

## 實踐理由之動機結構

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### 摘要

有關行動理由的哲學爭辯常聚焦於理由與動機之關連，內在論主張行動理由與動機事實有必要之聯結，外在論則否認。1980年，威廉斯發表論文“Internal and External Reasons”，提出反對外在論的強力論證，引發了倫理學、行動理論以及理由理論一連串深具影響力的辯論。二十年後，他發表“Some Further Notes on Internal and External Reasons”（2001），精進他的休謨理論以回應這些年來其他學者所提出的質詢；更重要的是，他將過去二十多年來的主要批評歸類為兩種進路：「康德進路」以及「亞理斯多德進路」，並且對二者提出強烈反對。本文檢視康德進路及亞理斯多德進路近來的可能發展，其中包括柯思嘉和麥克道爾的哲學論述，以解釋並論證為何威廉斯的最新論點不足以反駁此二進路。

**關鍵詞：**理由、動機、內在論、外在論

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## The Motivational Structure in Practical Reason

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### Abstract

A central issue in the contemporary philosophy of action focuses on the relation between reason and motivation: Internalism holds, while Externalism denies, that there is a necessary connection between reasons for action and motivational states. In 1980, Bernard Williams launched a powerful argument against Externalism in his article, “Internal and External Reasons,” which triggered influential debates in ethics, action theory, and theory of reason. Twenty years later Williams published “Some Further Notes on Internal and External Reasons” (2001), in which he refined his Humean theory so as to accommodate the many criticisms he had so far received. More importantly, he classified his major critics, in the past two decades, mainly into two groups, “the Kantian” and “the Aristotelian,” and raised objections to both. This paper explores the later development of the Kantian and the Aristotelian approaches, primarily in terms of the recent works of Christine Korsgaard and John McDowell, and argues to the effect that Williams’ objections are insufficient to refute the two approaches.

**Keywords:** reason, motivation, internalism, externalism

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# **The Motivational Structure in Practical Reason**

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Internalism about practical reason contends that all reasons for action must be connected, in some way, to some motivational fact, whereas Externalism holds that at least some reasons for action are not so connected. In 1980, Bernard Williams launched a powerful argument against Externalism in his article, “Internal and External Reasons,” which triggered influential debates in ethics, action theory, and theory of reason. Twenty years later Williams published “Some Further Notes on Internal and External Reasons” (2001), in which he refined his Humean theory so as to accommodate the many criticisms he had so far received. More importantly, he classified his major critics, in the past two decades, into two groups, “the Kantian” and “the Aristotelian,” and raised objections to both. This paper will examine some later developments of the Kantian and the Aristotelian approaches, mainly in terms of Christine Korsgaard’s and John McDowell’s theories, and explain why Williams’ objections are insufficient to refute both approaches.

## I. Argument against External Reason

Williams claims that “S has a reason to  $\Phi$ ” has two interpretations. The internal interpretation is that if S has a reason to  $\Phi$ , then S has some “motive which will be served or furthered by his  $\Phi$ -ing” (1980: 101); and the external interpretation is that S can have a reason to  $\Phi$  without relevant motive. He further explains the notion of internal reason as the combination of motivational structure and rational deliberation: “A reason is internal just if it can be reached by rational practical deliberation which starts from the agent’s antecedent subjective motivational set” (1980: 101). He also enlarges the traditional role of deliberation to include not only the traditional means-end reasoning but also tasks such as determining the best way of satisfying some desire balancing motivational dispositions, and arbitrating conflicting tendencies. Equipped with these notions, Williams proceeds to argue that there is no external reason.

As matter stands, it appears that there can be true external reason statements; for instance, in Henry James’ story, Owen Wingrave has no motivation to join the army as his family tradition requires, but his father urges him to do so. We may imagine the father to state that “There is a reason for Owen to join the army,” and this statement can in some sense be true. Williams does not think this is a case for external reason. He holds, “If something can be a reason for action, then it could be someone’s reason for acting on a particular occasion, and it would then figure in an explanation of that action. Now no external reason statement could *by itself* offer an explanation of anyone’s action” (1980: 106). Nevertheless, external reason could figure in an explanation of action if it is conjoined with a *belief*. That is, an agent’s

coming to believe the external reason statement may help explain his action in the following way: he comes to believe that it is a reason for him to do the action, and he is motivated, even if earlier he didn't have such a motive. Still Williams questions how coming to believe a reason statement can acquire a new motivation. In his view, the externalist must concede:

The agent should acquire the motivation because he comes to believe the reason statement, and that he should do the latter, moreover, because, in some way he is considering the matter aright. (1980: 109)

For Williams, “considering the matter aright” is made possible only by deliberating the matter rationally. There are, according to Williams, two possible applications of deliberation. First, the deliberation does not start from the existing motivations, and hence cannot give rise to any new motivation. As Williams states, “For, *ex hypothesi*, there is no motivation for the agent to deliberate from, to reach this new motivation” (1980: 109). In this case the external reason statement would be false. Second, the deliberation gives rise to motivation because it bears rational relation to the earlier motivations, but “in that case an internal reason statement would have been true in the first place” (Williams, 1980: 109). Either way, there is no external reason.

Indeed, if we accept the view that considering the matter aright is effected by correct deliberation, it is difficult to explain external reasons.<sup>1</sup> Then an external reason statement would at best be an elliptical of what Williams calls

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<sup>1</sup> McDowell says of the agent in the case that “he needs to invent an application of reason in which it can impel people to action without owing its cogency to the specific shape of their prior motivation; and this is what Williams rightly says it is hard to believe in” (1995: 99).

an “optimistic internal reason claim”: “If the agent rationally deliberated, then he would come to be motivated to  $\Phi$ ” (Millgram, 1996: 199).

## II. Internalist Requirement

If Williams is to be classified as a Humean internalist, then Christian Korsgaard can be seen as a Kantian internalist. Their major discrepancy lies in their attitudes to the universality of moral reason, which will be specified in Section 3. Korsgaard distinguishes internalism from externalism in terms of the role of moral judgment: “An internalist theory is a theory according to which the knowledge ... of a moral judgment implies the existence of a motive ... for acting on that judgment”; an external theory is the view that “a conjunction of moral comprehension and total unmotivatedness is perfectly possible: Knowledge is one thing and motivation another” (1986: 8). Her version of internalism differs from those that appeal to a *direct* link between reason and motivation. She proposes “internalism requirement”:

Practical-reason claims, if they are *really* to present us with reason for action, must be capable of motivating *rational* persons. (emphasis added, 1986: 11)

The term “really” indicates, as will be specified later, that moral reason must come in a particular way, while “rational” means that not all persons at all time are motivatable.

To avoid the direct link between reason and motivation, Korsgaard suggests a “transmission” picture of motivation. A desirable end must carry some motivational force, and when the agent is rational, this force is transmitted

from the desirable end to practical deliberation, to causal means, and finally to bodily motions. The motivational transmission can occasionally be interfered by some states such as passion or anger; and when the transmission is blocked, no bodily motion occurs. In this situation, it does not mean that rational considerations have no motivational force, for we are not always in an “open path” for the motivational force to go through. As Korsgaard claims, “The necessity, or the compellingness, of rational considerations lies in those considerations themselves, not in us: that is, we will not necessarily be motivated by them” (1986: 13-14).

The transmission of motivational force in practical reason is further supported by the transmission of conviction in theoretic reason (Korsgaard, 1986: 14-15). A theoretically rational person who is engaged in logical reasoning must be appropriately convinced by its conclusion. If the premises are true and the reasoning is valid, then the person has to accept the conclusion with conviction. The conviction in the premises is transmitted to a conviction in the conclusion. However, the path of transmission of conviction can be blocked by states such as weakness or ignorance; and in this situation, a person may fail to be convinced by the conclusion of what he takes to be a sound argument. Put together:

In order for a theoretical argument or a practical deliberation to have the status of reason, it must be capable of motivating or convincing a rational person, but it does not follow that it must at all time be capable of motivating or convincing any given individual. (Korsgaard, 1986: 15)

For Korsgaard, skepticism about practical reason is based on a misunderstanding of internalism requirement. The requirement emphasizes that “rational considerations succeed in motivating us” with the proviso: “insofar as we are rational” (1986: 15). A person may understand a rational consideration but his motivational path is blocked; nevertheless, this is not a case against internalism requirement, because “rationality is a condition that human beings are capable of, but it is not a condition that we are always in” (Korsgaard, 1986: 18).

### III. The Kantian Approach

We have explained the two versions of internalism and we may now consider how they face the famous objection against internalist theories, namely the objection from moral reasons. It is obvious that moral reasons are applicable to all agents, no matter what their motivational states are; thus it is possible that an agent has a moral reason but lacks the relevant motivation. Here is an argument:

- (P1) “If something is morally wrong, then there must be a reason not to do it.”
- (P2) “Some actions are morally wrong for any agent no matter what motivations and desires they have.”
- (C) Hence, there can be a reason for an agent not to do some action, but the agent has no relevant motivation. (Finlay, S. and Schroeder, M., 2008: 3-6)

The existence of categorical moral reason poses a powerful challenge to internalism, to which many theorists have attempted to offer different sorts of



solutions.<sup>2</sup> Williams and Korsgaard have very different reactions to it. Williams never seriously considers the problem a threat to internalism; indeed, he may straightforwardly deny (P2). In this respect his theory contradicts our basic intuition. On the other hand, Korsgaard tries to meet this objection in her broadly Kantian approach, the most salient feature of which is the existence of universal principle of reason. Her view is basically that subjective motivational sets can acquire universal principles, due to the nature of rational deliberation.<sup>3</sup>

Korsgaard contends that Williams' emphasis on agents' existing motivational set has the consequence that "it is a subjective matter which considerations can motivate a given individual and therefore that all judgments of practical reason must be conditional in form" (1986: 19). If all practical reasons are conditioned by what is in the subjective motivational set, can there be any universal principle of reason? There is one possibility: "If one accepts internalism requirement, it follows that pure practical reason will exist if and only if we are capable of being motivated by the conclusions of the operations of pure practical reason as such. Something in us must make us capable of being motivated by them, and this something will be part of the subjective motivational set" (Korsgaard, 1986: 20). This claim is too strong. Not all subjective motivational sets contain such a capacity; and not all reason issued from pure practical reason always motivate an agent to do something. Williams may thus reject the existence of pure practical reason. Korsgaard proposes a mild version of the claim in line with her internalist requirement: "If we can

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<sup>2</sup> The theorists can appeal to, for example, moral relativism (Harman, 1975) and error theory (Joyce, 2001; Mackie, 1977). See Finlay, S. and Schroeder, M. (2008: 6).

<sup>3</sup> Korsgaard's position will be further explicated in Section 6. Her basic idea, to anticipate, is that rational deliberation requires the involvement of two principles (or "rules"), namely hypothetical and categorical imperatives, through which moral reasons are applicable to all rational agents.

be motivated by considerations stemming from pure practical reason, then that capacity belongs to the subjective motivational set of *every rational being*” (1986: 21).

For Korsgaard, there is no reason to suppose that subjective motivational set contains nothing but individual elements such as beliefs, desires, or inclinations that are not likely being shared with other agents: “What sorts of item can be found in the set does not limit, but rather depends on what kinds of reasoning are possible.” (1986: 21). For the sake of argument, let us focus on a Kantian principle that “a given agent has reason to respect the interest of others” (McDowell, 2006: 175). Such a principle, according to Korsgaard, can be acquired in rational deliberation:

If we say that the agent comes to accept the principle through reasoning — through having been convinced that the principle admits of some ultimate justification — then there are grounds for saying that this principle is in the subjective motivational set of every rational person: for if all rational persons can be brought to see that they have reason to act in the way required by the principle, and this is all that the internalism requirement requires. (1986: 21)

Williams denies the need of universal principles in subjective motivational sets partly because he disregards the impact of the objection from moral reason. The debate between the two internalists is succinctly noted by McDowell as follows. “The dispute is over whether there is a deliberative route to the broadly Kantian conclusion, in the sense of ‘deliberative’ that incorporates Williams’ structural requirement — whether there is an argument

that starts from something in the existing motivation of any subject capable of reflecting on what she has reason to do, and yields the conclusion that the agent has reason to respect the interests of others. Korsgaard says there is; Williams doubts it” (McDowell, 2006: 175). The key difference between Williams and Korsgaard lies in their accounts of what rational deliberation consists in, which will be elaborated later.

#### IV. The Aristotelian Approach

Another major criticism of Williams’ argument against externalism also takes issue with his account of rational deliberation, but from a different direction. What is at stake is no longer the dispute whether rational deliberation can yield universal principles, but whether rational deliberation constitutes the only mode to grasp practical reason — whether considering matters aright is only effected by rational deliberation. McDowell (1995) presents an understanding of considering the matter aright in terms of social upbringing.

McDowell intends to accommodate the apparent external reason as a kind of “hypothetical internal reason.” He states, “Some consideration constitute a reason for [an agent] to act in a certain way, his not being motivated by it is a matter of his not *believing*, of the consideration, that it is a reason to act in that way. If he came to believe that, he would come to be motivated. That is, certainly, he would come to have an internal reason statement true of him” (1995: 98). As noted, Williams argues that externalist needs a further condition: the person comes to believe the reason statement because he is considering the matter aright, which requires him to “deliberate correctly.” We may put his argument in the following form:

- (P1) “The external reasons theorist essentially wants, that the agent should acquire the motivation because he comes to believe the reason statement, and... because... he is considering the matter aright.”
- (P2) “The condition under which the agent appropriately comes to have the motivation [must be] ... that he should deliberate correctly.”
- (C) Therefore, to say that an agent has an external reason to  $\Phi$  is, at best, to say that “if the agent rationally deliberated... he would come to be motivated to  $\Phi$ ” (Millgram, 1996: 199).

Given this argument, we may see that McDowell’s point is to attack the transition from (P1) to (P2). As he questions, “Why must the external reasons theorists envisage this transition to considering the matter aright as being effected by correct deliberation?” In his view, considering the matter aright is not perceiving some non-natural properties of things, but seeing things with proper vision and motivation, which is a *combined* capacity that can be cultivated in a human society:

Ethical upbringing is... a process of habituation into suitable modes of behavior, inextricably bound up with the inculcation of suitably related modes of thought, there is nothing mysterious about how the process can be the acquisition, simultaneously, of a way of seeing things and of a collection of motivational directions. (1995: 101)

If ethical upbringing goes well, one can acquire the way of seeing things with proper motivation — she can *recognize* some certain fact as a reason for action and *response* to it by performing the action. Thus, having been properly

brought up and considering things aright are, in McDowell's view, "two ways of giving expression to the same assessment" (1995: 101).

Properly brought up persons tend to consider matter aright in the sense that they are capable of recognizing, and responding to, reasons. We may reconsider the case of external reason in this light: a person unmotivated or unconvinced by some correct (external) reason is a kind of *deficient* agent who is not properly brought up to recognize and respond to this reason. An unmotivated or unconvinced person, on McDowell's account, can nevertheless be induced into seeing things aright by some sort of "conversion." He writes,

At least sometimes we really might be able to understand on these lines how someone who had slipped through the net suddenly or gradually become as if he had been properly brought up, with the interlocking collection of concerns and way of seeing things that he failed to acquire earlier. (1995: 102)

So a person who has not been properly brought up can be induced into seeing things aright not by practical reasoning but by conversion. The conversion can alter the motivational structure without deliberating from existing motivational elements. In this case, the person was given an external reason statement, came to believe it through conversion, and acquired the new motivation to act in accord with the reason. Hence Williams' argument against externalism is not as convincing as it looks.

## V. Williams' Criticisms on the Kantian and the Aristotelian

In his later work (2001), Williams reviewed the debates initiated by his famous paper "Internal and External Reasons." He mentioned two of his major critics, the Kantian and the Aristotelian, and he argued that both approaches have weakness in explaining internal and external reasons, respectively.

(1) Williams disagrees with Korsgaard's Kantian reply to the objection from moral reason, for he doubts the existence of universal principles of practical reason. In his view, principles of reason are not in the subjective motivational set of every rational person; they are acquired by education and training. For him, no principle admits of ultimate justification. Instead, he proposes a "limiting version of internalism":

If it were true that the structure of practical reason yielded reasons of a kind as binding on every rational agent, then it would be true of every rational agent that there was a sound deliberative route from his or her [motivational set] to actions required by such reasons. (Williams, 2001: 94)

This version of internalism is limited because it is conditional in form. It does not assert that there is a sound deliberative route to categorical reasons, for the assertion is conditioned upon a further fact that practical reason has certain "structure" that can affirm such reasons.

Williams' criticisms of Korsgaard's approach, in my view, can be summarized into two objections. First, he points out that "we cannot simply assume that moral considerations ... must figure in every agent's S. [A]

philosophical claim that they are necessarily part of rational agency needs argument.”<sup>4</sup> Second, he contends that deliberation should not be restricted to some “narrow instrumental connections” (Williams, 2001: 92). He expands his notion of deliberation to cover ways of satisfying desire and arbitrating conflicting ones, and he thinks Korsgaard’s notion of deliberation is constrained to means-end reasoning.

(2) The Aristotelian approach, in Williams’ eyes, aims to “construct a truth condition for external claims in terms of the reasons that would be recognized by an ideal, ‘well brought up,’ or at least improved, agent — an agent, that is to say, for whom these would indeed be internal reasons” (2001: 94). In my view, Williams raises two questions to this approach. First, let us note McDowell’s remark:

The transition to “considering the matter aright” need not be capable of being effected by deliberation. ... But in the case we envisage, realization that one had it would not have been reachable by deliberation. So it would be an external reason. I exemplify this possibility by talking about a transition, not plausibly effectable by reasoning, to seeing situations as a properly brought up person would.” (2006: 176)

Williams contends that the ideal agent model must offer explanation for the possibility of “a transition, not plausibly effectable by reasoning, to seeing situations as a properly brought up person would” (2001: 94).

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<sup>4</sup> However, it is interesting to note that previously Korsgaard has made the same complaint about Williams, when she claims “Williams’ argument does not show that if there were unconditioned principles of reason applying to action we could not be motivated by them. He only thinks that there are none” (1986: 21).

Second, Williams maintains that the Aristotelian approach involves a framework of virtue ethics, which essentially employs a model of imitation to account for the acquisition of reason. Roughly speaking, a person has a reason for action A only if a person with relevant virtues would choose A in the same situation. He points out that this model does not always work because there are situations in which an imperfect agent has reason *not* to imitate a virtuous person. He states, for example: “Just because I am, can know myself to be, an imperfect agent, it may be that I have reason not to try things which a better agent would indeed have a reason to do” (2001: 94).

What Williams has in mind is Gary Watson’s (1975) famous example in which an ill-tempered person just lost a squash game and he should act as a gentleman to shake hands with his opponent; but knowing his own defect of bad temper, he has a reason not to do so. Williams comments, “If I know that I fall short of temperance and am unreliable with respect even to some kinds of self-control, I shall have good reason not to do some things that a temperate person could properly and safely do” (1995: 190). In sum, a person with a relevant virtue has a reason to greet his opponent, while a person who lacks the virtue does not. Similar examples have been used to argue against the imitation model, which is considered central to the Aristotelian virtue ethics.

## VI. The Kantian Response

According to Williams, the Kantian approach incurs two problems. First, it needs an argument to show that moral considerations figure in every rational agent’s motivational states. Second, the Kantian concept of deliberation may be understood as limited to mere instrumental principles. In her latest work,



Korsgaard does not provide an argument as a response to Williams' criticism; however, in my view, some of her main theses can actually be rearranged so as to present such an argument. The proposed argument contains two steps: first, rational deliberation necessarily involves "hypothetical and categorical imperatives"; and second, hypothetical and categorical imperatives generate reasons for action that are binding on all rational agents. Given these two premises, we may conclude that "the structure of practical reason yielded reasons of a kind as binding on every rational agent." This statement is exactly the antecedent of Williams' "limiting version of internalism," and therefore its consequent follows, namely that "it would be true of every rational agent that there was a sound deliberative route from his or her S to actions required by such reasons."

Internalism has mainly been derived from Hume's concept of motivation. He is known for his skeptical view about reason: "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them" (1978). The passions determine the desirable ends, and the only function of reason is to discern the causal means to these ends. Williams offers a milder skepticism, as he contends that practical reason depends on the existence of motives and principles of reason do not always give guidance to actions. Korsgaard proposes what may be called *non-skeptical internalism*, arguing that if we know *the way* principles of reason give guidance to actions, we know practical reason must be motivational to someone who engages in such a reason.<sup>5</sup> This particular way is explained by Korsgaard (2009) in

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<sup>5</sup> In her words, "the motivation skepticism depends on ... the 'content skepticism'" (1986: 23).

terms of the involvement of hypothetical and categorical imperatives in practical deliberation.

According to the Kantian approach, reasons for action are represented by “maxims,” which specify the grounds for taking actions. There are two rules for the “construction of maxims”: the hypothetical and categorical imperatives (Korsgaard, 2009: 108). The hypothetical imperative concerns the relation between an act and an end; for example, “Do action A for the sake of an end E.” On the other hand, the categorical imperative determines “whether the whole package, the act for the sake of the end, is worth doing for its own sake” (Korsgaard, 2009: 82); for example, “Do A for the sake of E’ is worthwhile.” The two imperatives determine the form of maxims and thus decide what reason we can have, and can therefore be regarded as a “constitutive principle of action” (Korsgaard, 2009: 72). In regard of the relation between the two imperatives, Korsgaard specifies “a method of reasoning about practical issues”:

Your maxim, once formulated [by the hypothetical imperative], embodies your proposed reason. You then test it by the categorical imperative, that is, you ask whether you can will it to be a universal law, in order to see whether it really is a reason. (2009: 51)

In other words, hypothetical imperatives yield reason proposals, whereas categorical imperatives test their universality; and practical reasoning is hence the process in which proposed reasons are transformed into real ones. In sum, we can arrive at the first step of the proposed argument, namely that rational deliberation necessarily involves hypothetical and categorical imperatives.

The second step of the argument is: the maxims generated by hypothetical and categorical imperatives must be binding to all rational agents. Korsgaard maintains that we have all sorts of “practical identities,” for example, being citizens, students, or parents, which provide the sources of practical reasons; and rational agency requires that we somehow unify the different personal identities into a *self*. As she writes, “We have many particular practical identities and so we also face the task of uniting them into a coherent whole” (2009: 21). In particular, practical identities are often in conflict with each other, and the agent must choose among them; and each time you make a choice, “you constitute yourself as the author of your action in the very act of choosing it” (2009: 25). In this sense, to act is to constitute a self; or, action is self-constitution.

A self-constituted act is not merely an action that is caused by something within oneself — it has to be caused by a *self*, not just any incentive that the agent happens to have. For Korsgaard, unifying practical identities into a self depends on the procedure of rational deliberation: “When you deliberate, when you determine your own causality, it is as if there is something over and above all of your incentives, something which is *you*, and which chooses which incentive to act on” (2009: 72). Deliberation can have this unifying effect, again, because it essentially involves the function of the two imperatives: When one’s maxims are constructed and tested by the two imperatives, she successfully wills the maxims as universal laws; and in this situation, her acting on the maxims would, in Korsgaard’s view, constitute herself as a cause of an end. As she writes,

To act is to constitute yourself as the cause of an end. The hypothetical imperative picks out the *causal* part of that formulation: by following the hypothetical imperative, you make yourself the *cause*. ... The categorical imperative picks out another part of that formulation — that the cause is *yourself*. (Korsgaard, 2009: 72)

The different functions of hypothetical and categorical imperatives can be explained in terms of the distinction between incentives and self. When hypothetical imperatives are in place, we get a maxim such as “Do A for the end E,” and this may come from an incentive among others. As mentioned, an act according to an incentive is an inner act, but not all inner acts are self-constituting acts. When categorical imperatives are at work, we may have the maxim of “‘Doing A for the end E’ is worthwhile,” which is delivered not from a random incentive but from an *integrated* self. A reason for action stemming from this vein has gained normative binding. The binding is causal, for it demands the agent to act, as the hypothetical imperative indicates; it is also a requirement from self-constitution, for doing the action is part of constructing oneself, which is a function of the categorical imperative. That explains why there is the distinction between “you make yourself a *cause*” and “the cause is *yourself*.”

Rational agency thus requires making oneself as the cause of an end. That is why a reason that is formed in accord with the two imperatives is capable of motivating a rational agent. This helps explicate the internalist requirement quoted earlier: “Practical-reason claims, if they are really to present us with reason for action, must be capable of motivating rational

persons” (Korsgaard, 1986: 11). To translate, when we construct maxims according to the hypothetical and categorical imperatives, these maxims “really” present us with reasons for action; and insofar as we are in a rational state, these reasons must be “motivating.”<sup>6</sup>

So we come up with a version of the proposed argument for Internalism:

- (P1) The structure of rational deliberation is shaped by the operations of hypothetical and categorical imperatives, which function as the rules for constructing maxims.
- (P2) Reasons generated in accord with hypothetical and categorical imperatives are bidding on every rational agent.
- (P3) Therefore, it is true that “the structure of practical reason yielded reasons of a kind as binding on every rational agent.”
- (P4) “Limiting version of internalism”: “If it were true that the structure of practical reason yielded reasons of a kind as binding on every rational agent, then it would be true of every rational agent that there was a sound deliberative route from his or her S to actions required by such reasons.”
- (C) Hence, “it would be true of every rational agent that there was a sound deliberative route from his or her S to actions required by such reasons.”

Thus the Kantian approach offers a complete argument that moral considerations figure in every rational agent’s motivational states. It is debatable whether the structure of practical reason is best represented as the function of hypothetical

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<sup>6</sup> Williams fears that a principle may be understood by us but doesn’t motivate us to act accordingly, but Korsgaard doesn’t consider this a threat. For her, the motivational path does not cancel the normativity of reason, since the former depends on the particular condition of individuals and the latter is decided in the process in which the reason is formed. As mentioned, “the fact that the laws might not govern conduct, even when someone understood it, is not reason for skepticism: the necessity is in the laws, and not in us” (Korsgaard 1986: 25). The necessity is acquired in the process of constructing maxims.

and categorical imperatives, or even whether Korsgaard's interpretation is loyal to the Kantian tradition. But this argument is no doubt a complete account for internalism. That is to say, even if the soundness of the argument may be contestable, its validity is without question. The argument also replies to the second objection, for it shows that the Kantian concept of deliberation is much more complicated than mere instrumental principles.

## VII. The Aristotelian Response

In McDowell's view of social upbringing, properly brought up persons tend to consider the matter aright, whereas those who "slipped through the net" can turn to do so by some sort of conversion. Williams, as noted, raises two questions. First, this approach must explain the nature of the conversion, namely the transition to "considering the matter aright" that is not effected by deliberation. Can there be this sort of conversion that can alter an agent's motivational structure without rational deliberation starting from existing motivational elements? To see this, let us reflect on the role of some non-cognitive psychological factors in human reasoning and decision. As William James emphasizes, "Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds" (1956: 11). In cognitive science, there are important roles of these non-cognitive factors, the most salient of which is emotion; and empirical studies have demonstrated how emotion is essentially involved in individual behavior and decision making.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, A. J. Damasio (1994).

One of the most interesting cases is that in recent times researchers employed fMRI to show how the emotion of empathy — emotional contagion — works. In an experiment, a group of people were arranged to watch a film of others sniffing, with distinguishable facial expressions, a variety of fragrances, from disgusting ones, neutral ones, to pleasant ones; and later they sniffed the same fragrances themselves. In both times, their brain was scanned with fMRI.

It turned out that the same areas of the brain, the left anterior insula and the right anterior cingulate cortex, were automatically activated, both during the observation of disgusted facial expressions in the video and while experiencing the emotion of disgust evoked by the unpleasant fragrance. This suggests that the understanding of the facial expressions of disgust in someone else involves the activation of the same part of the brain that normally is activated during the experience of that same emotion. (Gazzaniga, 2008: 170)

Similar experiments were conducted to the investigation of different emotions, among which disgust and pain were shown to be the most contagious.

The neural mechanism of emotional contagion indicates that our perceiving others' emotional expressions can trigger our emotional response in an *automatic* way, that is, in a way without the intervention of rational reasoning. In this respect, the phenomenon of emotional contagion offers a mode to understand the kind of conversion that is essential to the case of external reason. An agent due to the emotion of empathy may change his motivational tendency to an (external) reason statement, without rational

deliberation from his motivational set. His aloofness to the external reason can be converted by his new emotion resulted from the occurrence of the contagion. For example, a Nazi officer may be led by the look of a baby girl's eyes to recognize some reason for action that he has long been trained or brainwashed to ignore. This way of seeing situations as a properly brought up person is a transition not effected by rational deliberation.<sup>8</sup>

Second, the Aristotelian approach, in Williams' accounts, intends to explain external reasons as what virtuous persons would have in the same situation as internal reasons. He holds that Watson's example discussed earlier shows that there can be complication when an imperfect agent attempts to imitate a virtuous person. The ill-tempered squash player, suspecting that he may attack rather than greet his opponent, has a good reason not to do what a temperate person would normally do. In Williams' view, Watson's example constitutes an objection to the imitation model and, therefore, the Aristotelian approach.

The problem of imitation, however, is not unique to the Aristotelian virtue theory. It is a general problem to all theories of reason, including Williams' own. His later version of internalism is this: "A has a reason to  $\Phi$  only if there is a *sound deliberative route* from A's subjective motivational set to A's  $\Phi$ -ing" (Williams, 2001: 91). This counterfactual internalism must face the problem of imitation because for those who know they are not good at sound deliberation, they may have reasons to act differently from those who are good at reasoning. These agents would have their reasons precisely

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<sup>8</sup> We may see another form of such conversion in the so-called "social persuasion." Being among a group of people may create some emotional responses in someone, whose motivational structure is thereby altered without rational deliberation.



because they are not capable of deliberating soundly; that is, they have reasons that are consistent with their self-knowledge. To paraphrase Williams, “if I know that I fall short of sound deliberation, I shall have good reason not to do some things that a sound deliberating person could properly do.”<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, Williams’ criticism may not be sustainable because it is unclear whether virtue ethics really requires the imitation model in the way Williams prescribes. Kieran Setiya endeavors to show that a framework of virtue ethics can accommodate the fact that “one’s reasons are sensitive to one’s defects of character” (2007: 9). The objection from Watson’s example can be met by taking into consideration of the agent’s array of mental conditions. He writes, “A reason is a premise for an episode of good practical thought whose other conditions are already in place. If the fact that  $p$  is a reason for you to  $\Phi$ , then it is good practical thought to be moved to  $\Phi$  by a certain array of psychological states, and you have that array — except, perhaps, for the belief that  $p$ . This belief would supply the final material for a good disposition of practical thought” (2007: 11). In brief, if  $P$  is a reason for  $S$  to do  $A$ , then  $S$ ’s psychological status *plus*  $P$  would be a good normative reason to do  $A$  — it would be what a virtuous person would decide upon in the same situation.

To see how the new version works, let us consider the following contrast between Williams’ and Setiya’s verdicts on Watson’s example. The example described in Williams’ scenario would imply the following false claim:

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<sup>9</sup> In reply, Williams may argue that his theory claims only the necessary condition of having a reason, not the sufficient one; but clearly the same thing can be said of the Aristotelian approach that he is attacking.

The fact that the game is over is a reason for the squash player to greet the opponent just in case he would be moved to greet the opponent by the belief that the game is over, as if he had the virtues of character.

We may re-describe Watson's example according to Setiya's proposal, which would imply a true claim:

The fact that the game is over is a reason for the squash player to greet the opponent just in case he has a collection of psychological states, *C*, such that the disposition to be moved to greet the opponent by *C* and the belief that the game is over is a good disposition of practical thought, and *C* contains no false beliefs.

The claim is true because in it the squash player's own defect of character plays a role in deterring himself from having the reason to greet his opponent. The problem of imitation does not surface in this scenario. The Aristotelian virtue ethics can accept this interpretation rather than Watson's or Williams'.

## VIII. Conclusion

This paper has examined the foundation for Williams' objections to the Kantian and the Aristotelian. In Korsgaard's latest works, we have seen that the Kantian approach actually provides a rather complete account of how rational agents are able to see that they have reason to act in the way required by moral principles. Moreover, although it remains to be seen whether rational deliberation consists in the combined function of hypothetical and categorical

imperatives the way Korsgaard suggests, this concept of reasoning is far from what Williams calls “narrow instrumental connections.” As for the Aristotelian approach, talk of emotional contagion can provide grounds for understanding the type of conversion that is essential to the possibility of external reasons, and the objection from imitation is shown to be a threat to Williams’ own internalism rather than the Aristotelian approach. Both Williams’ latest criticisms of the Kantian and the Aristotelian are ineffective to make their points.

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