

Cognitivism and Motivation Internalism

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Abstract

As a central thesis in metaethics, motivation internalism promises to explain the connection between moral judgement and motivation. Generally, it is defended both by non-cognitivists and cognitivists. While not accepting non-cognitivism, I ultimately reject any form of cognitivist position, which claims that cognitivism is not compatible with Hume's psychology of motivation. Precisely, I argue that the connection between moral judgement and motivation is neither necessary nor internal. Based on the possibility of moral indifference, I counter the claim, namely that moral judgement is essentially motivational. Although, my goal is not to offer any positive explanation of the connection in question, but the result of my argument has implications on why we are better off accepting Hume's psychology as cognitivists.

Keywords: motivation, internalism, metaethics, moral judgement, cognitivism

[O]ne can be indifferent to morality without error.
Philippa Foot, 1978

I. Introduction

The internalist debate about actions has taken various turns in recent years. However, as a result of different characterizations of internalism, philosophers seem to be talking past one another (e.g. Brink 1989; Darwall 1992; Tresan 2009). Against this background, I will proceed by clarifying its major manifestations as it allows us to situate this paper in a context. First, internalism refers either to *justifying reasons* or *motivating reasons*. In the former, the argument is that what counts for or against an action is internally embedded on the

agent's subjective psychological profile. For example, Bernard Williams (1981) argues that an agent's reason for action is always *internal* insofar as such reason is rooted in the subjective motivational set or desires. On this view, an agent necessarily acts accordingly just in case she has a reason (Rosati 2014). This position is also referred to as *reason internalism* or *internalism about practical reason*.¹ In the latter, the main concern is about motivating reasons for action. Unlike reason internalism, this form of internalism focuses on the connection between moral considerations and motivation, hence *motivation internalism* (hereafter, MI). While it is generally agreed that moral considerations make practical claims on us (e.g. Brink 1989; Smith 1994; Railton 2006), the motivation internalists argue that what moves us is internal to moral considerations. That is, it is the case that moral considerations motivate agents necessarily (e.g. Nagel 1970; McNaughton 1988; Bromwich 2013). Although reason internalism and motivation internalism are *prima facie* distinct positions, it would be incorrect to claim that they do not overlap in some cases (Pettit and Smith 2006). Zangwil (2008) argues that one set of issues is sometimes appealed to in arguments concerning the other. Regardless of this overlapping tendency, I will focus mainly on motivation internalism (hereafter MI).

That said, MI is defended on the bases of the psychological states underlying the moral considerations in question. Normally, it is explained either in terms of conative states or cognitive states. In the former, it is the thesis that non-cognitive states such as pro-attitudes motivate agents. Precisely, non-cognitivism strongly claims that conative states are motivational states. On this construal, to judge is to express these mental states; and they in turn motivate necessarily. This position is considered compatible with Hume's understanding of psychology of motivation (Coleman 1992; Stroud 1977; Mackie 1980; Darwall 1983). Hume claims that moral motivation is guaranteed by desires. The defenders of the latter position appeal to cognitive states to explain the necessary connection between moral considerations and motivation. On this view, cognitive-based moral considerations motivate not only

necessarily, but also sufficiently (Korsgaard 1996; Nagel 1970; Scanlon 1998; Platts 1980; Bromwich 2010, 2013). I refer to this view as cognitivist motivation internalism.

In this paper, I reject any form of cognitivist position, which claims that (1) cognitivism is not compatible with Hume's psychology of motivation. Precisely, I argue that the connection between moral judgement and motivation is neither necessary. While my goal is not to offer any positive explanation of the connection in question, but the result of my argument has implications on why we are better off accepting Hume's psychology as cognitivists. In the remainder of the paper, I provide some background before specifying the form of motivation internalism relevant to our discussion. Next, I present Olivia's case as an argument against the claim that moral judgement is motivationally efficacious. Finally, I conclude with some remarks.

II. Features of Motivation Internalism

One of the features driving MI is the idea of necessity.² The necessity claim is the view that the connection between moral considerations and motivation is unconditional and not contingent. As we shall see later, the necessity claim of MI comes in metaphysical and conceptual forms. The cognitivists construe the content of moral considerations differently, for example it can refer to moral properties, moral facts, moral judgements, moral beliefs, etc. Suppose we take moral property, say moral goodness, as an instance of moral consideration. The cognitivist of this tradition would argue that moral property necessarily guarantees motivation. For example, Plato once held that 'knowing' the good is necessarily 'doing' the good. We can formulate this claim as follows:

Plato's MI: Necessarily, if an agent *knows* that ϕ is morally good, then she is moved to act accordingly.
According to John L. Mackie,

Plato's Forms give a dramatic picture of what objective values *would have to be*. The Form of the Good is such that knowledge of it provides the knower with both a direction and an overriding motive;

something's being good both tells the person who knows this to pursue it and makes him pursue it. (Mackie 1977, 37)

Plato's understanding of MI is based on *moral ontological* and *epistemological grounds*. On Mackie's reading, Plato's moral goodness is not only action-guiding, but also it provides moral agents with the motivating reasons for action. Notice that motivation is overridingly tied to moral goodness, such that if an agent knows that something is morally good, he is necessarily motivated to do it. The knowledge of moral goodness rules out the possibility of moral motivation being toppled by other competing desires, motives etc. Bromwich describes this form of MI as *decisive internalism* (Bromwich 2008).

However, Plato's MI is disturbing at least on three fronts. First, ontologically, it assigns a rather strange character to moral values. Indeed, Mackie was right when he said, "If there were objective values then they would be entities or qualities or relations of a very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe" (Mackie 1977, 38). Second, epistemologically, it reduces the accessibility of moral properties to special intuitive faculty. Again, Mackie says, "Correspondingly, if we were aware of them, it would have to be by some special faculty of moral perception or intuition, utterly different from our ordinary ways of knowing everything else" (Mackie 1977, 38). In other words, this will require moral agents to possess special intellectual faculty for perceiving moral properties. Needless to saying that such a demand would render agents lacking such faculties motivationally unfit. Third, although Plato's claim seems to secure the connection between moral property and motivation, it fails to account for motivational failures, which are as well part of our moral experience. In other words, it is unable to justify some cases (e.g. weakness of will, overridingness of stronger emotions) which are significant parts of our moral experience.

Above all, Plato's MI is non-constitutive, that is, it does not involve an agent's formation of first-person moral beliefs. This applies to other forms of MI, which hold that perception of right and wrong necessarily motivates (e.g. Price 1965; McDowell 1979, 1981). For the purpose of this paper, I focus on

the claim that moral beliefs necessarily motivate. This form of cognitivist motivation internalism involves agent's (first-person) expression of moral judgement, hence constitutive. In other words, I will not pursue the claim, namely that knowledge of, actual consciousness of or cognitive contact with moral property" motivates necessarily beyond this point (Darwall 1992, 157).

III. Moral Judgement and Motivation Internalism

While the content of moral judgement is understood differently in metaethics, I will restrict myself to the cognitivist understanding. On this construal, moral judgement is on par with the ordinary act of judging. Hence, by judging something to be morally wrong, an agent is affirming a state of affair in the world. For example, by judging that torture is morally wrong, Peter is both asserting and affirming something about the wrongness of torture. Normally, such affirmations are said to entail belief. That is, Peter *affirms* that torture is morally wrong, because he *believes* that the act is morally significant. Since to judge is to express one's belief about something, which can be true or false. I will use 'moral judgement' and 'moral belief' interchangeably.³ To this end, the cognitivist MI claims that such moral beliefs motivate necessarily. Precisely, they motivate agents independent of any antecedent or mediating desires. Generally, we can formulate this view of MI as follows:

Cognitivist Motivation Internalism (CMI): Necessarily, if agents *judge* or *believe* that they are morally required (or morally ought) to ϕ , they are motivated to ϕ .

Unlike Plato's view, this form of MI provides space for agents' engagement in "deliberative process of practical reasoning and judgement" (Darwall 1992, 158). Brink refers to it as *appraiser internalism*, the claim that

It is in virtue of the concept of morality that moral belief or moral judgement provides the appraiser with motivation or reasons for action. Thus, it is a conceptual truth about morality, according to appraiser internalism, that someone who holds a moral belief or

makes a moral judgement is motivated to, or has reason to, perform the action judged favourably (Brink 1989, 40).

The content of moral beliefs makes practical claims on agents holding them. Hence, CMI is to be understood as the thesis that moral belief guarantees motivation insofar as agents hold the content of such belief as true. The guaranteed motivation “rests upon the nature of belief itself and upon the content of the belief that one is (oneself) morally required to....” (Mele 1996, 729). It is by believing that something is morally bad (or morally good) that agents are said to be *judges* or *appraisers*; and the cognitivist motivation internalist (hereafter, internalist) claims such moral judgement necessarily motivates moral agents to act accordingly.

Furthermore, the necessity claim of MI carries some sort of metaphysical commitment. Roughly, it is supposed to apply to *all persons* and *possible worlds* sharing the concept of morality. Tresan (2009, 54) argues that “to get internalism we must posit accompaniment, not just actually, but throughout possible worlds. That is, 'Entail' indicates that the accompaniment is necessary”. When applied to CMI, it implies that *all* agents judging or believing that ϕ is morally required are motivated to ϕ (at least if ϕ is understood as *normatively unqualified*). This claim amounts to the following:

It is necessary that any agent in any possible world who judges or believes that ϕ is morally required is motivated to ϕ .

This claim holds provided the agents' content of belief is the same (or at least similar) across possible worlds. However, notice that it does not say anything about the agents' psychological profiles. Suppose we characterise their psychological profile as 'normal'⁴, the content of such moral beliefs is said to motivate globally. Assuming the necessity claim sticks, the internalist is claiming that if any agent believes ϕ to be morally required, she is necessarily motivated to ϕ , regardless of the world in question. I refer to this claim as a core feature of CMI. Moreover, if the internalists claim is correct, they would be “advancing a reformative conception of

cognitivist belief and alternative to a Humean theory of motivation” (Mele 1996, 736). However, we shall see shortly that this view is false.

In the *Treatise on Human Nature*, Hume argues that “morals excite passions and produce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not the conclusions of our reason” (THN 457/294). Since reason is considered as a faculty for forming beliefs, we formulate Hume’s claim as follows:

- (1) (Moral) beliefs do not motivate because they are inert in this regard.

For the internalist to prove that Hume’s constraint on belief is false, he has to justify that moral beliefs motivate in the first place. However, such justification has to be at least on the same strength of attack levelled against beliefs. Notice that Hume’s attack is not just that moral beliefs do not motivate, but that genuine beliefs do not motivate at all. Therefore, the internalist rebuttal must not be that moral beliefs or some of them *can* motivate, but that they *must* motivate (Shafer-Landau 2000, 279). Bromwich, for one, argues that internalists have reasons to charge against Hume’s constraint without diluting their position. According to her, all moral beliefs motivate *simpliciter*.⁵ The success of anti-Humeanism depends on refuting the claim on (1) without admitting defeasibility (Bromwich 2009, 2013).

Assuming Bromwich’s claim is correct, then moral belief will not just motivate simply because it is moral, but because it is essentially belief. Based on this, we can impute the following claims to CMI.

- (2) Since (moral) beliefs motivate *simpliciter*,
- (3) It is necessary that, for any agent A, and for any action ϕ , if A judges that she is morally required (or that it is right) to ϕ , then she is motivated to ϕ .

In other words, the internalist can only show that (1) is false by proving that (2) is true, however not on per *ceteris paribus* basis. I take this view as the standard construal of MI,

namely the claim that the connection between moral judgement and motivation is internal and not defeasible (Brink 1989, 8; Tresan 2009, 53-54). However, I will shortly show why CMI is false, but before then it is important to consider two more core features of MI.

IV. Internality and Conceptuality

Apart from the necessary connection between moral belief and motivation, MI claims that motivation is essential to moral judgement. Mele writes that "...what is guaranteed, more precisely, is that motivation [...] is built into any belief that one is (oneself) morally required to [...] and is internal to the belief of that kind in this sense" (Mele 1996, 730). It is this in-built force that explains why agents are necessarily motivated upon believing that they are morally required to do something. In *Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy*, W. K. Frankena points to the essentiality claim as follows: It is so rooted in moral considerations that it is logically impossible for agents not to be motivated even if they lack actual or dispositional motives for doing what is morally required (Frankena 1958, 40-41). Notice that in order to justify (2) the internalist has to root such intrinsic or built-in motivation force in moral beliefs alone. Zangwill was right when he argued that "the internalist needs to claim not just that moral beliefs are necessarily motivating, but that motivation is essential to moral beliefs" (Zangwill 2008, 94). Another way of making the essentiality claim of MI is to ask whether motivation is embedded on the content of moral belief or not. In response to this, Roskies writes that motivation "must hold in virtue of the content of the moral belief itself, not in virtue of some contingent or auxiliary non-moral fact or reason" (Roskies 2003, 52). The necessity claim would make sense just in case motivation is internal, that is, essential to moral judgements. According to Fine (1994), the necessity claim does not entail the essentiality claim, because it is possible for the former to hold without the latter. For example, an internalist can believe that there is necessary connection between moral judgement and

motivation, while denying that such motivation springs from moral beliefs. Following Zangwill, I argue that MI should be construed not only in terms of the necessity claim, but also as an essentiality claim because “if motivation is essential to moral beliefs, that would explain why moral beliefs are necessarily motivating” (Zangwill 2008, 95).

The third feature of MI is the conceptuality claim. MI has been largely understood as a conceptual claim. That is, the necessary connection is understood as an essential part of our ordinary language and meaning of moral terms (Strandberg and Björklund 2013). If only roughly, just as it is part of the ordinary meaning of terms, for example, to understand a bachelor as an unmarried man, the internalist sees the concept of moral judgement as motivationally efficacious. For example, Nagel argues that “motivation must be tied to the truth, or meaning, of ethical statements that when in a particular case someone is (or perhaps merely believes that he is) morally required to do something, it follows that he has a motivation for doing it”. (Nagel 1970, 7) The conceptual claim seems to reflect the folk intuition about moral motivation. However, it is debated whether such intuition is conclusively on the side of internalism (for more discussion see Strandberg and Björklund 2014; Roskies 2003).

V. Cognitivist Motivational Internalism

The version of internalism relevant to this paper does not understand the motivation force of moral belief as overriding. Rather, it holds that the *necessary* connection between moral belief and motivation is *not defeasible*; and that moral judgement motivates essentially. To illustrate,

It is *necessary* that, for any agent A, and for any action φ , if A judges that she is morally required (or that it is right) to φ , then she is *efficaciously* motivated to φ by her moral judgement *alone* and not by external desires, feelings or emotions.

While motivation might fail in the face of other competing factors or states, the necessary connection is not defeasible; and motivation is internal to moral judgement. What such a robust MI tends to block is the problem of creeping (actual or conceptual) external factors – for example, desires, non-moral motives, etc. (Bromwich 2010, 19). The internalist concern is to avoid accepting Hume’s psychology of motivation. Hence, to secure the necessary connection, his task to show that motivation directly stems from moral beliefs. Assuming this strategy works, then it would be correct to say that CMI “[is] a sort of Holy Grail of meta-ethics. It offers us all we ever wanted from morality. The internalist claim gives morality the psychological "oomph" it needs to motivate action by itself, rather than having to hitch [a] motivational ride on pre-or non-moral motives. The realist thesis makes morality what it seems to be: a discourse about facts—moral facts—which we can discover, about which we can disagree, and of which we can often convince each other” (Noggle 1997, 88).

The argument of the internalist must be effective in explaining that moral motivation stems from the *content* of the agent’s moral beliefs alone. In other words, he has to justify how motivation is internal to moral beliefs without relying on any actual or hypothetical psychology that is external to the content of the moral judgements. On the contrary, in what follows, I will argue that the CMI is false. Precisely, I argue that moral motivation is neither internal nor essential to moral judgement. My argumentative strategy is to show that an agent can make genuine first-person moral judgements and yet fail to be motivated.

VI. Olivia’s Case: An Argument against Cognitivist Motivation Internalism

Consider Olivia is a professor of moral psychology. Recently, she had a long conversation with Emma, a doctoral student at the department she was visiting. They discussed the dangerous impacts of climate change, especially on women and children from poor countries. Olivia argues convincingly that

we are obliged to protect our environment. She strongly believes that any action with harmful impacts on the environment is morally impermissible. At the end of the conversation, Emma came to share her moral conviction: *Environmental harm is morally unjust*. Later, Emma and some of her friends filed a petition against the university authority on the grounds of some of its environmental unethical practices. Their target was to collect 1000 signatures. Within the space of three weeks, the petition gained an overwhelming support from both the professors and students, thanks to Olivia's moral conviction. However, when Emma approached Olivia to get her signature on the petition, she *declined* to sign it. She never doubted whether the university's policy was an instance of environmental injustice. She continues to believe that environmental harm is morally unjust and the policy in question is morally impermissible. Even at that Olivia does not seem to care about the issue at stake. In other words, she is indifferent about signing the petition – she is indifferent about the moral issue in question.

The phenomenon of indifference is part of human experience. We witness cases where people remain indifferent to various issues, ranging from simple to complex everyday issues. It is not rare to encounter people who do not *care* about what they believe. Indifference is, as well, an essential part of our moral experience. It is not queer to claim that people exhibit indifference in the face of moral demands or issues. Even though it is a contestable position, moral indifference is defended in philosophy (Foot 1972; Stocker 1979; Milo 1981; Brink 1989; Mele 1996; Svavarsdóttir 1999; Zangwill 2008).⁶ Zangwill writes: “it certainly seems that moral indifference is no mere abstract philosopher's possibility, but a common actual phenomenon” (Zangwill 2008, 102).

The idea of indifference, if only roughly, is about the degree of people's interest or care about what they believe. “Intuitively, we want things more than others, and we believe some things to a greater degree than others. (We are more confident of some claims than others.) Our mental world is not black and white.” (Zangwill 2008, 95) This experience replicates

in the domain of morality, we care about things more than others as well as believe things in different degrees. And the degree with which agents care about moral demands or issues determines to a large extent their motivation. Hence, our strategy is to show that CMI fails to capture this phenomenon in its psychology of moral motivation. Alternatively, if it is the case that the argument from indifference succeeds, then the claim that motivation is internal to moral belief is false given the possibility of holding a genuine moral belief and yet not caring about morality.

Moral indifference is the belief that it is, in fact, possible for someone to *know* or even *believe* that he or she is morally required to do something and yet not *care* about it. The phenomenon of indifference differs in its various construal of caring about the requirements of morality. For example, an agent might be presented as either ‘not caring at all’ or ‘not caring very much’ or ‘caring less’ about moral requirements (Zangwill 2008, 101). Zangwill rightly pointed out that we must not present indifferent agents as people who reject morality. The temptation of painting moral indifference as rejection of morality is seen in the case of *amoralism*. On the one hand, some externalist might think that it is only such a strong position of amoralism that guarantees a decisive counterexample to internalism. On the other hand, internalism seems to attack externalist cases of indifference from the perspective of rejection of morality, thinking that such a position flies in the face of categoricity of moral requirements. However, we are not claiming that moral demands do not apply to indifferent agents. Rather it is argued here that agents are not motivated by them because they do not care enough about moral issues (we shall return to this issue in the next chapter). That said, given that we do not need to construe indifference in such a strong term – complete indifference, we shall take it as “*the phenomenon of not caring very much about the demands of morality*” (Zangwill 2008, 101). Following Zangwill’s framework of indifference, our goal is to argue that people’s interest, care or desires come in various strengths; and that indifference is actually possible because people care varyingly about moral

issues. Assuming this argument works, then it serves as a counterexample to CMI's efficacy claim.

Zangwill's indifference argument is premised on the idea of degrees of beliefs as well as strengths of desires. He rightly pointed out one of the often-overlooked elements of moral motivational debate is the "Proportional Determination Thesis", the view that the "strength of moral desire is proportionately determined by degree of moral belief" (Zangwill 2008, 95). The internalist claim implies, among other things, that motivation is essential to moral beliefs, that is, they motivate efficaciously. Given this, it is argued that if two persons are alike in their moral beliefs, it is necessary that they will be motivated alike given the claim that moral beliefs are motivationally efficacious independent of any additional desires. In other words, it is not a matter of contingency that motivation follows directly given that their moral beliefs are alike in every respect. It would only amount to inconsistency should the internalist claim that the content of belief of one of the persons is motivational efficacious, whereas the other not. If motivation is essential to moral beliefs as internalist claims, then the content of moral beliefs of agents with equal cognitive dispositions *must* motivate them alike. On the contrary, it is actually possible for agents to share similar cognitive states, dispositions, beliefs and yet motivationally respond differently. Consider the Augustine's example in *De Civitate Dei*:

Suppose that two men, of precisely similar disposition in mind and body, see the beauty of the same woman's body, and the sight stirs one of them to enjoy her unlawfully, while the other continues unmoved in his decision of chastity. What do we supposed to be the cause of an evil choice in the one and not in the other? What produced that evil will? ...The mind? Why not the mind of both? For we assumed them to be alike in both mind and body [...] What other reason could there be than his will, given that their dispositions were precisely the same, in body and mind?

An agent might hold a genuine moral belief, but if he does not care about the desirability of the belief that he ought to do the action, he will not be motivated by his moral belief. In other words, given the different intensities of individual's care

about moral issues, it is possible that the phenomenon of indifference might occur between two persons sharing similar moral beliefs. More so, Zangwill argues that indifference can as well “be a matter of a person ceasing to care as much as he used to while his moral beliefs remain unchanged. Or it might be the possibility that a person at a time cares less than he actually do at that time while moral beliefs remain constant” (Zangwill 2008, 101).

VII. Explaining Olivia’s Behaviour

Olivia exhibits features of indifference: She does not seem to care, at least, about the moral issue at stake. Although, she is capable of forming and holding genuine moral judgements, she remains unmotivated or unmoved by them. We can attempt explaining her behaviour based on the two main categories outlined by Zangwill, namely the trans-personal and trans-temporal cases of indifference. In the former case, recall the incident between Olivia and Emma. Both share the moral belief that environmental harm is morally unjust. However, while Emma was motivated, Olivia remained unmoved in the face of the same moral belief. The internalist thinks that her behaviour is odd given that motivation is essential to moral beliefs as well as the fact that their moral beliefs are alike. However, Olivia’s behaviour is not odd. It is actually possible that the strengths of her interests or care about moral issues vary. To illustrate this, imagine that Olivia was once highly active and took part in various environmental actions. However, recently she experienced that all their efforts made no (substantial) difference at all. Increasingly, her motivation to engage in such actions starts to dwindle, although she still strongly believes that the cause is morally right and even warrants actions. Now, she is completely worn out to act accordingly.

Furthermore, assuming we rule out the cases of errors related to cognition and applications of moral concepts; and that they share precisely similar dispositions in mind and body. It is possible that she was not moved because not of her moral

belief was less genuine than that of Emma, but because she does not care very much about the moral issue in question or moral demands in general. As we illustrated above, it is possible that she once cared about such actions, but now such a motivation is longer there. Given this, it might be claimed, contrary to the internalist claim, that:

If agents A and B judge that φ is morally required, it is possible for A and B to be motivated differently (hence, not necessarily to φ) given their respective degrees of care about φ , while their moral belief φ remains unchanged.

In the latter case, namely, the trans-temporal case of indifference. Suppose Olivia used to care about morality, but of lately she started caring less about moral issues. It might as well be that she cares about moral issues, but of lately she started caring not very much about environmental matters related to morality. On this level, her care about moral demands has become less than usual. As in the first case, she not only grasps the content of moral belief, but also, she genuinely believes that environmental harm is morally unjust and yet she has no motivation to sign the petition. Given this, it might be claimed, contrary to the internalist claim, that:

If an agent A judges that φ is morally required, it is possible for A not to be motivated given a change in her care about φ , while his moral belief φ remains unchanged.

Notice that in both cases that Olivia did not completely reject moral demands, at least, she continues to hold her moral beliefs. Notice also that other concerns did not matter more to her than morality. In other words, she is indifferent to her moral belief, because her care about the moral issue in question is not proportionately determined by the degree of her moral belief. Alternatively, it is possible that a change in Olivia's moral belief will not necessarily provide a change in her care about a new belief as the internalist claims. This is because we seem to care more or less about morality regardless of the

genuine contents of moral beliefs we hold. In sum, Olivia might share moral beliefs with the rest of us, but if she cares less, she will be indifferent to morality. So also, she might have cared about morality (like the rest of us), but if she cares less now than usual, she will be indifferent to the moral demands that she used to care about, while her moral beliefs remain unchanged.

Nevertheless, it might be argued that moral beliefs and caring to act accordingly do not come apart. That is, to believe that X is morally required is inevitably to be motivated to X. Given that moral beliefs are taken to be best practical judgements of reason; it is argued that agents cannot fail to be motivated by what they judged as morally required. However, do we necessarily adhere to (even the best of) our moral judgements? The mere fact that we want certain things more than others or believe certain thing to have greater degrees than others, if only roughly, seems to show, at least, the possibility of caring less about what we judge as good. In other words, denying this possibility seems to amount to the following claim, namely, ‘to believe something is necessarily to care about it’.⁷ Such a denial is problematic, for it might place the idea of moral agency under a grave risk. If agents lack the possibility of choosing freely, morality would become a suspicious enterprise. In addition, such a move might lead to determinism, the sort that eliminates the possibility of freedom to choose. It is against this background that Henry of Ghent in his *Quodlibet* argues thus: “We must assume that [there is] over and above the freedom in reason to judge [*libertas arbitrandi*] and there is in the will a freedom to choose what is judged [*libertas eligendi arbitratum*], so that the will does not choose with any necessity even what reason judge after deliberation”⁸ (Henry, *Quodl.* 1. 16, 5:102; Hoffmann, 2008).

Olivia has the possibility of (freely) choosing to care more or less about moral issues. She can as well choose not to care as she used to in the past. The case of indifference, hence Olivia’s case, is actually possible given that people have the possibility of choosing to care or not to care at all; and there are cases where people freely decide to be indifferent to moral

issues. Consider one of the three examples presented by Zangwill:

[A] mercenary I once met on vacation exuded moral indifference. He was in control, reflective and articulate. Everything he said convinced me that he was perfectly aware that his vocation was genuinely morally wrong, not merely what people conventionally call 'wrong'. He fully understood the wrongness of his vocation. Nevertheless, he was not very concerned about that. He was more concerned with his immediate interests and concerns, that is, colloquially, looking after number one. There was no moral cognitive lack. He made that quite clear. Indeed, he insisted on it. The mercenary was unusually indifferent to the demands of morality; but he shared moral beliefs with the rest of us, and with his former self. He insisted on that (Zangwill 2008, 102).

Like Olivia, the mercenary in Zangwill's example is not suffering from psychological impairments. He knows fully well that his 'vocation' is morally wrong, hence knows what morality demands, but he freely chooses to be indifferent to those demands. In fact, he freely chose this vocation. Cases of moral indifference are part of our ordinary moral experience; and Foot elegantly captures the possibility of this phenomenon in the following words: . . . one [*can*] be indifferent to morality.... (Foot 1978, xiv). The emphasis is on *can* – normal people *can* freely choose to reject morality or care more or less about moral issues. We can be indifferent.

VIII. Conclusion

The fact that we can decide against our best practical judgement of reason explains why we can actually desire to be morally indifferent or even bad. In his work '*Desiring the Bad: An Essay in Moral Psychology*' Michael Stocker argues that these phenomena are actually part of our moral experience. Stocker argues that there are cases where people fail to be motivated or act according to their best decision or intention (Stocker 1979). In essence, it is not case that moral judgement of what one believes to be good or morally required to do necessarily motivates accordingly. Stocker writes that: "motivation and evaluation do not stand in a simple and direct

relation to each other, as so often supposed. Rather, they are interrelated in various and complex ways, and their interrelations are mediated by large arrays of complex psychic structures, such as mood, energy, and interest” (Stocker 1979, 738-9). In other words, cases such as Olivia’s seem to show that it is possible to hold moral beliefs and yet not be motivated accordingly. In other words, the necessity and essentiality claims are false. Although, it is not my goal to defend any positive explanation of the connection between moral judgement and motivation, I think that we are better off accepting the Hume’s psychology of motivation as cognitivists. Such a combination allows us to integrate the important roles of desires, emotions, self-identity etc.; and thereby, better explaining the (moral) motivational profiles of agents by (de Sousa 1987; Colby and Damon 1992; Frankfurt 1998).

NOTES

¹ For more discussions on argument for internal reason see Goldman 2005; Manne 2014.

² These features are not peculiar to cognitivist motivation internalism. They also apply to non-cognitivist version of MI just in case moral judgements are understood as expressions of conative states.

³ However, it is understood as a cognitive state.

⁴ Such agents are said to be normal in the absence of psychological conditions such as depression, weakness of the will, spiritual exhaustions, etc.

⁵ She puts this thus: “In defence of this thesis (that is, cognitivist internalism) it is tempting to either argue that the Humean constraint only applies to non-normative beliefs or that moral beliefs only motivate *ceteris paribus*. But succumbing to the first temptation places one under a burden to justify what is motivationally exceptional about moral beliefs and succumbing to the second temptation saddles one with a thesis that fails to do justice to the practicality intuition that cognitivist motivational internalism is supposed to capture” (Bromwich 2009, 2).

⁶ Although Frankena defends an internalist position, he believes that moral indifference is possible. He writes thus: “It has not seemed to me inconceivable that one should have an obligation and recognize that one has it and yet have no motivation to perform the required action” (Frankena 1958, 42-43).

⁷ On the contrary, belief is different from caring, the former is cognitively-laden, whereas the latter is an emotional capacity.

⁸ Super libertatem ergo arbitrandi in ratione oportet ponere libertatem eligendi arbitratum in voluntate, ut voluntas nulla necessitate eligat etiam

quod ratio sententiat....” (*Quodl.* 1. 16, 5:102; Hoffmann, Tobias (2008). Henry of Ghent's Voluntarist Account of Weakness of Will. In *Weakness of Will from Plato to the Present*. Catholic University of America Press).

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