindly offered me Nagel's article 'The Value of Inviolability' in English.

<sup>5</sup> We should be careful here, since Nagel's argument about moral development echoes the Aristotelian idea about moral training. The idea of moral training in Aristotle's virtue ethics depends on the view that if it is possible to train one to be good at a certain practice i.e. carpentry, then one can be equally trained to be a virtuous person; that is, to live one's life according to the virtues. In Aristotle's account of moral training, there are not divided stages which draw the distinction between what a virtue is and what a vice is. It is central to the training that the agent will become familiar with the virtues, and he will acquire the skill to apply them when it is necessary. On this reading, Nagel's moral development is different from Aristotle's.



ideas which shape and inform Nagel's argument, since this is what Raz has aimed to debunk.

Nagel clearly defends a Kantian view of practical reason, according to which there seems to be two sources of motivation: the moral point of view and the non-moral point of view. The first generates categorical reasons for action, and thus it is impersonal and impartial, since these reasons apply independent of one's self-interest. By contrast, the second generates hypothetical reasons for action which tell us what to do, but depends on one's personal projects (broadly construed). As a result, hypothetical reasons cannot be endorsed by the moral point of view, since they cannot be impersonal. In addition, what is also distinctive about reasons which are endorsed by the former standpoint is their overridingness when they are in competition with non-moral considerations. So, those who stand outside of the moral realm act on different kind of reasons, and they need to acquire the right kind of reasons in order to be moral. This move sounds possible, since agents deliberate on the reasons they have, and if they realise that they act for the wrong reasons (or that they do not have reasons to perform a certain action), they can always revise their reasons for actions. This move, however, calls for more than revision of one's reasons for action. It further suggests that there is strong justification to give priority to those reasons which are endorsed by the moral realm. Can Nagel's account of moral development support this claim? My answer will be 'no', because there is an inescapable objection to his argument.

Once again, his argument about moral development holds that there are three stages: self-interest – which he calls egoism – utilitarianism and the moral-impersonal point of view. He seems to imply that the first two stages lack normativity, insofar as reasons from the moral point of view appear to be stronger due to their normative power. However, both these standpoints manifest normativity. The first holds that one has a normative reason to act according to what is in one's interests, rejecting reasons that do not concern one's interests. The second claims, roughly, that one has a normative reason to act only if the action maximises utility; if an action does not comply with this principle, then there is no reason to perform it.<sup>6</sup>

If the two stages –egoism and utilitarianism – reflect normativity as well as the moral point of view, what could make the last stage more attractive to those who stand outside of it? A move that might save Nagel's argument is to claim that although the three stages of moral development manifest normativity, there might exist a normative,

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<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, I can claim that my having lunch does not maximise utility, yet even utilitarians admit that I have a reason to eat.

a metaethical standard as it were, to which they are compared. In this case, the latter standard is the one which provides adequate justification for one's standpoint, and for Nagel this would mean that the moral point of view would always be judged favourably by the normative standard in question.

However, as a moment of reflection shows, this claim is not open to advocates of the Kantian view of practical reason. If Kantians accept my suggestion then they immediately accept that the normativity of the moral point of view is somehow inferior to a higher normative metaethical standard. But this is not consistent with their thesis that moral demands are distinctive insofar as they exhibit sovereign normative force that non-moral demands do not manifest.

Although it seems that Nagel's argument from moral development fails to provide a Kantian account of practical reason which can bridge the gap between the moral and non-moral considerations, this is not sufficient to reject Nagel's view. In the beginning of the current section, I presented a couple of claims which inform his argument: the necessary conflict between self-interest and the moral point of view, and the impartial character of moral considerations, which distinguishes them from non-moral ones. On this reading, Nagel's argument fails to provide a satisfactory solution to the amoralist's sceptical attack, since it depends on these two claims which construe morality narrowly.

In what follows, I try to show that Raz is right to argue that, if we accept there is a necessary conflict between morality and self-interest (which is also confirmed by the distinctive character of moral judgement), then we depict a morality which is vulnerable to amoralist scepticism. My argument proceeds as follows: if it can be shown that the amoralist can have friendships, then there is no necessary conflict between morality and self-interests, insofar as one cannot have any kind of friendship if he does not take into consideration the interests of others. If this is right, I will move on to claim that moral reasons cannot be distinguished from non-moral ones in virtue of their impartiality, because there is nothing that can guarantee that all moral reasons are necessarily impartial. If my argument is successful, there is sufficient ground to claim that the Kantian view of practical reason is vulnerable to the amoralist, and that we will need to investigate rival views on this matter. To do so, I will use as my foil Raz's idea of whether it is possible for the amoralist to form any kind of friendship.

However, before I unfold my argument, I need to consider an objection that quickly presents itself. One might claim that I beg the question against Kantians if my argument depends on the concept of friendship, so long as the latter is related to one's

well being and partial behaviour (at least towards one's friends). How can I seek support for a Kantian picture of morality in what appears to be a view incompatible with its main distinction between categorical and hypothetical imperatives? My answer to this objection will be that I do not beg the question for two main reasons. Firstly, I do not argue that, insofar as one can have friendships, the stringent picture of moral judgements is undermined. On the contrary, I will argue that friendship generates obligations which involve both sides, and if the amoralist can subscribe to the obligations in question, this shows that there is no necessary gap between morality and self-interest. And secondly, following on from the last claim, I do not argue that moral reasons should be partial, but I will attempt to show that some moral considerations can be partial as well as impartial. Bearing this mind, let me explore the implications of the suggestion that the amoralist might be able to have friendships.

Jim and Peter have known each other for a long time and consider themselves friends. Jim thinks that Peter is a witty and intelligent person; someone who will stand by him whenever it is necessary. He enjoys spending time with him, and he also thinks that his friendship with Peter contributes significantly to his well being. Similarly, Peter believes that Jim is a nice person with a refreshing attitude to life; he has a great sense of humour and Peter has benefited from his desire to lead a happy and fulfilling life. He also enjoys spending his time with Jim, and thus they usually take days out of work together, or they get involved in sporting activities that both enjoy, such as tennis or golf. What Peter does not find attractive about Jim is his views on morality. Peter believes that Jim is indifferent to moral matters, and quite a few times has dropped the question, "is there any reason to perform moral actions?"

The example in question does not imply any definition of friendship. Nevertheless, it describes what we usually mean by friendship: a relationship between people who value others equally with themselves, and thus take their interests into consideration. For instance, Peter cares about Jim's life not only insofar as this contributes to the friendship, but also for Jim himself. They also respect each other, and as such there is reciprocal care.

If this is the case with friendship, it is obvious enough that friendship entails other-regarding demands, in the sense that one takes into consideration the interest of the other person in each action, since this sustains the friendship. The demands in question also generate obligations that both parties ought to fulfil, if they aim to develop their friendship further. There cannot be a friendship between Jim and Peter if Peter cancels their tennis match due to his wife being in an accident, and Jim gets annoyed

with him because he thinks Peter should not have cancelled for that reason. If Jim takes his friendship with Peter seriously, he ought to understand that Peter could not make the game and also offer his sympathy for Peter's wife, irrespective of whether they lost their game that evening or not. So, a friendship can be sustained only insofar as those who are involved fulfil the obligations of the other-regarding demands that friendship generates.

Kantians might point out that Jim (who is an amoralist) cannot have a friendship, since he is concerned only with his own self-interest, and this is not compatible with what friendship is all about. However, I think people like Jim can have friendships. Jim knows that what makes his life fulfilling is to have good friends; although he cares too much about his own interests, and is usually indifferent to others, he values those people that he considers friends. Thus, he never lets his self-interest determine his actions when these are related to his friends. On this reading, Jim acknowledges the other-regarding character of reasons for action when they are endorsed by the point of view of friendship. Consequently, if moral reasons are distinctive in virtue of their relation to other-regarding demands, it seems that the amoralist does not have problem in doing so.

The Kantian would object that the amoralist of my example does not act morally. His reasons for actions are shaped and informed by his self-interest. They would argue that Jim follows the obligations that come from friendship because this sustains his friendship, which benefits his own well-being. In other words, it is argued that Jim would never act in favour of other-regarding demands if the former did not advance his interests. However, I do not think that Kantians can defeat my point here. I am arguing that there are times when moral actions (actions informed by other-regarding demands) might happen to coincide with one's self-interest. This does not mean that actions which happen to fulfil one's self-interest should necessarily be placed in the non-moral realm. There might be cases (as with the amoralist's friendship) in which moral obligations can be fulfilled by pursuing one's self-interest. I think this is sufficient enough to show that the conflict between morality and self-interest is not necessary as straightforward as Kantians claim; it seems, in fact, that such a construal of morality is rather narrow.

Nevertheless, those who advocate the strict distinction between the moral point of view and self-interest might counter-argue that those moral actions which happen to pursue one's self-interest are not done in the light of the requirements of morality, but are instead dictated by the power of self-interested reasons. They could claim, for

example, that Jim has a reason to help Peter under the condition that he is a friend. If Peter happened to be someone unknown to Jim, he would not really take his interest into consideration. I think that the rebuttal from the advocates of the Kantian point of view leaves my point untouched. I am not arguing that friendship is in antagonism with morality, in the sense that one might comply with moral demands only if these advance the interests of his friends and consequently his as well.

This might portray a picture of friendship that some of us might enjoy or like, but it does not correspond to the picture I have tried to sketch here. The idea of friendship that I have tried to stress depends on the idea that friendship generates moral obligations, rooted in its other-regarding demands. These obligations happen to coincide with self-interest, and thus provide enough evidence to claim that self-interest and morality are not necessarily in conflict. Hence, the Kantians cannot undermine my point, insofar as it is inspired by the idea that friendship depends on other-regarding behaviour.

If morality and self-interest are not necessarily in conflict (as I have tried to show), it seems we need to examine what the former view entails: the idea that morality necessarily calls for self-sacrificial acts which do not contribute to one's well being. Is it the case that all moral actions are necessarily self-sacrificial?<sup>7</sup>

Consider the following example. Jim is offered a job in Sri Lanka to help a corporation develop parts of the island which have been badly affected by the tsunami. If he goes away for a long time, he knows that he might miss the chance to get promoted to a senior position in the same corporation, which will in turn significantly influence his family finances. In this case, if we follow a morality which holds that self-sacrificial acts are necessarily moral, Jim has a moral reason to give up his current position and move to Sri Lanka. To construe moral actions as self-sacrificial, we seem to accept that any action which can be self-sacrificial and against one's self-interest is a moral one.<sup>8</sup>

Once again, recall my friendship example. Jim is offered a prestigious position in a company in Italy where he has always wanted to be. Additionally, his new post will allow him to travel around the world, and his children will be offered a place in a good school, which is something that really matters to him. However, if he accepts the offer, his friendship with Peter will be challenged, since he knows that Peter does not like

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<sup>7</sup> Susan Wolff (1979: 419-439) has discussed this point in detail in her 'Moral Saints'.

<sup>8</sup> The question that arises here is whether suicide can be considered a moral action from this perspective. Since I imply a Kantian view of morality, although suicide is a self-sacrificial act which is against one's self-interest, since it undermines one's rational will and similarly shows disrespect for one as an end in oneself, it is not considered a moral act.

travelling to hot places, and it will thus be difficult to spend the same amount of time together as they used to. So, Jim is confronted with a dilemma: either to sacrifice his new position to sustain his friendship with Peter (which contributes significantly to his well being), or sacrifice his friendship for a post which will benefit him in the future.

Both actions appear to be self-sacrificial, in the sense that Jim has to sacrifice either his friendship for his career, or vice versa. If we accept that self-sacrificial acts are those which undermine one's well being, and this entails that they contribute to other-regarding demands, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between those actions which are self-sacrificial, and those which are necessarily moral at the same time. There is nothing in a self-sacrificial act that warrants that this will yield in moral behaviour. The alleged relation depends on how we construe the relation between self-interest and morality. So long as an action complies with other-regarding demands and is incompatible with self-interest, there seems to be space for one to claim that moral acts are self-sacrificial.

Nevertheless, if Jim denies the offer in order to sustain his friendship with Peter – out of other-regarding obligations endorsed by their friendship – but happens to get a better post in the area where he is currently living, it seems that his well-being has been served by his decision to sustain his friendship; that is, to comply with other-regarding demands. The objection that quickly suggests itself here is that my example fails to capture the nature of the relationship between self-sacrificial acts and those of self-interest. Jim is confronted with two choices that both advance his self-interest. If the idea that lies behind self-sacrifice is that we give up a chance which will make our lives better for a choice that cannot guarantee that, then Jim's choice to sustain his friendship does not guarantee that his life will go better. Furthermore, his decision to sustain his friendship with Peter is also endorsed by what I have described as moral obligations, which are rooted in friendship. In this respect, his choice to forward his career is purely self-interested, whereas any choice which depends on the demands of friendship is not. Hence, moral acts appear to be self-sacrificial only if we assume that this is the case, since self-sacrifice cannot warrant moral behaviour.

So far, I have tried to show that neither an other-demanding character nor self-sacrifice can explain the difference between moral and non-moral considerations. I would like to turn my attention to a third claim, according to which moral considerations have a distinctive realm of their own thanks to their impartial character. Roughly speaking, a Kantian account of morality like Nagel's depends on the view that moral judgements are endorsed by an impersonal standpoint. This entails two further

points: firstly, that moral judgements do not take individual circumstances into consideration; and secondly, that practical considerations which do not manifest impartiality cannot be moral. This idea is central to understanding of Kantian practical reason, since it implies that morality cannot accommodate friendship and family. Bernard Williams, attacking Kantian morality, argues that if one is confronted with the dilemma of whether to save one's own wife or someone else's – when both are in danger – one is quite unable to make a decision from an impersonal point of view. He points out that this would be 'one thought too many'.

If Kantians can be persuaded to accept that friendship is not in tension with morality, as my example implies, the relation between two friends within the context of friendship is an ethical one which endorses obligations. So, if Jim acts in the light of Peter's interest, as friendship demands, he acts impartially. Kantians might disagree here, claiming that friendship cannot be an impartial standpoint since it contributes to the well being of two people. On this reading, one sustains a friendship because it contributes to one's well being. Hence, the motive behind Jim's action is to guarantee his well being, which is promoted, as I have argued, by friendship. Nevertheless, friendship can be an impartial standpoint. A friendship might depend on the circumstances of those individuals who are involved in it, but I have shown that a real friendship does not depend on them, insofar as individuals should act in the light of certain obligations. In this case, one acts impartially (from the standpoint of friendship) and contributes to one's well being, since a real friendship enriches one's life. This once again demonstrates that impartiality is not a necessary feature of moral considerations, since practical considerations in general can be impartial and self-interested at the same time. If moral considerations cannot be distinctive, in virtue of their normative character, impartiality and self-sacrificial character, then we might need to reconsider our views concerning the Kantian view of practical reason and morality.

The question that arises, here, is whether (if I have been successful in showing that moral considerations cannot be distinctive from non-moral considerations) I have shown that there is no difference between hypothetical and categorical reasons for action. This question is important, insofar as it is central to an understanding of the operation of Kantian practical reason, which depends on the view that moral considerations are necessarily categorical, while non-moral considerations are hypothetical.

Philippa Foot (1972) has successfully argued that there is nothing special in the normative character of moral considerations, inasmuch as judgements from etiquette are

also normative, but this does not mean that they are also moral. My purpose here is not to offer an argument which shows that moral reasons are non-categorical, but to show that this feature does not necessarily make a consideration a moral reason.

The idea that moral considerations are impartial and self-sacrificial is supported by the categorical application of moral reasons. If they are impartial, they are made from an impersonal standpoint, and thus they endorse reasons for everyone. Furthermore, this claim suggests that moral actions are self-sacrificial, that they require one to give up one's self-interest or personal projects (broadly construed) to comply with moral requirements, since morality and self-interest are incompatible. In this respect, moral reasons apply categorically because they are not related to personal projects. Nevertheless, I have shown that moral considerations are neither necessarily impartial nor self-sacrificial. Does this mean that moral reasons do not apply categorically? My reply will be 'no', since my argument does not undermine the categorical application of reasons, but it suggests that the categorical application does not mark what is distinctive about moral reasons.

Raz is right to reject the Kantian picture of practical reason, because it displays a picture of morality which is vulnerable to the amoralist's scepticism. Kantians like Nagel do not reject the view that one can be an amoralist, but their account of moral reasons cannot support any argument which would persuade the amoralist to take up a moral stance. If they hold that moral reasons are different from non-moral reasons because they are not compatible with self-interest and thus they can sustain their normative power, they cannot answer the amoralist's request insofar as they cannot show how moral reasons can have a grip on someone's behaviour. In this respect, Raz argues that we should reject the Kantian view of practical reason and turn our attention to a rival view of practical reason which, at least, can provide a link between one's projects and morality.

Raz looks for an account of moral reasons which does not need to justify the distinctive character of moral considerations, since he believes that such an account will not be vulnerable to amoralist scepticism. As a result, he turns his attention to the Humean model of practical reason, in order to support his contention that there is no sharp distinction between moral and non-moral reasons.

Exploring Williams' account of the amoral agent (Raz 1997: 377-381), he accepts for the sake of the argument that Williams' neo-Humean model of practical reason, and his Humean account of morality appear sufficient to deal with the challenge of the amoralist, for three distinct but interrelated reasons. Firstly, the Humean model of



practical reason makes room for the distinction between motivation and justification, and thus advocates of the model accept that one can make a moral judgement and remain unmoved by it (Korsgaard 1986: 5-25). Secondly, the amoralist fails to be motivated by his moral judgement, but this is not incompatible with his well being. On this reading, Raz points out that such a portrayal of the amoralist is more challenging, insofar as moralists need to show what the amoralist misses by standing outside the moral realm. Thirdly, Humeans explain the amoralist's failure as being due to lack of the motivating element of sympathy. Therefore, they argue that the amoralist will be convinced to be less resistant to moral claims only if, via imagination, we expand his sympathies. What these stipulations have in common is the doctrine of the Humean model of practical reason according to which practical considerations are motivationally efficacious in virtue of the presence of a desire in a broad sense. Hence, failure to act morally is tantamount to failure in motivation, which can be corrected by altering the amoralist's desires.

Raz (1997:380-381) asserts that Williams' argument is more appealing than Nagel's, but is still not without its problems. He doubts whether an account of moral reasons which depend on the mechanism of imaginative sympathies can guarantee moral motivation and sustain the normative authority of reasons. His doubts, however, demand sensitive unpacking. He does not put forward an argument to show that the Humean model of practical reason is incapable of accounting for the normative aspect of moral reasons. His argument addresses a problem with the model in question, centring on its assumption that there is something distinctive about moral considerations. In effect, this means that the model is subject to the very same problems as the Kantian account of practical reason, and is still vulnerable to the amoralist's sceptical attack.

As I have shown in my last chapter, Humeans like Williams concede both Hume's model of practical reason and his account of morality. They hold that considerations of practical reason are different to those of theoretical reason, since the former motivate us to act, encapsulating non-cognitive states such as desires. All desires are typically motivating, but this does not mean that they generate a reason for everyone to act in the light of any desire. One has a reason to act insofar as the reason is rooted in a desire which is part of one's psychological set up. Hence, the Humean model of practical reason reflects two requirements for something to be a reason for action: the presence of a desire in one's psychological set up, and the adequate relation between the reason and the desire. So, something R is a reason for action only if R is related

adequately to A's set of desires – broadly construed.<sup>9</sup> If a connection cannot be made between one's reasons and desires, one is mistaken in thinking that there is a reason to act. Thus, for Humeans, absence of desires is tantamount to the absence of reasons for action. For instance, if Richard claims that he has a reason to buy a car, but there is nothing in his psychological set which could explain his reason to buy a car; according to Humeans, Richard does not have a reason to buy a car.

Moreover, Humeans hold that morality is associated with our sentimental responses to what is good or bad. Consequently, moral judgements incorporate moral feelings, and thus they are typically motivating – like practical considerations. So, Humeans do not need to draw the distinction between moral and practical considerations, since any motivation (moral or non-moral) is strictly related to the presence of a desire in a wider sense (Quinn 1993: 228-239). So, Humeans unlike Kantians could argue that there is nothing peculiar about the motivating power of moral reasons, since their status is warranted by the presence of non-cognitive elements such as desires, which are inherently motivating. Kantians would respond to this argument by asserting that there is nothing that can guarantee the stringency of moral reasons. Nonetheless, it is fairly straightforward for Humeans to respond that the stringency of any practical reason depends on the deliberative route, which connects desires and reasons. That is, those desires which are corrected provide stronger reasons than others.

On this reading, the Humean account of morality and practical reason has two distinct advantages over the Kantian one. Firstly, it makes room for the operation of one's feelings and sentiments in moral motivation, and does not allow an impartial construal of the moral point of view. Thus, moral considerations cannot be distinguished from non-moral ones simply because of their impartial status. Secondly, it does not suggest that there is a necessary gulf between one's interest and morality. If the status of reasons is confirmed by their relation to one's motivational set (which according to Williams might incorporate one's personal projects), moral reasons can be connected to one's interest. One should be careful, since I do not suggest that moral reasons should be necessarily compatible with one's interest, but instead that the Humean position allows for one's moral motivation to be informed by interests. Although this view is consistent, the Humean model of practical reason is not entirely convincing when it comes to freeing itself from the need to posit a distinctive character

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<sup>9</sup> My interpretation of the Humean model of practical reason echoes Williams' account of Internal Reasons, and thus 'adequate' relation implies what Williams calls a sound deliberative route.

for the moral point of view. Therefore, it is an open question whether the model in question can provide sufficient grounds to justify morality to the amoralist.

Raz attacks the Humean account of practical reason, claiming that the distinction between reasons which are rooted in one's psychological set up and those which are not, implies that Humeans accept that there is something distinctive about the nature of moral reasons. The backbone of his argument is the difference between relational and non-relational good, and the alleged priority of the former over the latter. If it is shown that relational good is not prior to non-relational good, there is nothing in the Humean account which warrants the distinctive character of moral reasons. But how are we to understand the difference between the two kinds of 'good' in relation to the distinctive character of the moral point of view?

Raz (1997: 381-391 and 1996: 247-272) draws the distinction between relational and non-relational good, implying that they endorse different kinds of reasons. The latter endorses what can be called moral reasons, because they are other-regarding, whereas the former reasons are related to one's personal projects.

On this reading, relational goods are those which are good for the people who have them, and thus they are related to their state of affairs. For instance, holidays are good for Richard since he has been working long hours during the year, but this does not mean that it is good for anybody else. Similarly, physiotherapy is good for Richard (since it treats his hurt knee and improves his health), but this does not mean that physiotherapy will be good for John, who does not suffer from any similar pain. In addition, studying harder maths is better for Tom, because it makes him better at maths. Raz points out (correctly, I think) that not all relational goods make someone or something better. Consider again my first example. Holidays are good for Richard but this does not entail that they will make him a better person.

Non-relational goods are those which are good in themselves. For example, taking exercise and eating healthily are good independently of whether they are good for Richard. Similarly, learning a foreign language is good irrespective of Tom's travelling around the world, and his projects working abroad. Finally, reading is something good, and not only for those who enjoy it. Hence, non-relational goods (according to Raz) are those which do not derive their goodness from their relation to the agents' state of affairs, but those that have value in themselves.

Before I turn my attention to the relation between reasons and the good, it is necessary to counter a misguided impression concerning the relation between instrumental and relational goods. Raz (1996:253-255) insists on the difference between

relational and instrumental goods, claiming that not all relational goods count as instrumental ones. Consider again the example of Tom and studying mathematics. Studying maths is good for Tom since this makes him stronger in maths, and I said that this is relationally good. It seems that it is also instrumentally good for Tom to study maths, since this will result in higher marks and a stronger degree. In this respect, studying maths is also relationally and instrumentally good for Tom. If, however, Tom does not study maths in order to get a better degree, then his studying should not be considered instrumentally good. So, something is instrumentally good so long as it means to an end.

Clearing the ground of obstruction lets me focus on the relationship between good and reason. According to the idea which lies behind the difference between relational and non-relational good, agents attach value to those ends which can be related to their projects. They are good because they are part of their projects. So, Richard judges that holidays are good because they benefit him in some way, and this is why he has a reason to go on holidays. This suggests a Humean interpretation of reasons for action, according to which reasons are internal to one's motivational set up, since they promote those ends which are good for us. Richard, for instance, has an internal reason to go on holidays, since holidays are good for him. Similarly, he would not have a reason to go on holidays if he did not judge that they are good for him. By contrast, the Humean interpretation of reasons for action does not accept that non-relational goods provide us with internal reasons for action. For instance, the fact that reading is good is not enough to supply Tom with a reason to read, if it cannot be shown that reading is part of Tom's motivational set up.

On this reading, what marks the difference between relational and non-relational goods is the presence of a desire in the former case (but not the latter). According to Humeans like Williams, an agent has a reason to do  $x$  only if he has a desire to do  $x$ ; that is, he finds  $x$  desirable. Hence, relational goods are desirable since they are good for us, whereas non-relational goods are not linked to the agents' desire, because there is nothing in their description which explains how they can be good for an agent.

However, the striking thing about this interpretation is that non-relational goods can provide internal reason for actions, only insofar as they can be related to relational goods (Raz 1996: 256-268). For instance, if reading is relationally good for Tom (insofar as it is part of his free time), Tom might appraise reading as non-relationally good, since he can see that this might contribute to others' free time as well. Nevertheless, Humeans insist that Tom appraises reading as non-relationally good only

on the condition that reading is, in the first instance, relationally good for him. Hence, a requirement for something to be a reason for action is whether it is related to one's motivational set. Non-relational goods provide internal reasons only if they are transformed as relational goods.

Raz assumes that the Humean model of practical reason sets two constraints on the content of morality. Firstly, that there is a priority of relational goods over the non-relational ones, in the sense that one finds the latter desirable only because they are linked to the former (which are necessarily desirable). And secondly, that internal reasons, which are rooted in relational goods (and are again desirable), are necessarily motivating, since they are linked to emotive elements such as desire (broadly speaking).

At the risk of being repetitive, Humeans like Williams (1972: 251-265) hold that the amoralist can be persuaded to take the step towards a moral stance, if we expand his sympathies. The amoralist has sympathies; that is, he attaches value to people, even if it is only those who are directly related to him, such as his family or relatives. In the Humean model of practical reason, those people would be what Raz calls relational good. Similarly, the amoralist does not attach value to his distant neighbours, and this would fall into the category of non-relational good, for Humeans. The amoralist appears to be capable of acting morally towards his distant neighbours only if they can be shown to be related to him in some way. Humeans argue that this is possible; since, if he acknowledges that he attaches values to his family, he can also be persuaded to attach value to his neighbours. If the first provides him with internal reasons to act, the second will do the same, since it can be accommodated by the first. The transfer in question can be done via imaginative sympathy.

This account of practical reason and morality is an attractive package, but it is also open to criticism on number of grounds. The first complaint is that the account confuses the justificatory power of reason and its motivational power, giving priority to the latter. The presence of desire is sufficient to guarantee motivation, but it is insufficient to justify the normative power of reason. It seems that, according to Humeans, the amoralist will be provided with moral reasons because his sympathies have been expanded. This implicitly suggests that, so long as some motivation is present, reasons will follow; but there is nothing that can guarantee that motives are tantamount to reasons. A Humean response to this complaint might be that reasons are related to motivation via a sound deliberative route, which is sufficient enough to justify the normative power to reason. However, as I explained in chapter 2, this response is

insufficient, since the sound deliberative route collapses into the imaginative account of sympathy, which cannot account for the normative power of reason.

In addition, Raz (1996:264-268) puts forward a second complaint, according to which the Humean model of practical reason cannot justify the priority of relational goods over the non-relational, and thus the priority of internal reasons. If his criticism is sound, the Humean model of practical reason depicts a morality still vulnerable to the amoralist's attack. The priority of relational goods over the non-relational calls for a standard which justifies why the former are prior to the latter. For instance, the Humean needs to show why, when we attach value to distant neighbours, our relation to them must be part of our personal projects, broadly speaking. Raz points out that Humeans implicitly accept that non-relational goods have an other-regarding character; and this can be reason-giving only if it is related to relational good, which represents the partial point of view. But is this prioritising of the partial over the impartial the reverse picture of the Kantian view of practical reason, which depends on the dualism of practical reason?

Humeans would argue that they do not hold such a distinction, since the motivating power of any kind of reasons moral or non-moral depends on the presence of an emotive element, in a broad sense. They neither say nor imply that moral motivation has a different source to non-moral motivation.

However, Raz's reply would be that, although sentiments and emotive elements such as sympathy can be part of one's motivational set, they still need to show why internal reasons are prior to any other kind of reason. And the only answer available seems to be the presence of the motivating element. But of course, if the motivating element in question cannot account for the normative power of reasons, there might be a good reason to reject the Humean model of practical reason. The model remains vulnerable to the amoralist's attack, since it cannot provide reasons for one to be moral which do not presuppose that there is something peculiar about the moral point of view.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> I would like to note here that my argument attacks Williams' account of internal reasons from a different angle. I have tried to show that the 'sound deliberative route' is not sufficiently normative to account for the normative power of internal reasons. Although Raz's attack begins from a similar idea, he takes the step forward claiming that internal reasons call for a 'priority' standard which confirms that internal reasons should override any other reasons. Nevertheless, the Humean account of practical reason cannot justify any standard of this kind.

### 4.3 Raz's answer to the amoralist's request for justification of morality

So far, I explored Raz's arguments about the Kantian and the Humean accounts of practical reason and morality. I argued that Raz rejects them since both accounts are shaped and informed by the dualism of practical reason. He suggests that both accounts aim to assign a special status to moral considerations and they are therefore vulnerable to the amoralist's threat. Once again, the amoralist calls for a justification of morality undermining the distinct sovereign normative force of moral considerations. On this reading, if there is an account of moral reasons which do not ascribe any special normative force to moral reasons, the account in question will not be vulnerable to the amoralist's attack. Hence, Raz concludes that the amoralist is a problem for morality because we misconstrue the nature of moral reasons. If we can get rid of the mistake we make, there seems to be no problem with the amoralist.<sup>11</sup>

In this respect, Raz suggests that we should look for an alternative account of practical reason which does not give priority either to the moral point of view or to self-interest. Consequently, the alternative in question would not ascribe any special status to moral considerations. For instance, one could suggest that there should be a hybrid account of practical reason, roughly speaking, which combines the moral point of view and self-interest.

However, an objection quickly suggests itself. A hybrid account of practical appears to be simplistic, since it does not really undermine either the special authority of the moral point of view, or the appeal of self-interest. By contrast, it aims to combine both standpoints when this is possible, and it intends to provide overriding and stringent considerations. Nonetheless, the account in questions rests on the assumption that it is always possible to show that there is no conflict between moral and self-interested considerations. So, it dismisses that morality and self-interest might be in conflict and it does not offer any solution to this dilemma. As a result, the dualism of practical reason is still present, since one has to decide between these two standpoints.

Raz does not accept a hybrid account of practical reason, but he favours a classical conception of practical reason broadly construed. He argues that his proposed account demonstrates how it is possible to debunk the amoralist's sceptical threat. In what follows, I will explain Raz's account of practical reason and I will attempt to

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<sup>11</sup> Raz in his article 'The Amoralist' (1997: 369-398) draws the conclusion that the problem with the amoralist depends on the fact that we misconstrue the nature of moral considerations. However, he does not propose an alternative account of practical reason in this article. His proposed solution concerning the nature of moral considerations rests on different parts of his work.

challenge his conclusion claiming that his argument dismisses the amoralist's threat too hastily.

Raz's account of practical reason if it is shown that it does not depend on the dualism of practical and consequently that it does not seek to assign any special to moral considerations. Although he claims that he favours a classical conception of practical reason broadly construed (Raz 1999: 304), he does not provide a clear account of his proposal. Therefore, it is difficult to have a clear account of his proposal. In this respect, I will try to define how we are to understand a classical conception of practical reason so as I can locate Raz's own account. Since, Raz does not offer any definition of a classical conception of practical reason, I will draw upon Nagel's definition of the Aristotelian and Platonic view of practical reason in order to elaborate Raz's account. According to Nagel (1986: 195) an Aristotelian conception of practical reason can be defined as follows:

The moral life is defined in terms of the good life: it does not mean that the two ideas are equivalent, but it does mean that the content of morality is defined in terms of the necessary conditions for a good life, so far as this depends on certain aspects of individual's conduct, such as his relations with other people, and the expression and control of his emotions.

For the Platonic view he writes (Nagel 1986:195-196):

The good life is defined in terms of the moral life. It can allow that there is more to the good life than morality so long as it assigns absolute priority to the moral component – so that though two moral lives may not be equally good (because of differences in health, for example) a moral life is always better than an immoral one, however good the immoral one is in other respects.

Since Raz does not assert whether he favours an Aristotelian or a Platonic account of practical reason, in what follows, I will present what I consider to be general features which describe the a classical conception of practical reason broadly construed.<sup>12</sup>

First, a classical conception of practical reason does not rest on the dualism of practical reason according to which morality and self-interest are two different standpoints. They yield different kinds of reasons and they are necessarily in tension. If one accepts that morality is the strongest standpoint, one can claim that moral considerations have a distinct sovereign normative force and they are therefore stringent and override any other consideration. By contrast, if one holds that the self-interest point of view appears to be the strongest, then one acts morally only if it is shown that moral reasons can be related to one's self-interest. Once again, one will be looking for

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<sup>12</sup> I do so by tracing Raz's views about it, focusing on his work 'The Central Conflict: Morality and Self-Interest'.



the special status of moral considerations and what makes them distinct from any other consideration.

Advocates of a classical conception of practical reason which do not accept the dualism of practical reason they also reject that there are two different standpoints which yield reasons for action. Since, they reject the dualism of practical reason, they do not draw the distinction between moral and non-moral considerations. For they think that moral considerations are like any other practical considerations which require from one to do something without a special status. Think of the following example. Oliver has a five pound note and he has two choices. He can either give it to cancer relief, or he can buy a ticket for the cinema. For the advocates of the classical conception of practical reason, both actions are worth pursuing and Oliver has good reason to perform either of them. Proponents of the classical conception of practical reason do not claim Oliver's reason to give a five-pound note to cancer relief should override his reason to pay five pounds for a cinema ticket. They do not draw a difference between moral and non-moral considerations, since the ethical domain is not separated from any other practical domain. All considerations about what to do are practical considerations and there is nothing which assigns any special properties to any of them.

Second, supporters of a classical conception of practical reason hold that there is no need to distinguish between the moral and the non-moral point of view. In this respect, they contend that an account of practical reason should be shaped and informed by reflection on one's life as a whole, and it therefore should not focus on separate acts.<sup>13</sup> If one focuses on separate acts, one judges the acts in question according to a standpoint which demonstrates whether they are right or wrong. Nevertheless, if one refers to a standpoint, it seems that one assigns a special authority to those considerations which are related to the standpoint in question. This means that if, according to the standpoint, an act is right, then one would be wrong if one did not act in the light of this consideration. Hence, to focus on separate acts is entails the dualism of practical reason which the advocates of the classical conception of practical reason reject.

Consider the following example. Tom's aunt gave him a jumper as a present. Although Tom appreciates her gift to him, he does not really like it. He can either say to her that he does not like it, or he can say he is pleased with it. Either way, Tom acts well.

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<sup>13</sup> The distinction I draw here between reflection on one's life as a whole and separate acts is slightly different from the point I will be making in Chapter Five of the dissertation concerning the view to see one's life as a whole. Here, neither I say nor imply that reflection on one's life is a separate standpoint.

If one focuses on the action of receiving gifts, one would expect that it is wrong for one to express his dislike for the gift in question. In contrast, proponents of the classical conception of practical reason who suggest that one should see one's life as a whole, they can accept that it is also possible to dislike a gift. In this respect, to express your dislike is not tantamount to a wrong action. It is one of the choices that one has, but none of the choices in question appear to be obligatory.

Finally, according to a classical conception of practical reason desire in a broad sense does not seem to play any role in the picture of motivation. Once again, if one acknowledged desires as the source of motivation, one would provide with special status those considerations which are related to one's desires. As a result, one could argue that those practical considerations which satisfy one's desires are prior to those which do not.

However, desires are present in a classical conception of practical reason. More precisely, according to an Aristotelian account of practical reason, desires and/or emotions are regulated by virtues. On this reading, the virtuous agent will train his emotions so as he becomes properly affected. It is virtues that supply one with motivation and not emotions.<sup>14</sup>

So far, I have tried to provide a classical account of practical reason broadly construed, focusing on the claim that the account in question does not rest on the dualism of practical reason. Consequently, it holds that moral considerations are practical considerations and they therefore do not have any special force. But does this account provide support to the conclusion that there cannot be a sceptical challenge to the authority of moral considerations?

Raz seems to answer positively the last question. In his paper 'The Central Conflict: Morality and Self-Interest' provides a series of examples which aim to show one's well-being does not dominate one's considerations and it therefore does not provide overriding reasons for actions. In addition, he intends to demonstrate that different acts and activities shape one's life as a whole, and consequently one does not need to assign any special authority to reasons which support one of one's actions over another. One of his examples is the following (Raz 1999: 313-314):

Consider a simplified example. I have a moral reason to volunteer as a driver for food convoys in a far-away country afflicted by starvation. According to the assumptions of the classical position, doing so

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<sup>14</sup> Raz does not propose an account of virtue ethics, but as I have shown earlier in the current chapter, he does not claim that moral considerations are motivationally efficacious due to their relation to desire. For Raz, desire can be present in the picture of motivation but it does not have any special force.

willingly and successfully would contribute to my well-being. Alternatively, I could start my university studies. I have gained a lucrative grant without which I cannot afford to go to university, but which has to be taken immediately. In other words, if I volunteer as a driver I will lose my chance of university education for the foreseeable future. What should I do? I should conform with the more stringent reason. Let us assume that the more stringent reason is the moral one. I do not mean that it is more stringent because it is a moral reason. I do not believe that moral reasons always defeat non-moral reasons. It is more stringent because many lives would be saved if I volunteer. The absence of drives is the bottleneck in the fight against famine in that far-away country. Every week I work there I keep dozens of people alive, and if they survive a year, the new crops will give them a fair chance to enjoy a life of normal length.

The example shows that Raz follows a classical conception of practical reason broadly construed. He rejects the dualism of practical reason, since he does not accept that there are two different unrelated standpoints which yield different kinds of reasons for actions. Furthermore, he treats both considerations – either to go to university or to volunteer as a driver for food convoys – equally in the sense that he does not assign to any of them any special authority. In this respect, none of them seems to contribute to his well-being more than the other. Finally, none of the considerations are rooted to any desires. Hence, the aforementioned example is in agreement with his classical conception of practical reason broadly construed.

However, Raz does not seem to provide a justification for his decision to volunteer as a driver to food convoys. His choice depends on the assumption that he should act in the light of the more stringent reason. There seems to be a gap here. First, there is no standpoint according to which one will be able to judge between two actions which are equally good. And second, there is nothing which demonstrates why the reason in question is more stringent than the other one.

Nevertheless, Raz provides a response to the previous complaints. He holds that reasons for actions are incommensurate and we therefore cannot provide a measure that shows which of the reasons we have is more stringent. On this reading, reasons cannot defeat each other and ‘they do not have equal strength or stringency’. So, ‘reason does not determine’ which of the reasons in the example should be followed (Raz 1999: 103-104). In addition, he assumes a pluralism of values and reasons from which we choose to act in our everyday life.<sup>15</sup> Raz without providing a standpoint from which one judges whether one acts well, he is consistent with his account of incommensurability. He seems to believe that if he introduced a standpoint, it would provide rational guidance in

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<sup>15</sup> For a criticism of Raz’s account of values and reasons see (Heuer 2004: 129-152).

the choice of one's actions. And this would assign special authority to these considerations which are related to the standpoint in question.

Although Raz's account deviates from a classical conception of practical reason, he seems to misconstrue the role that such a standpoint plays in a classical account of practical reason. In addition, he does not provide any justification which explains why his incommensurability of reasons fits with a classical account of practical reason broadly construed.

According to a classical conception of practical reason moral considerations are merely practical considerations. In this respect, we need a standpoint that will help us to judge which of the actions is the most suitable. Recall again the example with Tom's aunt and her gift. Once again, if Tom says to his aunt that he dislikes the jumper, he acts well. And if he says that he likes in order to please her, he also acts well.

The standpoint here does not provide rational guidance to Tom endorsing the 'right' action. The standpoint in question will direct Tom asking what kind of life Tom aims to lead. Does he aim to lead a life in which he manifests kind behaviour (saying to his aunt that he likes her jumper in order to please her)? Or does he aim to lead a life which he manifests honesty (saying to his aunt that he dislikes her jumper)? Hence, the standpoint does not provide rationally guidance to Tom in the sense that Raz implies. If this were the case, one of the choices would be irrational. The standpoint of a classical account of practical reason does not dominate one's decision. By contrast, it is the starting point of deliberation of how one should lead one's life. If this is the role of the standpoint in a classical account of practical reason, the amoralist has still space to ask whether good life is compatible with the ethical life that is, whether to act well is to act ethically. On this reading, the amoralist accepts that there is no difference between moral and practical considerations, but asks for a justification why acting well is no different from acting ethically. So, by adopting a classical conception of practical reason broadly construed, Raz dismisses the amoralist's sceptical threat too hastily concluding that there might not be such a threat.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I completed three tasks. First, I placed Raz's argument in the debate concerning the amoralist's sceptical attack to morality. Second, I explained Raz's argument which show that both the Kantian and the Humean models of practical reason and their accounts of morality are vulnerable to the amoralist's threat. More precisely, the Kantian account of practical reason and morality depend on the alleged

dualism of practical reason according to which the self-interest and the moral point of view are two separate and unrelated standpoints. On this reading, moral considerations are necessarily overriding and stringent. Therefore, it cannot explain how it is possible for the amoralist to take the first step to morality.

On the other hand, the Humean account of practical reason and morality appears to accommodate the amoralist. However, it fails to provide the amoralist with the first step to the moral stance, since, like the Kantian account, it depends on the dualism of practical reason. The difference is that the Humean account acknowledges that considerations which are related to one's self-interest are prior to any other considerations, since they play an important role in one's motivation. So, the amoralist can be taken the step to morality, if it is shown that morality is related somehow to him.

In this respect, I pointed out that Raz is right to claim that both accounts fail to provide justification to the amoralist, since they assign a special authority to moral considerations. Raz suggests that if we propose an account of practical reason and morality which does not depend on the dualism of practical reason, we will not seek to allocate a special authority to moral considerations. The latter will be like any other practical consideration.

Third, I explored Raz's argument according to which, the sceptical threat of the amoralist depends on the fact that we misconstrue the nature of moral considerations. In this respect, if it is shown that there is no difference between moral and practical considerations, and we therefore do not assign any special authority to moral demands, the amoralist does not seem to pose a sceptical threat to morality. I claimed that Raz suggests that a classical conception of practical broadly construed can provide a sufficient basis for his argument that moral considerations are merely practical considerations and there is no need to assign any special status to them. He suggests, since there is no point of view which determines which reason for action is the most stringent, moral considerations and therefore moral reasons do not have any special authority. So, the amoralist does not pose any threat to morality, since if he understands to act well, this means that he can understand to act ethically.

I pointed out, however, that a classical conception of practical reason depends on the idea that there is a standpoint from which one deliberates what kind of life one should lead. The standpoint in question does not dominate the agent's choices and it does not assign any special status to practical considerations. In this respect, there is still space for the amoralist to ask whether acting well is tantamount to acting ethically. Hence, I concluded that Raz dismisses too hastily the amoralist's sceptical threat, and

therefore there seems to be a need for an account which will help the amoralist to take the first step to morality.

On this reading, I agree with Raz that moral considerations are practical merely considerations. I also agree that one should see one's acts and activities as part of one's life as a whole. However, I think that a classical conception of practical reason needs to be supplemented with a standpoint from which one can ask what kind of life one should lead.

So, in the next chapter I provide an argument which rests on Raz's view that there is no difference between moral and practical considerations and conceives the entry to ethical reflection of a virtue ethical account of moral training. The entry point in question depends on the viewpoint to see one's life as a whole from which one asks what kind of life one should lead. In this respect, my argument in the next chapter revises Raz's account and aims to provide the amoralist the first step to ethical reflection.

## Chapter 5

### The Entry to Ethical Reflection

#### **Introduction**

In the preceding chapter I explored Joseph Raz's argument concerning the amoralist's challenge to morality. Raz argues that we should not ascribe to a dualism of practical reason and consequently to the distinction between moral and non-moral considerations. The alleged distinction entails firstly that the moral point of view is an independent normative standpoint, and secondly that it yields reasons for actions which are normative and necessarily overriding compared to other kinds of reasons. I have shown that his argument is shaped and informed by a classical conception of practical reason, broadly construed, according to which moral considerations do not have any special status, since they are merely practical considerations. All practical considerations, on this conception, are rooted in the viewpoint from which one considers one's life as a whole. On this reading, the moral standpoint does not mark a distinctive standpoint which yields reasons with a privileged status.

If there is no difference between moral and non-moral considerations, amoralist scepticism does not cast any doubt on the normative and overriding character of moral reasons, and therefore Raz concludes that it does not raise any interesting question concerning the normativity of moral requirements. Hence, amoralist scepticism depends on the misconception which dominates the structure of our moral thinking: the view that morality consists of a separate normative domain.

I pointed out in the last chapter that I agree with Raz's claim that the amoralist's challenge to morality is toothless, if the latter tries to argue that moral reasons can be defeated by other reasons such as self-interested ones. Furthermore, I also agreed with Raz that a classical conception of practical reason takes as basic reflection on one's life as a whole, in the context of which all practical considerations are seen as carrying equal weight.

I disagreed, however, with Raz's conclusion that if we accept a classical conception of practical reason, this is enough to show that amoralist scepticism depends on a misconception. Therefore, we should not try to answer his question. It might be the case that Kantian and Humean models of practical reason and morality appear to be vulnerable to the amoralist's attack, but it is too quick to claim that the classical account

of practical reason escapes the threat in question. The amoralist can still ask whether to live ethically is to live well and this is an interesting question, since it is more challenging to persuade someone who thinks that leads a flourishing life without acting morally.

My aim in this chapter is to argue that beginning from a classical conception of practical reason which entails a virtue ethical account of moral motivation we can accommodate the worries of the amoralist and convince him to take the first step towards ethical life.

A classical account of practical reason depends on the view that one sees one's life as a whole. Contrary to Raz, I think that this entails a standpoint from which some actions will be considered more important than some others. This view introduces the idea of a final good such as happiness. In this respect, the amoralist's question is whether his final good – happiness – entails ethical behaviour. An answer can be provided if we can show that to see one's life as a whole is the entry point to ethical reflection that is, the first step to ethical life.

Virtue ethics can achieve this since the first step to ethical life is in line with the idea of ethical training which is central to the understanding of virtue ethics. Roughly speaking, an account of virtue ethics begins from the claim to reflection on one's life as a whole is the entry point to ethical reflection. Nevertheless, the alleged entry entails three things: first that one needs to find out what is one's final good which unifies one's reasons and motivation; second, that to obtain the final good in question, one should act well and one can do so only if one practices the virtues; and third, that one can explore the operation of virtues and their contribution to one's final good, if one has adequate ethical training. On this reading, one cannot enter into ethical reflection without adequate ethical training. I will unfold these difficult claims in the sections which follow.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, I explain what is for one to see one's life as a whole and I explore three different but interrelated steps which mark this process. In addition, I argue that if the steps in question involve the idea of a final good and the operation of virtue, they mark the entry into ethical reflection.

In the second section, I shed some light on the dispositional, intellectual and affective aspects of the virtues, arguing that they are interrelated. Furthermore, I argue that to learn how to act well depends on ethical training. I conclude this section by showing that ethical training involves three different aspects of virtue.



In the third section, I treat an objection concerning the role of emotions in an account of virtue ethics. I argue that to train one's emotions to comply with the virtues is different from training one to expand one's sympathies. The latter can be based on imitation, but the former is based solely on habituation.

In the fourth section, I explore a complaint according to which, although to see one's life as a whole is the entry to ethical reflection, it manifests that an account of virtue ethics is necessarily based on self-interest. I respond to this complaint, arguing that although the step from the pre-moral life to ethical life entails to certain extent self-interest, the virtuous person does not act out of self-interest.

My conclusion will be that a conception of practical reason can accommodate the amoralist's worries and that it can convince him to take the step to ethical life. My account does not aim entirely to neutralize the amoralist's attack. It aims to provide a solution which is vulnerable to fewer problems than the accounts I have discussed so far in the thesis (see chapter Two and chapter Three).

## **5.1 My life as a whole – The entry into ethical reflection**

In what follows I will explain how we are to understand reflection on one's life as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Firstly, following Julia Annas (1993), I will explore the three interrelated steps that mark reflection on one's life as a whole, and I will show their relation to the final good and to virtue. Secondly, I will argue that if the amoralist reflects on his life as a whole he has already made the first step from the pre-ethical to the ethical life. Moreover, I will show why this does not happen for the amoralist if he focuses on separate acts.

Roughly speaking, reflect on one's life, as a whole is not to focus on separate acts. In contrast, one reflects on how one's acts and activities shape and inform one's behaviour throughout one's life. This view immediately suggests that if one considers two different acts which are not mutually exclusive, one does not seem to have a standpoint from which choose what is the right thing to do. For instance, Adam in trying to decide to join the University Capoeira club, or to attend Buddhist meditation classes at a place near to his University. If Adam sees his life as a whole, he will consider how both choices will make sense throughout his life. It is true that if he joins the University Capoeira club, he will improve his fitness and he will meet other people who share the

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to point out here that not all virtue ethicists agree that reflection on one's life as a whole has such a pivotal role in the entry to ethical reflection.

same interest in Brazilian martial arts. On the other hand, it is also true that if he joins the Buddhist classes, he will improve his meditation and he will further his practice in Buddhism. Additionally, he will meet people who are interested in Buddhism.

Both activities will contribute to his life. In this respect, it seems that Adam has a reason to join the Capoeira club and a reason to attend the Buddhist classes. His reasons for action carry equal weight and therefore whether he chooses the former over the latter, he acts rationally. Consequently, his practical considerations are not rooted in any standpoint which determines what is the right or the wrong thing to do in these circumstances.

My explanation, so far, portrays what it means to see one's life as a whole from a Razian perspective. To see one's life as a whole, on this conception, does not introduce any distinctive standpoint which yields reasons for action, and hence moral reasons do not have any special status compared to other kinds of reasons for action. Since I demonstrated in the preceding chapter that Raz constructs the view to see one's life as a whole differently from a classical conception of practical reason, I will proceed to show how we are to understand it from the classical point of view.

### 5.1.1 Deliberation

In *The Morality of Happiness* Julia Annas (1993: 23-46) argues that to see one's life as a whole marks the entry point of ethical reflection for virtue ethics. Although this suggests that one takes the step to the ethical stance from the self-interested point of view, this does not necessarily mean that it grounds an account of virtue ethics which is self-interested.<sup>2</sup>

Annas (1993: 23-25) points out that it is rather difficult to grasp what it means to see one's life as a whole while one deliberates. It seems that everyone is capable of reflecting on their life and choosing what is good or bad for them. Nevertheless, she points out that to see one's life as a whole involves three steps, which entail more than reflecting on good and bad options for one's life.

The first step is what I call the 'detachment step'. One should be able to step out of one's immediate projects and plans. Although one is tied emotionally to one's current plans and is committed to carrying them through, one should deliberate whether the projects in question make sense throughout one's life. Consider the following example. Sarah plans to pursue a career working for the United Nations on environmental issues and world poverty. She goes to University to study Law and Philosophy, since she

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<sup>2</sup> I will treat this complaint in more detail in the third section of the current chapter.

believes that these subjects will help her to build up her working profile and thus will advance her career. Sarah is committed to her plan and every summer she involves herself in local charity projects to gain more experience on issues related to environment and poverty. However, the question that Sarah ought to answer is whether her plan is worth pursuing.

Moreover, when Sarah was younger used to watch lots of television programmes concerning wild life and the people in Africa. Some of those pictures shaped her feelings and generated the desire to help those who are in need. Sarah will reach a well informed decision about her plan if she detaches herself from it. She is really committed to what she wants to do and therefore she has not doubted whether her planned career will be suitable for her. For instance, she has not reflected on where she would end up living and the amount of travelling she would have to do. In addition, she might have to compromise her plans to have family and children, something that is important to her.

The point of this example is not to show that our decisions for our current projects are necessarily 'clouded' by contingent feelings and emotions and that we might therefore be driven to make wrong choices about our life. Its point is rather to highlight that insofar as one is dedicated to current plans which one believes strongly are worth pursuing, it is difficult to make a judgement on the plans in question. Taking the step out of her current projects, Sarah at least can judge that her dedication to current projects depends on neither randomly feelings which might have been aroused by a television programme, nor on any kind of whimsicality. To see her project from a viewpoint which is not related to it, warrants at least a clearer view on the project and how this is connected with her life in general. Consequently, to take the 'detachment' step is to see how one is related to one's own projects and, more significantly, whether the projects in question are indeed worth pursuing.

Although the 'detachment step' is necessary to see one's life as a whole, it is not sufficient to serve this purpose, and therefore it should be accompanied by the second and the third steps. Recall my last example. If Sarah takes the step out of her immediate project and reflects on it, either she will choose to stick with it, or she will decide to shift to another project. However, her attitude to her own project depends on what kind of person she has become over the years. This is how failures and successes and past attitudes have affected her personality.<sup>3</sup> Hence, she ought to deliberate on how her past has shaped her present attitudes and how she will go on from her present state to any

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<sup>3</sup> I do not imply here any view concerning one's personal identity over time. For more about this issue see Parfit, D 1984. *Reasons and Persons*. Oxford. Clarendon Press.

future projects. On this reading, she needs to take the second step which is to deliberate from her past to her present, and the third step which is to deliberate from her present to her future.

### **5.1.2 Deliberation from Past to Present**

Annas (1993: 25) points out that to see one's life as a whole, it is necessary to reflect on one's past. Our current responses to states of affairs do not appear momentarily. Our actions and attitudes over the years have developed patterns of thinking and character traits which explain our responses to events of our everyday life. The same is true if one deliberates on one's future, about, say, whether one is happy to go on living the way one has done, or whether one should make changes to one's plans and projects. To say that I am happy to go on living as I have so far done means that I have a positive attitude towards my projects and believe that they will be successful. On the other hand, to claim that I am not happy as my life has been going on entails that I have a negative attitude to what will be happening concerning my current projects and their development. Nevertheless, to hold these attitudes for my projects depends on what person I have become so far. Hence, I can deliberate effectively on my life as a whole, if I am able to see how my past shapes my present and how the latter informs my future. I will elucidate Annas' reasoning on this point with an example.

Chris has been Head of the Philosophy Department. His position requires sitting on panels and making decisions concerning research grants for postgraduate students. His department has available two grants which will be given to two students. Although Chris and his colleagues sorted out the applications, they seem to be faced with a dilemma. All things considered, there are four candidates whose applications are equally strong. Chris knows that any decision he will make will be the right one, since he judges that all four candidates deserve the grant in question. He would like to make a fair decision and thus he has postponed his decision for a while. Recently, he has been reflecting on whether he is fair, on whether he has acquired such a trait. For instance, during his undergraduate degree he worked hard and managed to get a financial reward. At the time, this demonstrated to him that if you work hard there will be a reward. So, he understood that it is fair to reward those who are both hard-working and seriously committed to their studies. He also realised that to succeed in one's target demands courage and sacrifices. So, he realised that for any choice one makes in one's life a certain degree of courage is demanded and a number of sacrifices. Those might not

guarantee that one's efforts will be successful, but they highlight that one has at least acted well to meet one's targets.

On this reading, Chris, so far, has been courageous in making decisions and has cultivated the view that to conduct in the light of fairness manifests that one acts well. After his deliberations, he is sure that he is courageous enough to make the decision, and he is also fair to choose who will probably be the best two candidates out of four.

At this point, an objection quickly suggests itself. Chris is capable of reaching a courageous and fair decision although he has never been courageous and fair in his life. It might be the case that he realises that in this case he should act out of fairness and courage. Hence, the claim that our past shapes and informs our current character traits and affects how we act appears to be a weak one. My response to this objection is that to focus on separate acts might illuminate motive behind one's actions but this does not mean that one enhances those motives as patterns of deliberating and acting. Firstly, if Chris acts momentarily fairly and courageously, this does not entail that he understands what fairness and courage is and how they shape one's actions. If this were the case, he should be able to explain why he has not acted out of fairness and courage before. Secondly, to act in the light of some motives, it entails that one has familiarise with oneself with them and understands when it is necessary to inform one's actions. If this is not the case, then one might be acting in accordance with these motives due to luck. Hence, the objection in question is toothless since it cannot show that our present attitudes and patterns of actions are not related to our past.

My example may be extended as follows. Chris acting fairly and courageously chooses two out of the four candidates for the grant. His next project is to apply for a fellowship which will allow him to pursue two years of research with no teaching commitments. He knows that to prepare an application for the fellowship in question he will have to sacrifice his free time with his family and friends, and also his teaching commitments. Being fair and courageous, his next deliberative step is to question whether he is happy for his life to go on as it has been. If he is happy with his life, this means that he should apply for the fellowship. Acting again in the light of fairness and courage, he needs to be fair with his students and colleagues concerning his teaching duties, and with his family and friends regarding his time. He also needs to be courageous to take the decision to pursue the application, since it is demanding and challenging process.

### 5.1.3 Deliberation from Present to Future

A question that arises here, is whether Chris needs to take the third deliberative step and reflect from his current position on how the latter informs his future. I cannot see how one can deliberate about one's future plans if one does not take into account one's present state. What persons we are now somehow determines what choices we will make about our future. Nevertheless, this reveals the relation between the second and the third deliberative steps. One can think about the future if one understands one's position in the present which is shaped from one's past. One cannot see how one's life as a whole if one is not able to see one's actions and activities as episodes in one's life which are tied together.

Seeing one's life as whole presumably entails one's seeing one's acts, and activities as intrinsically connected. But what unifies one's acts and activities together in order to see one's life as a whole.

According to Aristotle, all acts and decisions are end oriented, and aim to bring about some good. Acts are successful if they fulfil their ends. So, during our life all our actions contribute to certain ends; if our actions realise our ends, we have acted successfully. But if they fail to realise their ends, we have acted unsuccessfully. On this reading, to see one's life as whole, means that one deliberates on one's ends and whether they have been successful. Although if we reflect on separate acts we can judge whether they realise their aims, to see one's life as a whole entails that there is a standpoint which unifies these ends, as an end incorporating all ends and this is what Aristotle calls happiness that is live a good life. The term 'happiness' does not convey the true meaning of the Aristotelian term 'eudaimonia'; it should not be confused with we call happiness. For Aristotle and his advocates eudaimonia is not a state which one reaches. It seems to be a process of realising all those ends about which one deliberates. Those ends make sense only if one sees them as episodes which contribute to the good life.

Recall again the last part of the example with Chris. He either decides not to apply for the fellowship or he makes all those sacrifices and deals with the application. Either action is rational and right, since there is nothing which implies that Chris should choose the former over the latter action. What will inform his decision is whether any of the actions in question will contribute to his final end, which according to Aristotle is to live well. On this reading, Chris has to choose the action according to which he will be able to live well. The question that arises here is whether Chris can live well without

acting well. Let's assume that he decides to apply for the fellowship. Once again this means that he will need to make sacrifices regarding his teaching duties and his free time. One might assume here that Chris will be acting well if he has the application ready in time and if the latter is successful. This appears to be the end of his action. Those who ascribe this assumption, they ignore that the end of the action is not that his application is successful. The end is that by handling adequately the sacrifices he has to make, he will be able to produce a strong proposal. For instance, if he is not fair with his students, his quality of teaching will be reduced and this will have an effect both to students and to his life, since he believes that quality in teaching accompanies quality in research. In addition, if he is not fair with his family and friends, he will end up being upset which will undermine his productivity and will disappoint both his family and his friends. In this respect, Chris acts well only if his action realises its end, and it contributes to a flourishing life. But how does it mean to act well in Aristotle's context?

Aristotle suggests that to act well is to act according to virtues. Virtues are character traits that agents develop and practice in every day action. However, it is not sufficient to practice the virtues for one to act well. One should know which virtues should apply in each case. Consider the following example. Ian lives with his family in a remote house in the countryside. Their house happens to be attacked by a couple of vicious burglars who asked for the family's money taking Ian's two children as hostages. Ian can act in the light of the virtue of courage in two different cases. He can act courageously trying to defend his children and attack the burglars. Or, he can also courageously by giving the family's money to burglars. Both actions manifest courage for different reasons. The first because Ian aims to protect his children putting in risk his children's lives. And the second, because he will give away a sum of money he has been working for a long time knowing that he will not be able to have again in the near future. According to Aristotle, the really virtuous person knows which of the two actions manifest the right degree of virtue which responds to the situation in question. I will have to say more about the operation of virtues in my next section. For the moment, I would like to turn my attention to the relation between acting well and living well.

Once again, according to Aristotle, one cannot claim that lives well, has a flourishing life, if one does not act well, one does not act in the light of virtues. The question that arises from the relation in question is whether one's reasons for action are rooted in one's final good or in one's virtues. If we accept that our conception of final good yields reasons for action it seems that all our reasons are eudaimonistic.

Nevertheless, this is not in aligning with the view to see one's life as a whole. To deliberate on my ends and reflect on how my life is going, it does not entail that those acts which contribute to my final good are the right ones and those which fail to do so are wrong. My final good informs my decisions about my acts in the sense that gives priority to those ends which contribute to my final end.

If, for instance, I am confronted with two choices, either to donate some money to charity or to do voluntary work to the local Amnesty bookshop every Saturday, both actions appear to be right. If my final good is to live a good life and this means that my life is meaningful since it involves relations to those who suffer and they need help, any of the two actions will be contributing to my final good. However, I need to prioritise since I need to make a decision. At the moment, my financial situation does not allow me to donate any money; therefore I choose to volunteer every Saturday for the Amnesty bookshop. However, what gives me reason to volunteer for the shop is to be just and benevolent with those who are in need. My reason is rooted to my deliberation that these people are in need and acting benevolently and justly I will help them. My reasons to help those in need are rooted in the virtue of benevolence and justice.

Hence, we need a standpoint to prioritise our ends this where from which one sees one's life as a whole, but to set priorities concerning our ends is rather pointless if we do not act well to realise these ends.

Let me trace my steps for a moment. I explained according to Annas what it means to see one's life as a whole. Following Annas, I shed some light on the three steps which consist to see one's life as a whole. One should be able to detach oneself from current projects. In addition, one should be able to reflect on how one's past shapes one's current projects and character traits. Finally, one should be able to deliberate about how one's present informs one's future. It is possible to see one's life as a whole if like Aristotle accepts that all acts and decisions are end oriented and directed. One who defines one's final end that is, one's final good, one can reflect on one's life as a whole. The standpoint of the final end unifies the variety of ends which we pursue with our acts and therefore they make sense only if they are seen in the light of the final end.

Nevertheless, what marks the entry to ethical reflection is to deliberate about our ends we cannot but reflect on whether we act well. Insofar as we deliberate about our ends, we are concerned how we will realise them.<sup>4</sup> On this reading, ends are realised

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<sup>4</sup> What is important here is that once we can get the amoralist to really reflect on his life as a whole, and what would make it go well, then he is no longer an amoralist – for he is bound to be engaging with



only if we act well. According to Aristotle, we act well only if we act in the light of virtues. Hence, the amoralist who takes the step to deliberate about his life as a whole cannot avoid to asking whether he acts well, since to live well is to act well. The account I have portrayed here is contrasted with view that we should focus on separate acts rather on our life as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

## 5.2 Virtue and Ethical Training

I pointed out earlier that the amoralist could not see his life as a whole unless he considers the relation between living well and acting well. Seeing one's life as a whole marks the entry to ethical reflection, but it is also accompanied by an account of good practice, which depends on the concept of virtue. So, in what follows, I will turn my attention to the concept of virtue exploring three different but interrelated dimensions of it. In the first section, following Aristotle's definition of virtue, I focus on the idea that virtue is a disposition to act in certain way.<sup>6</sup> In the second section, I shed some light on the idea that one's dispositions to act entail that one has intellectually grasped what it means to act in the light of virtue and when this is appropriate. Finally, in the third part I discuss the view that a proper understanding of virtue involves trained corresponding emotions. I explore the foregoing dimensions of virtue with reference to the idea of ethical training, since the latter is complementary to the understanding of virtue.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, one might raise the question whether it is necessary to elucidate these different aspects of virtue. Two reasons suggest the necessity of the forthcoming approach. Firstly, the definition of virtue I favour involves the three dimensions in question and therefore none of them can be dismissed. Secondly, an account of virtue ethics which depends on the idea of seeing one's life as a whole cannot accommodate the construal of virtue merely as a disposition, or merely knowledge, or simply as

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ethical considerations about the virtues. Kierkegaard (1987) makes a similar point in *Either/Or*. His point was that the 'choice' between living ethically and 'aesthetically' is, as it were, already made as soon as one starts to deliberate and reflect on it.

<sup>5</sup>There might be an objection to the view to see one's life as a whole. Why taking a detached look, reflecting on one's past and on the future amount to something 'large' as taking a view of one's life as a whole. There is, however, a reply available to this complaint. Recall my example with Adam. Any full reflection has no natural boundaries. For instance, considerations of physical fitness or improving one's Buddhist meditational technique will themselves connect up with other things in one's life – so that there is something arbitrary in stopping short without a sense of how, as a whole, one's life is going and how it should go.

<sup>6</sup>I should note here that there are a variety of definitions of virtue in the contemporary literature. I follow Aristotle's definition since it is closely related to the idea of seeing one's life as a whole but more importantly with the idea of ethical training.

<sup>7</sup>Burneyat makes a similar point concerning the relation between virtue and moral training in his article 'Aristotle on Learning to be Good' in Rorty, Amelie, O. (ed.) 1980. *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California. California University Press, p. 69.

emotion. To consider whether one acts well and whether this contributes to one's flourishing, one should be able to know what to do, be properly affected by it, and habituate one's choices. But how are we to understand this claim?

To consider virtue merely as a disposition – a habitual pattern of behaviour broadly speaking – means that agents who have limited experiences in life will never be able to develop their natural capacity to act virtuously. If acting virtuously depends on cultivating actions habitually which are rooted in deliberated repeated choices, those with a limited number of deliberated choices will know to deal with a limited number of actions in their lives. Furthermore, if virtue is merely a habit, then one could argue that ethical training is not necessary, since one can learn to act virtuously by imitating those who are virtuous. This view, however, is incompatible with seeing one's life as a whole, since it suggests that to act out of habit it is enough for one to act virtuously. A broadly Aristotelian view concerning virtue holds that deliberated choices become habit in case one has full understanding of what one is doing and one's emotions comply with it. Consequently, focusing only on the dispositional aspect of virtue, one misses one of the links between acting well and living well, which obviously cannot be based on imitation.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to that, it will be equally wrong to construe virtue solely as knowledge of what is the right thing to do. This is also irreconcilable with the view to see one's life as a whole. One should not forget that the foregoing view entails that not only one is aware of one's developed character traits and what they mean, but also that one practices the traits in question. If virtue were tantamount to knowledge, one could claim that knows what kindness is without practicing it. To see one's life as a whole, calls for changes in one's life if this is not fulfilling. Hence, to know what traits one should change is not enough, if one aims to change one's life. One should practice them.

Finally, if one contends that acting virtuously is an emotional reaction, or that virtues are synonymous to emotions, this undermines the role of virtue in seeing one's life as whole. Granted that to see one's life as a whole highlights the entry to ethical reflection, it seems that to consider about one's life depends on unstable states such as emotions. The latter are not developed, but there are responses to circumstances and therefore they are contingent. If, once again, to see one's life as a whole allows one to

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<sup>8</sup> I should note here that we need a three-way distinction: a. doing virtuous things as 'mere reflex' or just by imitation, b. Doing virtuous things as 'second nature', as a result of appropriate training. c. Doing virtuous things BOTH 'naturally' AND with understanding of why they are virtuous, how they contribute to eudaimonia etc. This is what Aristotle calls the 'fully virtuous' person.

change one's life plans and projects and requires that one should be able to view one's plans regardless of emotional ties, one cannot really act virtuously. Since acting virtuously will be to act emotionally which does not really sanction one to live well, according to the foregoing account. On this reading, it seems that discussion concerning the role of virtue in seeing one's life as a whole involves not only the dispositional, but also the intellectual and the affective aspects of virtue.

### **5.2.1 Virtue as Disposition**

According to Aristotle (NE, II, 6, 1106b36-1107a2), 'a [moral] virtue is a habitual disposition connected with choice, lying in a mean relative to us, a mean which is determined by reason, by which the person of practical wisdom would determine it'. Although he seems to provide more than one definition of virtue, what seems to be central to his understanding of virtue, is that the latter is a disposition. But what does it mean to be disposed to act?

Roughly speaking, disposition appear to be a property. So, water has the property or it is disposed to steam if it is boiled at 100C. In this respect, an agent is disposed to act in certain ways, only if there is a trait which highlights one's conduct and one has acquired as a habit. The last claim, however, involves two interrelated points concerning virtue; how one becomes to be disposed in certain ways, and how one develops the relational property in question.

Throughout one's life, one deliberates and makes decisions with respect to a variety of circumstances. As a result, one develops a pattern of behaviour which is shaped and informed by the choices that one has so far made. One's dispositions are rooted in those decisions and choices which are repeated through one's life and manifest how one responds to different circumstances. On this reading, to be disposed to act in a certain way involves both repetition and deliberation. In what follows, I will illustrate the dispositional aspect of virtue with an example and I will also respond to two complaints that one might raise against my example.

Tom used to be a college teacher. Although he liked his job, he felt that he would not be able to perform his teaching duties successfully and he therefore decided to change his career. He became a public relations officer for a construction company.

His new job involves meetings any time of the day with potential contractors for the company. Hence, his position is important to the company, since a large amount of contract agreements depend on how he handles the aforementioned meetings. Although

Tom is intelligent and grasps his new job requirements, he would not perform well, if he did not have the habit of acting out of kindness and respect.

As a college teacher, Tom developed the habit to respond to students' questions and parents' requests with respect and kindness. Now, receiving a large number of invitations for a variety of events, he needs to deal with those who provide the events in question in a kind and respectful manner.

The example shows that Tom repeatedly chose to act in the light of kindness and respect in the college environment and he therefore developed a pattern of conduct, which he thought would be important for his life, since it regulates his relations with others. He deliberated about how kindness and respect lead him to act well and exercises the same pattern of behaviour throughout his life. Consequently, he is capable of being kind and respectful in his new career.

Tom's kind behaviour resulted from the choices he made during his teaching career, but this enabled him to realise that this is how he ought to lead his life. He has developed those traits to the extent that his response to the demands of his new job is habitual. He does not need to deliberate about whether he ought to answer kindly to any invitations and treat his guests with respect. However, anytime he acts in the light of kindness and respect, he makes a choice, and this is how he trains himself and develops the traits in question.

At this moment, I would like to consider a complaint that one might raise against Tom's case. Once again, according to the example, Tom manifests the virtues of kindness and respect. This, however, does not mean that he possesses the virtues in question. He might understand that to perform well in his professional life he needs to be kind and respectful towards clients and colleagues, and he therefore acts out of reflex. To put it across differently, he just follows a code of conduct.

I think that there is a rebuttal available to the complaint in question. Tom does not act kindly and respectfully merely due to his job commitments. He is disposed to act kindly and he is not caused to act so by any external force. His actions are a product of habituation and the development of two virtues that is, kindness and respect.

To act kindly in a college environment and to act likewise in a corporate environment appear to be instances of the same virtue. Nevertheless, if one has not deliberated on what it is to act kindly, and has not acted kindly in the past, one cannot really act virtuously. Furthermore, to apply the virtues of kindness and respect in two different environments, one needs to understand the different kind of response that is

required from the circumstances in question. For instance, a kind response to a parents' request might be inappropriate in a business meeting with potential contractors. If acting virtuously were merely reflexive, deliberation on one's choices and decisions would not shape one's traits. In addition to this, what is central to the understanding of development of virtuous traits is that they are not contingent responses; instead they are deliberated choices which are end directed. That end is considered to be something good of which one is aware.

I would like to turn my attention to a second complaint which threatens to undermine my example. Tom has acquired the virtues of respect and kindness, and he has developed a habit of acting according to them. If his actions are considered merely habitual responses, one can argue that Tom acquired those virtues by imitation and not by training. The acquisition and the development of virtues depend on training and practicing. Although, according to Aristotle, we have the natural capacities to develop certain traits without training, they will not be developed. One does not really know what it means to kindly, one has to find out what kindness is by looking for those who manifest and act in the light of kindness.

On this reading, virtues seem to be acquired by imitation, since it is enough for one to take the first step to any virtue by imitating those who possess them and act on them. To respond to this complaint one must consider the intellectual and the affective dimensions of virtue. It might be the case that one enters into virtuous acting by imitating those who act virtuously, like children who imitate adults. But as one develops and exercises the virtues one develops a proper grasp of what it means to act in the light of certain virtues, and one trains one's emotions accordingly. Recall my example. Tom behaves out of kindness and respect in educational and corporate environments. If he solely imitates the virtues in question, he will not be able to distinguish between the two professional environments. Consequently, Tom would run the risk of behaving inappropriately, e.g. using an overly-familiar form of kindness in a business meeting. Virtue is a habitual disposition, but one that necessarily entails intellectual grasp and deliberation, in what follows. In what follows, I will therefore focus on the intellect part of virtue.

### **5.2.2 Intellect and the Virtue**

Debate concerning the intellectual aspect of virtue might be divided into two branches. The first concerns whether virtues manifest an intellect dimension, while the second involves the connection between virtues and phronesis (practical wisdom). In

what follows, I do not intend to answer the foregoing questions about the intellectual dimension of virtue. My aim is to show that virtues have an intellectual aspect and that they therefore are not merely emotional responses. Furthermore, the intellectual aspect of virtue is complemented by the idea of ethical training (Burnyeat 1980:69-92).

Recall the objection against the habitual aspect of virtue. If virtues have a habitual disposition, one can act in the light of virtues by imitating what the perfectly virtuous person does. This claim not only defies the necessity of ethical training but also overlooks the intellectual aspect of virtue. Hence, a rebuttal is available if we demonstrate that acting in the light of virtues involves the intellectual grasp of the virtue or virtues in question.

To imitate an act is not tantamount to understanding how to do it. For instance, if I decide to get involved seriously with the exercise of running, I might be able to do it if I just follow what some people do in the local gym. They run for some time on a running machine. Is this sufficient to have an understanding of what it means to run? I do not think that it is. To run effectively entails that one has the right body posture and knows how to breath according to one's pace. In addition, body posture depends on what kind of ground one runs and whether one runs indoors or outdoors. There is also a difference between running indoors and outdoors concerning what kind of clothes one wears and the speed of the wind.

On this reading, to know how to run means that I am able to understand how important all these factors are and how to adjust myself so I can perform the exercise of running well. I cannot find out by imitating those who run indoors how I should run when I run outdoors. A counter objection to this point might be that, there might be the idea of a perfect runner. This means that I am able to observe the perfect runner running in different environments so I can imitate his exercise in these different environments. My response to this counter objection is that even if it is possible to assume that there is such a perfect runner whom I can see running everywhere, there are still things concerning the exercise of running that I cannot know from imitation: for instance, the relation between breathing and pace, and how much pressure there is on my knees during the exercise of running. Consequently to know how to run, I need to have a good grasp of what it is to run. Only if I have a unified grasp of the activity of running – how I can do it, how it is related to my body, and how hard I need to press myself to do it – can I get involved with running seriously. Likewise one cannot learn virtues through simple imitation, since they require that agents have reached a unified intellectual grasp of what it means to act virtuously. But how are we to understand this?

Annas (1993: 66-73), following Aristotle, argues that virtues necessarily incorporate an intellectual dimension. She suggests that the virtuous 'agent has risen to intellectual grasp of the universal, of what particular cases share'. To unfold this complicated claim, one should bear in mind that acting in the light of virtues is not tantamount to learning a corpus of virtues and deliberating about whether they are applicable. Although Aristotle suggests a number of virtues, he does not suggest that agents should learn what the virtues are. The intellectual aspect of virtue is not limited to knowing what the virtues are – it requires knowing how the virtues are applied.

This, however, does not mean that the knowledge of the virtues is unnecessary. To know the virtues is the starting point in reflecting about the virtues and how they are applied. For instance, if one were not aware of the virtue of benevolence, one would not be able to act benevolently and develop the trait of character in question. Nevertheless, if the mere knowledge of virtues was sufficient for one to act virtuously, then there would be no difference between learning a set of virtues and a set of principles or rules which can guide one's actions. If this were the case, one would be convinced to act virtuously by lecturing or reading books and articles on ethical behaviour.

Furthermore, if this were the case the amoralist is an agent who is ignorant of what the virtues are and he therefore needs to be argued into it. However, according to the picture of the amoralist provided, in chapter one, he is, on the contrary, someone who knows the right thing to do – he knows what the virtues are – he is simply indifferent to them.

Complementing the intellect aspect of virtue is the Aristotelian idea of the 'mean'. According to Aristotle, 'virtues are habitual dispositions lying to a mean relative in us'. I do not intend to argue that the doctrine of the mean is what makes necessary the intellect aspect of virtue, but my claim is that it cannot be ignored. If we accept that the mean lies between excess and deficiency, this requires that the agent not only knows what is appropriate virtue is to apply, but that, through deliberation, he discerns where the mean lies according to the situation.

For instance, if one follows the principle that one should always help blind people to cross traffic junctions, one might fail to act virtuously. It is one thing to claim that one knows theoretically what benevolence is and another to act in the light of it. Applying the doctrine of the mean, one should deliberate firstly whether it is always good to help blind people crossing traffic junctions. It might be the case, that they are

able to do so on their own and they might feel intimidated by one's help. Or, they might own a dog which is trained to help them, and therefore they do not depend on our help. On this reading, deliberating on the mean, one explores whether one should act virtuously and what other factors one should include in one's deliberations.

The application of the doctrine of the mean manifests that acting virtuously requires that not only knows which virtue should be applied, but also he can explain and defends the virtue on which he acts. So, to act virtuously demands reflection which is rather something different from mere imitation.

Nevertheless, the aforementioned construal of the intellectual dimension of virtue might be misleading. If we contend that to deliberate well is tantamount to acting well, that is, in the light of virtue, those who are clever or intelligent are necessarily virtuous. Or, at least, they are more capable of acting virtuously than others. Yet Aristotle makes it clear that to be practically wise that is, to act in the light of virtues is not necessarily tantamount to intelligence. Sometimes those who are clever cannot find out or cannot understand what kind of virtue is demanded from the circumstances in question. As a result, they do not act well.

So, the intellectual aspect of virtue entails something more than to know theoretically the virtues in deliberation. It involves the cultivation of the relevant attitudes which is based on the training of the emotions. To act in the light of virtue now means that one knows which is the right virtue to apply, where the mean lies according to the situation, but most importantly that one's emotions comply with the virtuous action in question. To act virtuously means that one's virtues have become traits of one's character and therefore one does not need to defy in one's deliberations what pulls one away from the virtuous actions. On this reading, what McDowell (1978 and 1979) suggests concerning the 'silencing' of those reasons which guide one away from the virtues is probably right. Reasons to act against virtues are 'silenced' in the sense that there is nothing in one's deliberations which motivate one to act contrary to the virtues. Even one's feelings are in line with the virtue in question.

Furthermore, the practice of virtues shape and inform one's emotions. In this respect, one cannot claim that one practices acting benevolently although one dislikes helping others. To act in the light of the virtue of benevolence entails not only that I know how to apply benevolence, but also that I feel benevolent. I will have to say more about the relation between emotion and virtue in my next section.



Moreover, what one should not forget about the intellectual aspect of virtue is that aim at the 'good'. In the beginning of the current section, exploring the intellectual aspect of virtue, I pointed out that the agent who acts virtuously does not simply imitate virtuous behaviour. He is capable of defending his choice and explaining why he acted virtuously. This not only entails that one has a firm theoretical knowledge of the virtues, but also shows that one understands that acting virtuously aims at the good. But how are we to understand that?

Acting virtuously guarantees that we act well. On this reading, virtues provide us with reasons for action which guide us to a virtuous action which is our response to certain circumstances. Our virtuous action is how we respond to the question what should I do in such and such circumstances. If the agent is not aware that by acting virtuously, one does act well, it seems that there is no reason to act virtuously. Acts of virtue instantiate something in the sense that one practices well. Think of the following analogy. A knife is good only if it is sharp and therefore cuts efficiently. That is it fulfils its end. Bearing in mind that the end of virtue is to act well, one should be aware of the good in question.

Here, I neither say, nor imply that the virtuous agent acts contemplating on the results that actions of virtue will bring about. To act virtuously means that the agent has understood that this is something good in itself, since it simply constitutes good practice. That is to say that the virtuous agent is not motivated solely by the desire to produce certain consequences, since does not focus on separated acts. Good practice should shape his life as a whole. By realising that acting virtuously aims at something good, which itself cannot be fully specified except with reference to the exercise of the virtues.

I have so far focused on the intellectual dimension of virtue and I have shown that acting virtuously does not involve mere imitation of certain habits. I have considered three constituents of the intellectual aspect of virtue; theoretical knowledge of the virtues and the doctrine of the mean, the training of one's emotions, and the idea that virtues aim at something good. All of them reflect a unified basis of understanding of virtue which is not restricted to pure theoretical knowledge of the virtues, but entails critical reflection on those circumstances which call upon us to act virtuously. This enables one to defend and explain one's actions. Aristotle's comparison between virtue and skill, I think well captures the idea of the unified basis of virtue, highlighting the differences between skill and virtue. In what follows, I will briefly discuss the analogy in question to shed some light on the unified basis of the intellectual grasp of virtue.

Julia Annas (1993: 67-68) points out that the comparison between skill and virtue is frequent in ancient texts concerning virtue ethics. The analogy is helpful because both virtues and skills are acquired by a process of learning.

Virtue like skill, aims at something good which is not only good in itself, but also contributes to one's life as a whole. For instance, someone who is trained to become a medical doctor needs to acquire the skill to make stitches after an operation. The skill, however, is something good in itself, and it is necessary part of becoming a good professional. It should be noted here that the skill itself is not enough for one to be a good professional. It should be considered as a constituent of one's professional development, since it makes sense only within the framework of the practice of medicine. However, the analogy between skill and virtue highlights the intellectual grasp of virtue.

Skills are acquired by learning and they cannot depend on mere imitation. One should have the capacity to understand what the skill demands from one and by practising it, one will be able to master it and apply it successfully. Think, for instance, of carpentry. A skill that one needs to acquire in order to be a carpenter is to carve wood. It is easy to imitate someone who does so, and learn how to carve wood, but this does not mean that one has acquired the skill of carving wood which is appropriate for carpentry. To acquire the skill in question entails that one knows what kinds of wood are adequate for carving, how much time one needs to dedicate for carving different kinds of wood. In addition, one should know why one carves the wood that is, what would be the final product of one's activity. Although imitation appears to be the first step to knowledge, it is not sufficient for knowledge, since to acquire a skill is not restricted to mere unreflective repetition of the same action. To be sure, an Aristotelian account of virtues, which is based on the idea of moral training encourages those who are inexperienced to act like the ideal virtuous agent, but I have shown earlier that this is far from being a mere imitation. What is attractive about the analogy between skill and virtue in respect of training, is the idea that acquiring a skill is not merely to know what that skill is about. In acquiring a virtue as in acquiring a skill, one understands when it is necessary to apply the virtue or skill in question. The similarities between skill and virtue do not stop here however.

Exercising a virtue, like exercising a skill, involves the training of one's emotions; that is one develops the appropriate attitudes towards one's activities. In the case of skills this is important, since one will not practice any skill successfully, if one

is distracted by anxiety or worries. If, for instance, I am trained as an electrician and one of the skills that I need to learn is to replace electric wires, I will never practice adequately if I am afraid of doing this because it is dangerous. Part of acquiring the skill to replace electric wires is firstly to know that is dangerous, and secondly to know how to deal with such a dangerous activity. If I am worried that it is too dangerous, I will not be able to concentrate on what I have to do and therefore I will never acquire the skill in question adequately. Practising on replacing electric wires, I also learn to control my fear concerning the danger which is part of the activity in question. Similarly, acting virtuously I train my emotions so that they may be brought to comply with the activities in question. I will have more to say about the relation between virtue and emotion in the next section.

### **5.2.3 Emotion and Virtue**

To many people it has seemed that emotions play an important role in virtue ethics. Indeed some of them might have reached the conclusion that virtues are tantamount to emotions. In this section I wish to take a critical look at the affective dimension of virtue. In what follows, my aim is to illuminate the relation between virtue and emotion with special reference to the idea of moral training. I will focus on the role of moral education and the feelings that it fosters, the relation between the habitual aspect of virtue and the affective, and the significance of the affective aspect of virtue for virtue ethics. Moreover, my discussion will highlight significant implications concerning the nature of moral motivation and practical reason, which I will present in the conclusion of the current chapter.

First I need to clear the ground of some obstructions which the assumption that virtue is tantamount to emotion entails. *Prima facie*, if the assumption in question were true, virtue ethics would not be a theory which concerns one's character. Since contingency is one of the main features of emotions, it would be rather odd to justify one of the main principles of virtues ethics according to which, one can lead a flourishing life only if one develops a virtuous character. If virtuous behaviour depends on contingent reaction, it cannot shape one's life as a whole. Virtue ethics, on this conception, would appear to be an ethical theory which can justify whimsical behaviour. Virtues cannot therefore be tantamount to emotions.

It could be objected here that there is nothing wrong with the contingency of emotions, since one can be virtuous if one acts under those circumstances which invoke the emotions in question. For instance, one can always act benevolently if one meets

people who are in need. The objection, however, is toothless. What is pivotal to the understanding of virtue ethics is that one sees one's life as a whole and that one tries to develop those character traits which result in virtuous behaviour. On this reading, virtuous behaviour does not depend on contingent circumstances, since the virtuous agent seeks always to act virtuously.

Annas acknowledges that virtue involves feelings, but she points out that virtues cannot be merely feelings. She suggests that there are two major differences between virtue and feelings. Firstly, we are praised or blamed for having or lacking virtues and we are not praised for lacking or having feelings. For example, one might be praised because one exhibited courageous behaviour on the battlefield, or one might be blamed because one was a coward. In the same respect, one is not praised because one is happy, and one is not blamed because one is upset.

Secondly and more importantly, Annas stresses the point that virtues, unlike emotions are products of deliberate choice. One chooses to act justly and therefore justice shapes and informs one's decisions from the moment one has developed and exercised the virtue of justice. Feelings on the other hand are one's responses to external circumstances. For instance, if a student is upset because I gave him a low mark for his formative assignment on Ethics, he just responds to the fact that the low mark disappointed him. He does not feel upset because he chose to have this feeling. However, the student can choose how much his disappointment will affect his life and his work in the next few days. This point not only highlights that feelings are different from virtues, but also implies the link between the former and the latter. On this reading, the practice of virtues can accommodate the operation of feelings. Having cleared the grounds of obstructions and bearing in mind that virtues are not feelings, I can begin unfold claim concerning the affective dimension of virtue.

Virtue ethical accounts of emotion differ from Kantian and Humean accounts of morality and practical reason. A Kantian account condemns the role of emotion in moral motivation whereas Humeans hold that feeling dominates practical reasoning. Virtue ethicists acknowledge that one cannot be virtuous if one has not been properly affected, if, that is, one's emotional reactions are not appropriate to the circumstances. Aristotle points out that we do not have direct control over our feelings. And he also claims that vicious actions can be rooted in pleasure and that those who seek a life of pleasures therefore cannot lead a flourishing life. This does not mean that emotions should be excluded from the picture of ethical motivation. By contrast, one should be able to

control them adequately, so one can be affected properly and feel the 'right' feelings under the 'right' circumstances.

Here, however, an objector comes in. It seems rather absurd to claim that virtue ethics allow some space to emotions, while I argued in the first part of the current chapter that for one to see one's life as a whole one should not be emotionally tied with one's goals. Hence, emotions do not seem to be part of an account of virtue ethics. Nonetheless, there is a rebuttal available to this objection.

The objection in question does not threaten the link between virtue and emotion, but it underlies the significance of emotions in one's life. According to the view, that one should see one's life as a whole, one should not be emotionally tied to one's aims, but this does not exclude emotions from the decision process. This view, however, complies with Aristotle's view concerning the role of feelings. We cannot control our feelings, and sometimes we might be pulled to act wrongly since we follow our feelings. It is therefore important to control them in order to reach the right decisions. To do this one needs develop the right kind of virtues. Hence, the practice of controlling one's feelings may be reconciled with seeing one's life as a whole. In this respect, one is not emotionally tied to one's aims and goals, since one has developed the capacity to reduce the power of one's feelings when it comes to decisions about future or current plans. But how are we to understand this claim?

Recall my example concerning the student who is upset because I gave him a low mark in his Ethics assignment. He is disappointed and upset with himself. His emotional state might lead him to a variety of thoughts and decisions. For instance, he might conclude that he is not good at ethics and that he should therefore quit the module. Or he might be wondering whether he spent the right amount of time on the essay, and he might be worrying that he has to do something about his timetable schedule. Nevertheless, what should be noted is that if my student leaves himself to be pulled by his worries or his fear, which are the products of his disappointment with my mark, he might take the wrong decision. A low mark does not necessarily mean that he is a bad student who should give up the module.

According to Aristotle, the student needs to educate his emotions by practicing the virtues that will control his emotions. These virtues will generate the feelings that will be appropriate responses to his circumstances. On this reading, to act virtuously involves one's being properly affected, that one recognises the appropriate and correct ways to feel in certain circumstances. So, for the student in question, it is not enough to be aware that being upset and worried will only be harmful for him and others. He

needs to feel affected by the right amount of feelings which will help him to see what he should do concerning his low mark. The student, for instance, should be aware and practice the virtue of moderation. The virtue in question will educate his emotions. By practising moderation, he will learn to accept that a low mark can bring about disappointment but that should affect his view about the module.

In this respect, virtues not only are prior to feelings, they also appear to be the sources of them. The example is meant to illuminate the role of virtues in controlling one's emotions. This neither says nor implies that unethical behaviour is always manifested by the lack of certain feelings, or by the wrong amount of certain feelings. Instead, it is to say that by cultivating the virtues, one becomes properly affected because one is aware of the amount of feelings that one should manifest according to the circumstances. Hence a moderate student is upset at his low mark, but his being upset does not interfere with other aspects of his life. However, what can guarantee that the student will be moderate enough in other similar cases?

If the student in question has been adequately morally trained, he will be manifest moderate behaviour when it is demanded. What is central to the understanding of moral training for an account of virtue ethics is the education of emotions. This feature underlies the distinct character of virtue ethics. Nonetheless, it is often assumed that moral education is tantamount to a learning process which depends on codes or set of rules. According to this view, one can perform right actions, if one learns and applies the appropriate set of rules when this is necessary. Such training is successful under the condition that one knows as many rules as one can, and applies them adequately. There seems to be two problems with the assumption in question.

Firstly, if the aim of moral training is to help one to understand how one should act under certain circumstances, mere rule following seems to fail. As Hursthouse nicely points out, it might be the case that one is capable to imitate rules mechanically but this does not mean that one is aware of what is the right thing to do. Knowing the rules might be necessary to perform the right thing, but it is not sufficient to grasp what it does mean to perform the right action. One should not forget that being educated to follow rules does not necessarily entail that one will get a good understanding of what these rules are all about. For example, think of the rule one should always eat breakfast. One might always follow the rule, but one might lack the understanding of the rule. One might mechanically breakfast without realising what it does mean this for one's organism. It is always to eat breakfast in the morning, since this provides a balanced diet during the day and prepares one's body for one's work schedule. Nevertheless,

grasping the rule means more than just following it in this case. The rule in question makes sense, if one understands that a balanced and healthy diet is supported by small meals which contain low fat through the whole day. By eating breakfast every morning, if one in the rest of the day consumes high fat food and drinks large quantities of alcohol or soft drinks, one follows the rule, but one does not really understand what the realisation of the rule in question entails.

Secondly, one should take into account that our life experiences are immensely rich and therefore there are dilemmas that might be no rules to apply. In this respect, it seems that if one is trained merely to follow rules, one cannot provide solutions to those problems which do not correspond to any rules. For instance, one is aware that one's girlfriend cheats on one's best friend and one is in front of a dilemma. On one hand, one can let one's friend to know about it independently of the consequences. On the other, one might be aware that if one's friend knows about it, he will be really devastated. In this case, there seems no rule which responds directly to any of the horns of the dilemma in question, and therefore there is no direct guidance.<sup>9</sup>

A way out of these two problems can be given by an account of moral training which is not solely focused on rule following. Virtue ethics shapes and informs an account of moral training which aims to the education of the emotions. On this reading, one is trained to act well if one is properly affected that is one, knows how to react in each case.

Recall my example concerning the student who is upset and disappointed with his low mark in Ethics assignment. To train his emotions does not mean that he should not be upset or that he should not manifest his disappointment. Even if there were a rule that he should not be upset and disappointed, this is not sufficient to alter his emotional state. Although it sounds rather absurd that rule following change one's feelings, this does not warrant that the change in question will be sustained over time. If the student in question follows the rule that he ought not be upset and disappointed when he gets a low mark in one of his assignments this does not entail that he will be able to do the same for every event which brings about disappointment to him.

The student, however, by practicing the virtue of moderation cultivates an attitude towards unpleasant events which will be manifested in any instance which causes disappointment. In this respect, the student is properly affected. He is aware that

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<sup>9</sup> I would like to note here that my objection to an account of moral training which depends merely on rule following does not necessarily aim to attack rule-based theories of ethics. Nonetheless, it stresses the view that an account of moral education which is shaped by virtue ethics is more appealing than the former model.

certain events cause disappointment, but his emotional reaction is tuned according to the virtue of moderation. Hence his attitude is not present only when he gets a low mark. He leads his life deliberating that under those circumstances which entail disappointment, he should behave appropriately that is he should not let his feelings to dominate the rest of his day or the rest of his projects. So, by practicing the virtues one controls one's emotions.

This, however, does not mean that one suppresses one's feelings. On this reading, emotions are not constrained by virtues, but they are generated and guided by the latter. A life which is governed solely by one's emotions – those who seek only pleasure – cannot be a flourishing life.

Additionally, what is also central to the understanding of the education of the emotions is that moral training does not aim merely to control one's emotions. Annas rightly points out that in contemporary moral theory, we praise those agents who manifest the capacity to control their feelings. For Aristotle, those who control their feelings and they are not pulled by pleasure, although they can act well, they are not virtuous yet. The education of the emotions inculcates an attitude, which is present in the virtuous agent and informs and shapes all his actions. For instance, if the student in question breaks up with his girlfriend, if he inculcated the attitude concerning disappointment, he might be upset, but he will realise that this cannot affect his whole life. Therefore, moral training according to virtue ethics is neither mere controlling of the emotions, nor constraining of them, but it aims to cultivate the right attitude which should be one's response under certain circumstances. There seem to be two interrelated questions here that call for an answer. Firstly, whether an agent can sustain the cultivated attitude, and secondly if this is case how this is possible.

One will be able to manifest the right amount of feelings continuously under the condition that one practices the virtues for some time. In this respect, reacting in light of the right feelings under certain circumstances it will become second nature if the agent practices the virtues and trains oneself on a daily basis. This is how virtue can generate the right feelings. And this is possible due to practice.

On this reading, the training of emotions entails moral development. We cannot expect that as soon as the student of my example decides to act in the light of moderation, he will refrain from overacting because he is disappointed. It is necessary that he will take some time by practicing the virtue in question until he reaches the point of realising what it means not to overreact under those circumstances which bring about disappointment. Hence, the student not only inculcates a certain attitude, but also



develops it through time. For the student the development of this attitude depends on his daily actions, activities and he can reach the point of realizing the attitude in question when his reaction to events which bring about disappointment is almost habitual. For advocates of virtue ethics successful moral training depends on the idea of moral development. Nevertheless, this claim highlights the significance that the moral training that is education of emotions has for an account of virtue ethics which is primarily based on the view to see one's life as a whole.

Although the idea of moral training is attractive because it allows room for continuous development of one's character, the Aristotelian account of moral training is appealing, since it is accompanied by the first step to ethical reflection that is, to see one's life as a whole. All three aspects of virtue which I have so far discussed are related to the view to see one's life as a whole. However, I would like to focus on the affective dimension of virtue, since it is the most striking feature of the Aristotelian account of moral education and its impact is complemented by seeing one's life as a whole.

In the first section of the current chapter, I explained what means to see one's life as a whole and I argued that it marks the entry to ethical reflection. I concluded that if the aim to see one's life as a whole is a flourishing life, one needs to act well that is to act in the light of virtue. The idea of moral training which helps one to develop the virtues it also introduces the view to see one's life as a whole. The education of one's emotions is primarily related to the view in question. One educates one's emotion insofar as virtues determine not only the emotions that one feels but also the amount of the emotions in question. So, the virtuous agent develops an attitude which shapes one's motivation any time under certain circumstances. To develop the right attitude towards those circumstances one is expected to see one's life as a whole. The attitude cannot be developed immediately. As stated above, the student cannot be expected to alter his attitude immediately. What will sustain his attitude is to apply the attitude concerning disappointment in any deliberate action. by seeking to act in the light of the new inculcated attitude, the student practices the virtue of moderation. This will introduce him to see his life as a whole, since it is rather difficult to realise why he should not be guided by his disappointment, if he has not learnt to deliberate in perspective.

Furthermore, the training of the emotions hints that the entry to ethical reflection does not seem to depend on single acts but to see one's life as a whole. Once again to modify one's emotions and be properly affected demands time and practice. It is rather

impossible that one will change one's feelings and this will immediately lead to an established attitude. If this happens it is due to contingent factors. Consider the following example. Richard is afraid of earthquakes and therefore he does not visit places where earthquakes are likely to happen. Nonetheless, his new company requires from him to visit Japan which he did not consider before he accepted his job. If Richard visits Japan, this does not mean that he developed an attitude towards those kinds of events by acting in the virtue of moderation. On this reading, a single act is not sufficient to demonstrate that Richard stopped being afraid of earthquakes. If Richard's feelings change gradually and by seeing his life as a whole, he will sustain his attitude towards earthquakes and other natural disasters. What triggers and sustains the change of Richard's feelings is to see his life as a whole. By being properly affected one inculcates attitudes which shape and inform one's actions and activities not momentarily but through one's whole life.

So far, I have explored the three dimensions of virtue dispositional, intellectual and affective in relation to the idea of moral training. In the first part I explained the dispositional aspect of virtue and I claimed that if virtue is a settled disposition its dispositional character can be achieved by training and it is therefore related with the view to see one's life as a whole. In the second part, I discussed the intellectual aspect of virtue stressing the point that although knowing the virtues and developing practical wisdom are necessary for one to become virtuous, they are not sufficient. The knowledge of the virtuous agent is complemented by training and the education of the emotions. Finally, in the third part I explicated the affective dimension of virtue and I insisted on the claim that the virtuous person has been properly affected that is, he expresses the right amount of feelings under certain circumstances. I pointed out that the education of one's emotion is a distinct feature of an Aristotelian account of moral training, since it is related with the view to see one's life as a whole. Nevertheless, it remains to see whether an Aristotelian account of moral training can help the amoralist to take the first step to morality.

### **5.3 The amoralist's first step to ethical reflection**

In what follows, my aim is to shed some light on the amoralist's step from pre-ethical into ethical life stressing the relation between reflecting on one's life as a whole and the idea of moral training. Furthermore, in the second part of the current section, I would like to turn my attention to a couple of objections. The first is that the education

of one's emotions does not seem to be different from Williams's Humean account concerning the expansion of the amoralist's sympathy. And the second is the 'old' charge against virtue ethics that one might become virtuous because the acquisition of virtues benefits their possessor. Therefore virtue ethics shapes a self-interested account of moral motivation. If these complaints have force, the idea that one might take the first step to ethical reflection by viewing one's life as a whole is undermined.

In Chapter One of the thesis I claimed that it is possible for one to be an amoralist providing a picture of the amoralist, according to which he knows the difference between right and wrong, he understands the meaning of moral terms, but he fails to act in the light of his moral judgements. My concern in the current chapter has been to explore whether reflecting on one's life as a whole can provide the entry into ethical reflection to the amoralist.

Reflection on one's life as a whole is supported and developed by moral training and it is therefore related with the three dimensions of virtue. As stated above, virtues manifest three different but interrelated aspects; virtues involve a dispositional, an intellectual and an affective aspect. One could argue that the amoralist fails to act ethically because he ignores one of the three dimensions of virtue. However, in the beginning of the preceding section (5.2) I argued that the three dimensions of virtue cannot be separated. And I pointed out that an account of moral training aims to develop all three aspects of virtue.

Although the amoralist understands what the terms 'right' and 'wrong' mean, and is able to distinguish between right and wrong acts, this does not mean that he sees his life as a whole. Knowledge of right or wrong is not tantamount merely to the knowledge of rules or the knowledge of a catalogue of virtues. The intellectual aspect of virtue involves a unified grasping of what virtues are and what it means to act well in the light of virtues. The aspect in question is also supported by the idea of training and exercise. There is no knowledge of virtues if there is no exercise of them. The virtuous person acts well because he is practically wise that is, he knows that the circumstances demand from him and he acts accordingly following the virtue which fits to the circumstances in question.

Nevertheless, the exercise of virtues cannot be limited to some single acts. Knowledge and exercise of virtues call for reflecting on one's life as a whole, since one acts from the standpoint of seeing one's life as a whole deliberating how acting in the light of virtues will contribute to one's life. Mere knowledge of the virtues is necessary

but it is not sufficient to trigger reflection on one's life as a whole. Since to see one's life as a whole is the starting point of one's deliberations about what to do, knowledge of the virtues should be complemented by the exercise of the virtues. On this reading, the shift from the pre-ethical to ethical life appears to be possible, since the amoralist moves from the mere knowledge to practice. He has taken the step and at least tries to see how his life will be affected by acting virtuously. Nevertheless, insofar as he takes the first into ethical reflection and does not focus only on his life as separate episodes but he approaches it as a whole, this highlights that he moved from the pre-ethical to ethical life.

Imagine, for example, an amoral agent who acts in the light of anger and he therefore disappoints all those who share their lives with him. He knows that by acting indifferently in the light of his anger is the wrong thing to do, and he also knows that he should respect others. Sometimes he manages to control his anger and he knows that he ought to act moderately, but this does not mean that he has changed his behaviour.<sup>10</sup>

On this reading, knowledge of the virtue of moderation and the limited exercise of it does not help the amoralist to move from the pre-ethical to ethical life. Reflecting on his life as a whole, he can act with moderation at any instance and he then might realise that he should always act out of moderation. What the standpoint of seeing one's life as a whole does here, is to demonstrate that if the knowledge of virtues is coupled by practice in perspective, one's life will be different. This highlights the first step into ethical life, reflecting the impact of acting virtuously on one's whole life.

Furthermore, the affective aspect of virtue, which is related with the training of one's emotions, also complements the viewpoint to see one's life as a whole. One might expect that an account of moral training which involves the education of emotions it aims to locate the source of ethical motivation either to special circumstances which trigger special kinds of feelings, or to an account of modified emotions. The former would provide us with a variety of feelings that certain circumstances invoke to us and we are therefore trained to be acknowledged and be motivated by them. While, the latter would stress that a modified account of feelings which has been corrected by adequate training is the source of our moral motivation.

However, if this were the case, it would seem that the education of emotions is provided by a virtue ethical account of moral training places motivation behind single acts. If we try to define those circumstances which triggers special feelings to invoke

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<sup>10</sup> Raz successfully points out that the amoralist might act morally due to moral luck (Raz 1993: 369-371).

moral motivation, we seem to be after single acts which result in these feelings. It might be the case that, for instance, benevolence, is invoked by more than one act but this does not mean that this is enough to justify acting out of benevolence as a settled disposition. In addition, if we attempt to provide a modified account of emotions with motivational efficacy, we need to justify why the corrected account of feelings appears to be more appealing. Again the source of moral motivation cannot be located in a settled disposition.

A virtue ethical account of moral training involves the education of emotions by locating the source of motivation to virtues. Virtues generate feelings and shape the attitudes that we have towards certain circumstances. Those attitudes cannot be developed by single acts. Single acts might generate feelings, but they do not confirm the development of attitudes towards similar acts. Hence, the viewpoint to see one's life as a whole is supported by the education of the emotions. Deliberating how one's projects and life, generally speaking, develop, one realises that acting out of settled dispositions contribute to one's life, since this can guarantee to a certain extent a good life. Recall again the amoral agent who acts out of anger. Without seeing his life as a whole, any act or activity might trigger his anger. If, however, he reflects on his life as a whole, he realises that it is better to be moderately angry. The training of his anger will 'push' him to deliberate his life as a whole, since this will sustain his moderate behaviour. It does not make any difference to alter his behaviour for a couple of times. His step from pre-ethical to ethical behaviour is highlighted by the moment his anger is moderated and deliberates how this affects him and those who share their lives with him.

So far, I have tried to show how the intellectual and the affective aspects of virtue coupled by the idea of moral training can provide the amoralist with the shift from the pre-ethical to ethical life. And my claim has been that both aspects complement the view to see one's life as a whole which highlights the first step into ethical reflection. The dispositional dimension of virtue, however, is what enforces the reflection on one's life as a whole. Once again, one can act virtuously if one has developed a pattern of behaviour which is informed and shaped by virtues. One has practised the virtues for long time, so they have become a second nature. In this respect, there is no dilemma how to act in each situation. The answer is to act in the light of virtue. Virtues have become second nature due to continuous exercise. For the amoralist, it seems that virtues are not second nature. We should not rush trying to find an account which will sustain the amoralist's ethical behaviour. What is important is to

provide him with the first step to ethical life. The dispositional aspect of virtue elaborates how the view to see one's life as a whole is the first step to ethical reflection. The question that we ask the amoralist is that it is worthy trying to think how his life would be if he practiced the virtues. We cannot expect him to see how his life will be acting habitually out of virtue. But insofar as he sees his life as whole that involves to act well that is to act virtuously, he has made the first step into ethical reflection. From the moment, he enquires whether my life would be better by acting virtuously and to hold this question means that he has tried for some time to live virtuously, he has made the first step to ethical reflection.

One might claim here that the idea of moral training cannot be applied to the case of the amoralist, since it cannot be successful. Recalling Aristotle who claims that moral training depends on good moral upbringing, it seems that the amoralist either has not had a good moral upbringing, or the latter failed. Nevertheless, what the idea of moral training offers is that it is always possible to re-train somebody to act virtuously (Hursthouse 1999: 114-118). On this reading, one might not become an exemplary virtuous person but one would have made the first step into it. Retraining is possible since any time the amoralist doubts the value of acting virtuously, we can show to him those whose lives are not shaped by virtues and ask him whether he would like to live his life like them (Aristotle, *NE*, X).<sup>11</sup>

Having explained how it is possible for the amoralist to take the first step into ethical reflection by moral training – since I argued that to be morally trained is to engage with thinking your life as a whole and then practise the virtues – I would like to turn my attention to the first objection. This involves two parts; whether the idea of moral training is very different from Williams' Humean account of the expansion of the amoralist's sympathies; and if it is not very different how exactly the virtue ethics account avoids the criticisms that I raised against Williams.

Although the two questions appear to be different, in what follows, I will answer both of them respectively.

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<sup>11</sup> Raz (1993: 363-365) claims that we cannot convince the amoralist to act morally by arguing that his life misses something if he does not do so. Raz qualifies his claim pointing out that it will be more challenging to explore the case of an amoralist who does not miss anything by leading an amoral life. Though provoking this claim might be, it does not really undermine my account. Raz puts forward this claim, since he argues that there is no need for a standpoint which yields moral or non-moral reasons and therefore the problem of the amoralism can be dismissed. Nonetheless, I argued in chapter 4 that it is too quick to dismiss the problem of the amoralist by claiming that there is no standpoint which yield reasons for actions. Still the amoralist can doubt whether to act well is to act morally. On this reading, the view to see one's life as whole provides the standpoint from which one begins ones' ethical deliberations without attaching any special force to it, since to act well is to have a good life.

An account of moral training which is shaped and informed by virtue ethics, is different from a Humean account of expanding one's sympathies. First, a Humean account of training one's imagination locates the motivational source of ethical judgements to the degree of sympathy that one would be capable to feel after expanding his imagination. This idea involves an account of practical reason according to which reasons for action are rooted in non-cognitive states. That is to ascribe a special standpoint which yields reasons for action which have a special motivating force. In this respect, the motivational force is located at one's desires broadly speaking. Hence, the idea of training one's imagination is limited to the idea to expand one's desires for those who are not close to him. In other words, the amoralist seeks to find those desires which will expand his circle as much as possible. But as I claimed chapter three there is nothing in the account in question which demonstrates how it is possible to train one's imagination.

A virtue ethical account of training, however, differs significantly from an account of training one's emotions in two respects. First, a virtue ethics is shaped and informed by a classical conception of practical reason broadly construed. That is, there is no specific point which yields reasons for actions with special weight according to their content. Hence, the source of moral motivation cannot be located in separate feelings. All reasons for actions have equal motivating and deliberative force insofar as they are yielded by the viewpoint of reflecting on one's life as a whole. My account does not look for a special force to invoke moral motivation in any state cognitive or non-cognitive. Although it allows space to feelings, the latter do not dominate one's deliberations concerning one's step to ethical life. Instead the entry into ethical reflection is a viewpoint – to see one's life as a whole – with which one engages at any moment of one's actions and activities.

The last claim implies a further difference between my account and Williams' account of moral training. Williams contends that ethical motivation is rooted in desire in a broad sense and the amoralist will take the first step to morality if he can modify his desires by expanding his imagination. The account that I offer, although it involves the affective aspect of virtue and consequently the education of emotions, it locates ethical motivation to virtues. The education of emotions results in a settled disposition which informs one's deliberations when one see one's life as a whole. The expansion of one's sympathies does not lead to a settled state which will guarantee ethical behaviour. There are a variety of thoughts which might expand one's natural feeling of sympathy towards others (Cooper and James 2005: 97-101). For instance, one might be watching a

television programme about poverty in Africa and feel sympathy for those nations who live under poverty. This might expand his sympathies towards those people and trigger one's motivation to involve actively with charity work in these countries. Or, one might visit Sri Lanka soon after the tsunami and feel sympathy for the residents of the island and one therefore involves with charities which help the development of the country. This, however, does not mean that one's sympathies will result in settled disposition which will always play a role in one's deliberations. Since sympathy is a natural feeling towards fellow humans, the expansion of one's sympathies does not guarantee that one will act out of sympathy towards the environment and animals. Nonetheless, an account of moral training which is based on virtue ethics holds that for those who have been trained, the virtue of compassion is a settled disposition and therefore they will be always acting in the light of this virtue.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, one might argue that since my account of moral training involves the education of emotions appear not to be very different from Williams' account because the emotion of sympathy is central to the understanding of the latter. In what follows, I will explain that if this is the case, how my account is not subject to the criticism I made of Williams.

In my chapter three I offered three criticisms of Williams' account. First, that it is not exactly clear how the training of one's imagination works. Second, that the result of the expansion of one's sympathy is an account of modified desires which do not seem to account for the normativity of moral requirements. Third, that his account does not warrant moral motivation, since it depends on contingent factors which might invoke the expansion of one's sympathy and the arbitrary degree of sympathy.

The account I offer manifests clearer from Williams how moral training works, since it aims to shift one from the pre-ethical to ethical life by continuous exercise of the virtues. The entering point into ethical reflection is to reflect on one's life as a whole which I have shown that is complemented by the account moral training. Hence, at least, my account appears to have clearer structure.

An account of moral training which is related to the viewpoint to see one's life as a whole can account for the normativity of moral requirements. The viewpoint in question provides reasons for action which have equal deliberative weight since they are related to one's life as a whole. By contrast, in Williams' account reasons for action are rooted in desires and they gain their normative weight by a 'sound deliberative route'

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<sup>12</sup> My account is different from Williams' in the sense that unlike sympathy not all of the virtues are necessarily 'other-regarding' (what about, e.g. humility, self-discipline?), and for that reason as well, one could not treat being virtuous simply as a matter of extending sympathy more widely.



which is responsible for a modified account of desires. So, the shift is from an account of limited sympathetic desires to a modified account of expanded sympathetic desires. The modified account appears to be normatively stronger, since it has been revised by 'a sound deliberative route', however, reasons for actions are still rooted in desire.

Finally, although my account, like Williams', aims to provide the amoralist with the first step into ethical reflection, my account can warrant moral motivation. One should not forget here that a virtue ethical account of moral training is successful if one continuously reflect on one's life as a whole and monitor one's accordingly. The more one exercises the virtues, the closer to virtuous character one moves. What shifts from the pre-ethical to ethical life is to see one's life as a whole, which does not depend on arbitrary conditions. Whereas, Williams' account depends on contingent factors which will invoke the amoralist's imagination to expand his sympathies, like the television programmes I mentioned earlier in this section.<sup>13</sup>

So, the first objection does not undermine my account to the extent that my account does not aim to provide a solution to the problem of the amoralist, but it intends to provide an argument which is at least less vulnerable to the criticisms that the rest of the accounts presented, so far in the thesis, are.

I would like now to turn my attention to the second objection according to which a virtue ethical account of moral training is appealing to the amoralist, since it is self-interested. In other words, that virtue ethics is a self-interested theory (Solomon 1997: 171-174 and Annas 2003: 20-32).

The objection goes as follows; if the entry into ethical reflection is to see one's life as a whole, the amoralist is provided with a reason to act in the light of the virtues because this will benefit him. This involves two further claims; first, that the amoralist is motivated to act virtuously by his self-interest; and second that if there is no link between his self-interest and virtuous action he will not be acting in the light of virtues. Hence, he will refrain from practising other-regarding virtues such as justice and benevolence.

Reflection on one's life as a whole involves self-interest to the extent that one is interested in one's plans and projects and self-development. This, however, does not mean that one cannot take into consideration the interests of others when this is

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<sup>13</sup> Although there is more to be said about the relation between virtue and emotion, my aim here is not to thoroughly appraise the relation in question. I am interested in showing the differences between the virtue ethical account of moral training and Williams' account which I discussed in Chapter Three of the dissertation.

necessary. By pointing out to the amoralist to reflect on his life as a whole, we do not ask him to act out of self-interest. We merely suggest that instead of focusing on single moral actions which call for his sacrifice, if he sees his life as a whole, he will realise that by acting morally continuously is something which will make his life better. One might claim that the latter point undermines really moral reasoning, since it contrasts other-regarding actions with self-interested deliberation.

Nonetheless, I would like to note here that to see one's life as a whole is not a viewpoint which yields reasons with special force. As stated above, a conception of practical reason broadly construed does not draw the distinction between reasons which are other-regarding and self-interested reasons. All reasons for action have an equal deliberative weight because they concern one's life. What is important is to act well. A counterargument here would hold that acting well should be tantamount to acting in the light of other-regarding reasons. This view appears to be rather a narrow construal of practical reason, and more significantly of moral reason. One should not forget that according to the account of practical reason which shapes and informs a virtue ethics approach, to act well is to act ethically. But the other-regarding demands does not dominate ethical actions, they are just part of them.

Furthermore, reflection to see one's life as a whole is the entry into ethical reflection. Although it might appeal to the amoralist's self-interest, this does not aim to sustain his self-interested motivation. Since, one sees one's life as a whole, one exercises the virtues and develops a unified understanding of the virtues. The development of the exercise of the virtues through moral training and the understanding of what means to act virtuously shifts one from one's self-interest. For instance, to act in the light of justice or in the light of benevolence, one should be able to ignore his self-interest, even in case acting justly might undermine his self-interest. A complaint might be raised here, since it is rather impossible for the amoralist who entered into ethical reflection because it advances his self-interest, to act in the light of self-sacrificial virtues such as justice. A reply is available here. Recall my discussion of the three dimensions of virtue coupled by moral training. Since one sees one's life as a whole, one by exercising the virtues acts from a settled disposition, and one therefore does not distinguish between actions which promote one's self-interest and those which do not further it. If one is truly just, one will not contemplate twice to sacrifice oneself for others if this is what the circumstances call him to do. This is the result of reflecting one's life as a whole, that the exercise of virtues have become second nature, and hence their application is part of one's life at any project or plan (Foot 2002: 127-130). For the

virtue ethicist, a reason like 'Because this contributes to the good of my life as a whole' is typically – perhaps always – going to be a reason too many, on any individual occasion of moral decision. The reasons he will give will be ones like 'Because the man was suffering and I was in a position to help him', or 'Because this policy was unjust, and there was something I could do about it'. It is precisely because he gives, and acts on, such reasons as 'second nature' that he can count exercising such virtues as benevolence and justice. Critics who accuse virtue ethics of endorsing a self-interested stance failing to distinguish between the reasons that motivate the actions of the virtuous person and the reasons that make such actions those of a virtuous person.

Nonetheless, a further complaint can be made concerning the self-centred character of reflecting on one's life as a whole. The objection is as follows: the amoralist takes the step into ethical reflection but he acts virtuously because he will become a better person and this is what drives his motivation. A rebuttal is available to this argument. Even if this is the case, this is not sufficient to justify the charge in question against virtue ethics. To become a better person one should acquire a good understanding and grasping of the virtues while one practises them. If one aims to become a better person and this is one's only reason to act virtuously, one does not really act virtuously. In cases where virtues call for self-sacrificial behaviour, it will really difficult for one to claim that I suspend my self-interest now, since the self-sacrificial action will enrich my life later by developing my character. Nevertheless, this appears to be a misunderstanding of how virtues operate. Once again, the amoralist who will be thinking to become a better person just by acting virtuously, he lacks a proper understanding of virtue and he still needs to be trained more. Although virtues benefit their possessor, this happens only if the possessor has a proper understanding of virtue. A proper understanding of virtue cannot be traced solely to self-development and consequently self-interest. As Foot (2002: 1-18) nicely points out what we forget about the virtue is that they are correctives. So, for the amoralist who thinks too much of his self-interest when he acts virtuously, the operation of virtues will not satisfy his aim. The amoralist cannot acquire the virtues and become a better person, if his only motivation is rooted in self-development, because this manifests an excess of self-interest already, and therefore it is not tantamount to virtuous behaviour anymore.

So, the second objection does not undermine my account of moral training. Although self-interest might be present in the first step into ethical reflection, a proper development of a virtuous character precludes the dominating motivating force of the self-interest from the picture of our practical deliberations. As Annas (1993: 27-42)

remarks, although self-interest is the point of entry to ethical reflection, it is not its point of exit. Hence, my account is successful in this respect, since it is not subject to the charge that the account of self-interested motivation is, as I discussed in my Chapter Two. I would like again to remind my reader that my account does not aim to provide a solution to the problem of the amoralist, but to demonstrate that there might be an account which is not vulnerable to the charges of the rest of the accounts I have presented so far in the thesis.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I argued that if there is no difference between moral and practical considerations, we can provide the amoralist with an entry point to ethical reflection. I divided my chapter in three sections.

In the first section, I explained how we are to understand the view that the entry point to ethical reflection is to reflect on one's life as a whole and I pointed out that there might be three different stages which complement each other. My aim was to show that one's choices and deliberations shape one's conduct through time. Insofar as one begins reflecting on one's behaviour over time, one enters into ethical reflection, since by deliberating on how to act well, one develops certain character traits. Those traits will shape and inform his behaviour.

Since, an agent deliberates how to act well, it is therefore necessary to turn or attention to the question how it is possible for one to act well. So, in the second section, I focused on the three aspects of virtue, intellectual, dimensional and affective and I explored the relation between virtue and moral training. I pointed out that what is distinctive about a virtue ethical account of moral training is the education of one's emotions that is, how it is possible for one to be properly affected. In this respect, training to become virtuous, involves knowledge of the virtues, continuous exercise so as virtues become a 'second nature', and control of the emotions by virtues. Hence, what supplies the agents with motivation to act ethically is virtue.

Finally, in the third section, I explored how it is possible for the amoralist to enter into ethical reflection. I argued that the entry to ethical reflection can be conceived in terms of a virtue ethical account of moral training. Moreover, I treated a couple of complaints that seem to undermine my account. First, I demonstrated that my virtue ethical account of moral training is different from Williams' account, and it is therefore not subjected to the criticisms that I made against his account. Second, I claimed that although the acquisition and the exercise of virtue might benefit their possessor, those

who act virtuously they do not exercise the virtues for self-interested reasons. As Annas points out, self-interest is the point of entry to ethical reflection, it is not its point of exit.

Consequently, a classical account of practical reason which does not draw the difference between moral and practical considerations coupled with a virtue ethical account of moral training seem to provide an entry to ethical reflection. At least, they provide an account which is not vulnerable to the criticisms which I raised for those accounts that I presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of the dissertation.

## Conclusion

In what follows I aim, firstly, to provide a summary of the preceding chapters. Secondly, bringing the conclusions of each chapter together, I will explain how each argument contributes to the thesis as a whole, and I will demonstrate why the solution I suggest concerning the justification of morality to the amoral agent has more advantages than the solutions that they have so far been provided. Thirdly, I will stress some loose ends and problems which although they are related to moral motivation and the justification of morality, I did not have the space to discuss in the thesis. Furthermore, I will show what remains for further research.

My thesis begins from the view that it is possible for one to be an amoralist that is, to call into question the action-guiding character of morality. In this respect, the amoralist is an agent who expresses scepticism about the practical character of morality. Insofar as my purpose is not to argue whether an agent can be an amoralist, but rather whether it is possible to explain away the amoralist's sceptical attack to morality, and justify morality to him, it has been necessary to explain the amoralist's position and its relation to other positions, which pose a sceptical threat to morality.

So, in the first chapter I shed some light on moral scepticism by providing a historical introduction focusing on Plato's works *Gorgias* and the *Republic*. I explicated the position of the amoralist claiming he may be perfectly knowledgeable about the requirements of morality, but they do not play any role in shaping his motivation. Illustrating the amoralist's sceptical attack to morality, I distinguished some examples of amorality. I held that we can distinguish between an amoralist who is unable to be moved by moral considerations, and an amoralist who is perfectly able, but simply does not care enough to be moved by moral considerations. We can furthermore distinguish between an amoralist who is willingly unmoved by moral judgements permanently and an amoralist who is willingly unmoved by moral judgements temporarily. Finally, we can distinguish between an amoralist who is willingly unmoved by all moral considerations temporarily and an amoralist who is willingly unmoved by a subset of moral considerations temporarily. In addition, I stressed that there are two questions one might ask about amoralist: first, whether there is a person like an amoralist; and second, if the amoralist exists whether we can persuade him to be less resistant to moral claims. Since my purpose in the thesis has been to answer the second question, I claimed that the amoralist is at least intuitively plausible and it is therefore more interesting to try to justify morality to him. In this respect, morality will appear to be stronger. Furthermore,

I explained why Kant's and Hare's views concerning the magnetic force of moral judgements cannot undermine successfully the intuitive plausibility of the amoralist. I also discussed the internalist view concerning moral motivation claiming that internalists have the burden to justify why the amoralist is impossibility.

Moreover, I discussed three kinds of egoism, psychological, ethical and rational, claiming that they challenge the other-regarding character of morality. Additionally, I explained the kind of scepticism that non-cognitivism and error theory express pointing out that they are different from egoism and its kinds because they challenge the content of moral judgements. In addition to that, stressing the problems of weakness of will, *akrasia* and *accidie*, I claimed that these failures in moral motivation challenge the alleged link between moral judgement and motivation that is, the motivating force and the action-guiding character of morality.

I concluded that the amoralist poses a different sceptical attack from kinds of scepticism, which I discussed. The amoralist aims to undermine the normative character of morality asking whether there is any reason to be moral that is, to deny that moral judgements guide one's behaviour. Insofar as the normativity is the fundamental feature of morality, the amoralist calls for a different treatment from other kinds of scepticism, since he aims to undermine it. Hence, it is worth untangling his challenge. The next step will be to investigate whether it is possible to persuade the amoralist to be less resistant to moral claims that is, to justify morality to him.

In the second chapter I argued that it might be possible to provide the amoralist with a reason to be moral by appealing to his self-interest. I claimed that according to the common sense view about morality, the latter is other-regarding and since the amoralist is indifferent to the interests of others, he is not motivated by moral judgements. If it is shown that his interests will be advanced by acting morally, this might be the first step to enter the moral circle. Nonetheless, I pointed out that there is a tension between self-interest and the moral point of view, since moral rationalists those who claim that moral requirements are necessarily rational requirements hold that there is a necessary conflict between self-interest and morality. As a result, to argue that self-interest could issue moral actions; they assert is to reduce morality to self-interest. However, I pointed out that moral rationalists appeal to self-interest in order to show that the amoralist cannot hold his position consistently and his position is therefore incoherent and irrational. I argued that their argument fails its purpose and thus we can engage with the amoralist in an argument about the justification of morality.

Furthermore, I claimed that since both self-interest and morality issue reasons for action, it is necessary to investigate the kind of reasons in question. In this respect, I explicated the differences between explanatory/motivating reasons and justificatory/normative reasons. I claimed that the amoralist appears to have motivating reasons to act morally but he lacks normative ones. I argued that those who claim motivating and justificatory reasons are necessarily related such internalists about moral motivation, they should be able to explain how it is possible for the amoralist to move from one kind of reasons to the other.

Providing a survey of the views concerning internalism and focusing on motivational internalism according to which moral judgements necessarily motivate those who sincerely hold them, I argued that they could not accommodate the case of the amoralist since they believe that he is irrational. Having argued that the amoralist is a rational agent, I investigated whether motivational internalists can explain a change in the amoralist's motivations by moving him from his personal point of view to the moral that is the impersonal point of view. I demonstrated that they could not do that since they cannot justify how it is possible for one to move from the personal to the impersonal point of view, since they also hold that self-interest and morality are two viewpoints that are in conflict.

In the third chapter I explored whether it is possible to justify morality to the amoralist if we expand his sympathies. I discussed Williams's view according to which the problem of the amoralist is his desires and more precisely that he has desires only for him that is, he has limited sympathies. The amoralist can enter into the moral stance if he acquires new motivation, that is new desires and this can be achieved by expanding his sympathies.

Since Williams's account of sympathy depends on Hume's ideas concerning reason and passions in ethics, I explicated the Humean theory of motivation, and I illustrated the psychological mechanism of sympathy. I define what sympathy is and the role that it plays in the generation of moral motivation in Hume's moral theory. I claimed that Williams, following Hume, concedes that sympathy is a mechanism which can transmit moral motivation. However, I argued that Williams's theory of practical reason does not comply with his account of sympathy and as a result, he cannot claim that he can justify morality to the amoralist by appealing to his expanded sympathies.

More precisely, I argued that Williams' proposal requires a move from motivating reasons, those reasons such as desires which are rooted in one's motivational set, to normative reasons for action. This move seems to be plausible if, according to



Williams, one follows a sound deliberative route in which imagination plays a crucial role. In addition to that, the move is constrained by *existence internalism* according to which something R can only be a normative reason for one to do  $\phi$ , if R1 would anyway motivate one to do  $\phi$  – where R1 is like R except that it is not sufficiently deliberative to count as a normative reason. Granted that sympathy constitutes a motivating reason for action, it will be transformed into a normative reason under proper deliberation. The transformation will guarantee some motivation but it will not warrant moral motivation, since it appeals to the arbitrary degree and direction of one's sympathy. Furthermore, I challenged Williams' account of the process of deliberation arguing that his proposal is plausible only if we construe the relation between motivating and normative reasons as one of a means to an end. Although an instrumental view of practical reason is a necessary condition for moral motivation, it is not sufficient.

In the fourth chapter, I presented Raz's argument concerning the amoralist according to which, the position of the amoralist is misconceived due to the way we construe some arguments in moral philosophy. More precisely, he argues that advocates of the dualism of practical reason hold that morality and self-interest are two different and unrelated standpoints, which yield different kind of reasons for action. If both standpoints carry equal normative weight there is a conflict between moral and self-interested considerations. I explained how Raz discredits the dualism in question claiming that the Kantian and the Humean accounts of practical reason and morality are shaped by the dualism in question. Both accounts fail to justify morality to the amoralist because they hold that moral considerations have a special status in virtue of either of the magnetic force of moral terms or the role of one's feelings in motivation.

Following a classical account of practical reason broadly construed, Raz argues that moral considerations are just like practical considerations and therefore if the amoralist is capable of understanding and responding what it means to act well, he should be capable to act ethically. So, there is no need to justify morality to the amoralist. I argued, however, that his account does not provide a standpoint according to which one would be able to judge whether one acts well and it therefore dismisses too hastily the amoralist's sceptical threat.

Accepting Raz's claim that there is no difference between moral and practical considerations, in the fifth chapter I argue that a virtue ethical account of moral training can provide the basis for the entry to ethical reflection. More precisely, I claim the amoralist will take the step from pre-ethical to ethical life if he sees his life as a whole. Following Annas, I illustrate this view and I distinguish three different stages that

deliberation from this standpoint might entail. The first concerns deliberation of one's current projects without being emotionally tied to them. The second involves deliberation from the past to the present, so one can realise how one's past choices inform and shape his current decisions and plans. And the third deals with deliberation from the present to the future, when one contemplates whether one is satisfied with one's present choices considering how the latter will affect one's future life.

Furthermore, reflection on one's life as a whole entails deliberation concerning how one can act well. I argue that to act well is to act in the light of virtues. Practising the virtues enables one to act well through one's whole life, since one becomes virtuous by continuous training and practice. I explicated the three dimensions of virtue, the dispositional, the intellectual and the affective aspect. And I argued that although all of them are important to the training of virtues, the affective dimension makes a virtue ethical account of moral training distinctive. I demonstrated that what is significant about the moral training is the education of one's emotions and how one can become properly affected. That is, one's character is tuned to respond to any circumstances according to the virtues. I also argued that as soon as the amoralist sees his life as a whole and considers how he is to act well, this marks his move from the pre-ethical to ethical life.

Finally, I responded to a couple of complaints which might undermine my argument. First, I argued that my account of virtue ethical training is different from Williams' account of expanding one's sympathies, since the former does not depend solely on the presence of feelings such as sympathy. In addition, I demonstrated that even if my account is not very different from Williams' is not subject to the same criticisms. Second, I argued that the charge that, on a virtue ethical approach, the acquisition and the exercise of the virtues is undertaken for reasons of self-interested benefit does not weaken my argument.

So far, I presented what I have argued in the chapters of the thesis. But how are we to understand the contribution of their conclusions to my aim that is the justification of morality to the amoralist?

In the first chapter I concluded that the amoralist poses a different kind of scepticism to morality, and thus it needs different treatment from the rest of the sceptical positions such as egoism, non-cognitivism, error theory and weakness of will. I stressed the point that the amoralist undermines the normative status of morality and the motivational efficacy of moral judgements which the rest of the sceptical positions

do not do. As a result, the amoralist claims that he can understand what is morally right or wrong, but this does not have any grip to him. This is a rather fundamental problem for moral philosophy because it undermines the picture of what morality is all about that is, to issue moral reasons, which are necessarily action-guiding. Since I pointed out that the amoralist poses a different sceptical attack to morality, I pointed out that what is challenging about him is not to investigate whether such a figure is imaginary or not, but whether we can justify to him that he has a reason to act morally. Hence, I am not concerned with internalists such as Kant and Hare who argue for the magnetic force of moral judgements and they therefore hold that the amoralist is impossibility. Nevertheless, I need to show that the amoralist is not irrational and thus we can engage him with an argument about the justification of morality. In addition, it is necessary to insist on the motivating elements of moral judgements investigate which of those can have a grip to the amoralist. Finally, we need to find an account of practical reason, which will allow the possibility for one to be an amoralist, without undermining the justification of morality.

Following from my first chapter and the need to show that the amoralist is a rational agent, in my second chapter appealing to the amoralist's self-interest I concluded firstly that the amoralist is a rational agent and secondly that it is not possible to act morally only in virtue of self-interested motives. The fact that he can act in the light of his self-interest reasons shows that he is rational. Furthermore, he is rational since he can consistently hold his amoralist position without violating his self-interest. Insofar as he is a self-interested agent, if we aim to justify morality we need to appeal to his self-interest. To put it alternatively that being a moral agent is going to promote his self-interest. In this respect, we allocate the motivating element of moral judgement on something, which necessarily has grip on one's psychology. Although it is not necessary to be dualists about practical reason, to act out of self-interested motives is not sufficient to act morally, since this will alter the amoralist's behaviour but it will not sustain moral motivation. The amoralist will act morally only when his self-interest coincide with morality. Hence, motivational internalists claim that if we want to insist on the necessary connection between moral judgements and motivation we should accept that there is no need to appeal to one's self-interest in order to persuade him to act morally. Moral judgements themselves are enough to produce motivation, but since the amoralist express moral judgement without being moved by them; motivational internalists have to show whether it is possible to move from one's self-interest to the moral point of view. Their argument is not sound since to make the move they need to

concede that their internalist doctrine is an analytical truth which seems to beg the question against the amoralist. So, the problem that we are left is that although the amoralist is a rational agent, appealing to self-interest cannot guarantee moral motivation and it cannot justify morality. In addition, an account of motivational internalism which stresses the connection between justification and motivation cannot explain sufficiently how it is possible for the amoralist to alter his motivations.

Expecting that my third chapter will provide some solutions towards to the problems that appeared in the previous chapter, I concluded that Williams' account of practical reason does not comply with his view about sympathy according to which it is possible to convince the amoralist to be less resistant to moral claims by expanding his sympathies. His account of reasons internalism stresses the importance of motivating reasons and the shift from the latter to normative it is possible via a sound deliberative route. We expect that sympathy, which constitutes a motivating reason via the amoralist's deliberation, which depends on sympathy, will be transmitted to a normative reason for action. It seems that this account of internalism can accommodate better the case of the amoralist for two reasons.

First, it acknowledges that it is possible for one to be an amoralist without the charge of irrationality holding that the problem with him is his motivations. And second, reasons internalism does not need to stress that moral judgement motivate due a special force. It supplies their motivating force with the agent's motivating set, that is one's desires in a wider sense. In this respect, this branch of internalism solves one part of the problem, but the account of motivation it entails does not provide a solution to the amoralist's call for the justification of morality. We can explain the motivating element of moral judgement by sympathy, and it is true that although sympathy is an idiosyncratic feeling, it is different from self-interest since it incorporates practical concern for others.

However, one should not forget that independently of how much one's sympathies will be expanded this will not guarantee moral motivation. Again, like self-interest it will provide some motivation, but it will warrant that the amoralist will keep expanding his sympathies in order to act morally for more sentient beings. So, appealing to one's sympathies to justify that one has a reason to be moral, it is to concede that moral motivation depends on a contingent factor such as the degree of sympathy that one feels towards others. And although Williams attempted to set the motivating element of sympathy under deliberation, the result is not consistent with his theory. Hence, although the account of internalism I explained in this chapter fits better the

psychology of the amoralist and consequently the motivating power of moral judgements, does not suffice to justify morality to the amoralist since the link between the action-guiding character of morality and motivation is not persuasive.

Finally, although sympathy is a step further from self-interest, moral motivation is still contingent to the arbitrary degree of sympathy that one might feel for others. Consequently, we seek to find a balanced account of practical reason which will assign equal weight between one's motivating states and one's rational deliberation. If we achieve this, it seems possible to solve the problem of the contingency of motivating states.

In my fourth chapter I concluded that Raz is right to discredit the dualism of practical reason which holds that morality and self-interest are two different standpoints which are necessarily in tension. In this respect, it seems that the sceptical threat which the amoralist poses to morality depends on the fact that we misconstrue the nature of moral considerations. So, if we show that moral considerations are not different from practical considerations, and since the amoralist understands the latter, he will be able to understand the former. Although I agreed with Raz that there is no difference between moral and practical considerations, I pointed out that he dismisses the sceptical threat too hastily. Although there is no difference between moral and practical considerations, there should be a standpoint according to which one can judge whether one acts well. Hence, the amoralist can still ask whether to act well is tantamount to act ethically.

Following Raz, that moral considerations are not different from practical considerations, in my fifth chapter I concluded that a virtue ethical account of moral training which depends on the view to see one's life as a whole might provide the amoralist with the first step from pre-ethical to ethical life. To see one's life as a whole does not assign any special force either to the intellectual or the affective aspect of virtue, and therefore there is no need to locate the motivating and the justificatory power of reason to a particular side. To reflect on one's life as a whole provides reasons to act well, and since these reasons to act well are guided by what is the virtuous thing to do, the person who engages with this view, he also engages to virtues. Nevertheless, this might be the first step, what will sustain one's virtuous behaviour is the continuous practice of virtues.

My account rests on virtue ethics and it is therefore different from those I have so far presented in the dissertation. It is different for at least two reasons. First, unlike accounts which depend either on self-interest or on the feeling of sympathy, it does not locate the authority of moral requirements to any specific standpoint which provides

those considerations with a special status. As a result, self-interest or sympathy, although they might appear to play some role in the picture of motivation, they do not provide any reasons for actions and they do not ground reasons to act ethically.

Although, the practice and the acquisition of virtues might benefit their possessor, this is not the reason according to which the virtuous person acts ethically. In this respect, the amoralist who moves from the pre-ethical to ethical life, although he might realise that this advances his self-interest, this is not the reason why he acts ethically. As soon as one begins practising the virtues, one is not pulled any more one's self-interest, but one is moved by the virtues. On this reading, my account allows space for self-interest, but it does not justify ethical actions to the amoralist by appealing to his self-interest, since the latter cannot sustain moral behaviour.

Furthermore, my account can provide some space to emotions, since to act virtuously is also to be properly affected. As I have shown, virtues also have an affective dimension and this is what makes my account distinctive, since it allows the role of emotions, but they are not dominating. For instance, according to the Humean theory of motivation it is enough to have a desire in order to generate motivation. However, according to a virtue ethics account emotions cannot generate reasons. They are subject to the power of virtues, and they therefore become inculcated attitudes which are tuned to particular circumstances. On this reading, emotions appear in the picture of motivation, but virtues generate reasons for action.

Second, my account does not narrow the scope of ethical behaviour either to self-interest or sympathy. It shows that reflection on one's life as a whole provides a broader view about what ethical behaviour means, since it aims to incorporate the richness of one's life. Ethical behaviour cannot be limited in a couple of actions when this is necessary. And a virtue ethical account of moral training intends to show that ethical deliberations are important part of our lives, therefore any practical deliberation is not different from ethical deliberation. If to act well is to act ethically, one should at least try to see how one's life will be by practicing the virtues. This is the first step to ethical reflection which unlike the step which a self-interested account or an account which rests on sympathy offer, appears to sustain ethical behaviour through one's life.

So far, I have shown that my account appears to have more advantages than the rest of the accounts I have discussed in the dissertation. In this respect, my account is at least a more plausible solution to the question of the amoralist, since it escapes the criticisms which the rest of the accounts are still vulnerable. Although this might be the

case my account needs further development and there are some parts which are still in need of defence.

In my thesis I did not focus on the differences between internalism and externalism since it has not been my aim to investigate the possibility of the amoralist. I accept that it is possible for one to be an amoralist, and I am interested in arguing whether morality can be justified to the amoralist. In this respect, I appealed to the internalism-externalism debate where this was necessary. In addition to that, I have not argued whether my virtue ethical account of reasons is externalist or internalist, and if it is an externalist one, how it can be defended to some internalist accounts that might exist. But it would be interesting to develop some further research investigating whether my account can resist to other accounts of internalism. Furthermore, I did not provide a full explanation of the role of motivating states such as desire in relation to moral judgements, since my aim was to focus only on Williams's idea about the role of motivating states in moral motivation.

Moreover, one of the most important elements in moral philosophy is the content of moral judgements. It is still under question whether moral judgements are motivational detached states such as Humean beliefs, or they necessarily incorporate motivation since they express conative attitudes or desires in a wider sense. That is the debate between cognitivism and non-cognitivism to which I did not refer explicitly in the thesis, since my aim has not been to show what kind of judgements the amoralist is able to make. I focused on how it is possible to alter his motivations and provide him with a justification of morality.

What remains there for further research can be divided in three specific issues and one more general issue. The first specific issue is related to Bernard Williams's work (1985: 132-155) concerning his ideas about the role of deliberation in practical reason and its relation to his anti-objectivist views about ethics. If his account of practical deliberation which mostly depends on affective states such as imagination does not succeed to provide justification for the amoral agent, it appears to be an open question whether this account of deliberation can be successful for an anti-objectivist theory of ethics. Second, if we accept the justification of morality that virtue ethics seem to offer to the amoralist according to which, moral considerations are just practical considerations, one might wonder whether this is a pathway for a naturalist account of moral reasons. This claim also invites the question whether naturalism is the most adequate account of moral reasons. The third specific issue involves the role of imagination in moral training and the question whether virtues carry value. If virtues

carry any value how imagination will sanction the realization of the value in question by moral training. I would like now to turn my attention to a general matter that can be raised by my thesis.

If an account of virtue ethics can provide justification to the amoralist, or, at least, it provides a more plausible solution from the other two that I discussed in the thesis, it is an open question whether such an account can be used in applied ethics. For example, professionals such as businessmen, doctors, or even archaeologists do not seem to grasp the need of ethics in their fields. What is worth seeking is to find out whether we can justify that they need to deliberate and act ethically in their fields by appealing to the view that moral considerations are like practical considerations like the ones which they take into account in their work.



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