INTERNALIST AND EXTERNALIST THEORIES:

THE DIVERSITY OF REASONS

FOR ACTING

by

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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: INTERNALIST AND EXTERNALIST THEORIES: THE DIVERSITY OF REASONS FOR ACTING

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Although common-sense moral theories tend to hold that everyone has reason to act morally, Bernard Williams argues in "Internal and External Reasons" that an agent has no reason to act if the act in question fails to promote any desire or project of hers. Williams considers this a logical property of reasons for acting and refers to this position as "internalism."

After critically examining Williams' specific arguments, I use a heterogeneous group of arguments to show that internalism oversimplifies the logic of reasons. There are various ways in which reasons can be attributed to an agent without first examining her motives or projects: (1) some ways of undertaking obligations give rise to reasons for acting due to rational requirements on consistency of intention; (2) Thomas Nagel's arguments

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that prudential reasons are best described in terms of the agent's metaphysical conception of herself allow us to attribute reasons for acting to an agent without checking her desires first; and (3) John McDowell's account of agents "perceiving" reasons explains how an agent's conception of the facts will give rise to a reason and a motive for acting.

It also appears that internalism's appeal relies in part on our prejudices in favor of self-interest theories of rationality and our tendency to view agents as more separate and independent than they actually are. As a result, internalism suffers from too narrow a value focus. The emphasis on a shared form of life that originates in the Wittgensteinian notion of a practice allows us to attribute reasons for acting to agents without considering their individual projects in each case and better suits the process of judging and understanding reasons for acting than a view which focuses as heavily on the individual as internalism does.

Finally, because agents are sometimes perverse, reasons themselves do not always motivate and motivation cannot logically be part of having a reason.

In conclusion, reasons for acting are significantly more diverse than internalism allows and the theory should therefore be rejected.

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Introduction

This project addresses a basic question regarding the logic of reasons, the question whether a motive or project of the agent is a necessary precondition to his having a reason to act. A negative answer will have serious implications for the controversy over whether agents always have reason to act morally which, in its turn, raises problems for some common-sense theories of moral responsibility.

Of course most of us care about morality in the sense that we have some desire to live up to moral standards and that desire gives us reason to act morally. However, it is not so clear that an agent who does not care about morality (and who does not care what anyone else thinks of him) has any reason to act in moral ways. The questions at issue appear to be: When <u>there are</u> moral reasons for doing ø, can we automatically judge that individual agents <u>have</u> reasons to act? And, if not, is there anything wrong with holding an agent responsible for failing to act in ways that she had no reason to act?

Of course there is nothing <u>contradictory</u> in holding an agent responsible for failing to act when she had no

reason to do so, but it is somewhat troubling (at least insofar as common-sense is concerned). And if we only have reason to act because morality is one of our "projects" or concerns, we need to adjust our conception not only of the relation between morality and reasons that we have for acting, but also our conception of morality itself because morality then is not always and for everyone the supremely rational mode of behavior.

Bernard Williams supports this latter view. In "Internal and External Reasons," he argues forcefully that the concept of a reason for acting necessarily includes a motive or desire on the part of the agent. Without this, statements that the agent has a reason for acting "are false, or incoherent, or really something else misleadingly expressed."[1] Williams believes it is a mistake to speak of an agent having reason to act morally if that agent does not care about morality and the action is not required for some other project she does care about (such as maintaining good standing in the community).

This interpretation of reasons is called an internal interpretation. The motive is internal to the reason; it is logically necessary. Because a reason for acting must make a connection to what Williams calls the agent's "subjective motivational set," reasons for acting are relative to the particular agent's psychology and

projects. Judgments regarding the agent's reasons for acting cannot be made without considering such. When we make reason statements about agents who have no motive to act in the way described, we are often either trying to convince the agent to act in that way or are optimistically hoping that the agent will do so, claims Williams.

I began this project thinking that Bernard Williams was simply wrong, that agents had reason to act morally even if they were not concerned about morality, simply understanding moral concerns gave one reason to act morally. Now I believe there is much truth in Williams' position. However, his internalist theory of reasons is wrong insofar as it presents itself as the correct and complete explanation of reasons for acting. Williams' theory explains a central and very important type of reason for acting but fails to cover all possibilities and perspectives. I argue here that to accept internalism as the correct theory of reasons is to oversimplify, to make neat generalizations about phenomena too complex to be categorized in that way.

The internalist theory of reasons for acting is very seductive and Chapter One examines in detail Bernard Williams' arguments for a strict internal interpretation of reasons. The argument relies on two basic claims: (1) reasons for action must be capable of explaining action

and (2) this is not possible without some kind of connection to the agent's subjective motivational set. External reason statements by definition do not always make this connection and therefore cannot function in explanations of action. They should only be regarded as giving reasons for action when they provide such a connection, says Williams, but then an internal reasons statement can be made and the external statement is unnecessary. Hence, external reason statements can either be replaced by internal ones or are not capable of providing reasons for action.

My concern in Chapter One is to make clear what Williams' argument actually proves and to point out ways in which it can be challenged, ways that will be taken up in the later chapters. Despite the fact that Williams' arguments are not as successful as he intends, they raise many serious issues which the external reasons theorist must address. For example, if the external reason statement makes no connection to an agent's subjective motivational set, how can such a statement affect an agent's behavior at all? How can it function as a reason for acting for that agent? It is difficult to see how an external reason statement which cannot be reformulated as an internal reason statement could be related to intentional action on the part of agents.

In their arguments, internal reasons theorists such

as Williams tend to focus on cases in which there is a clear motive, desire, or project of the agent that gives him reason to act in the situation in which he finds himself. However, philosophers such as Thomas Nagel and John McDowell have raised serious challenges for the claim that the desire-based model can adequately cover all cases and possibilities. Much of Williams' argument relies on the implausibility of external reason statements being able to generate the kind of motivation that we are led to expect when we focus on desire-based cases, but perhaps they should not be taken as the paradigm of having a reason for acting.

Replies to this challenge that external reasons cannot generate the necessary kind of motivation and to others offered by Williams are taken up briefly in Chapter One and then more fully in the succeeding chapters. Generally, Chapters Two through Four offer considerations which allow for reasons to be attributed to agents without examining their subjective motivational sets, while Chapters Five, Six, and Seven look at the factors that tend to mislead us into limiting our view of reasons, into denying their variety and complexity.

More specifically, Chapter Two argues that certain ways of undertaking obligations can give rise to reasons for acting. Frankena has argued that obligations are

capable of external interpretation -- an agent can admit that he has an obligation and deny that he has any motivation for acting on it. Common sense morality assumes that obligations or duties do not always motivate the agent to whom they apply. If obligations gave rise to reasons for acting then reasons generated in such a case would be external reasons for acting. However, a general claim that obligations always give reason for acting would be highly problematic. Making a reason judgment without examining the agent's subjective motivational set does seem possible in some cases, nonetheless. For example, in the case of an agent whose obligation is based on a promise made in good faith, the judgment that the agent has reason to perform the action fulfilling the promise need not presuppose an examination of her current motives and projects. Therefore, the statement that she has reason to act is a legitimate external reason statement. And although it will be argued that consistency of intention over time rather than simply the obligation itself serves as the basis for the reason judgment, external reasons are still possible.

Attacking the internalist position somewhat less directly, Chapter Three uses an argument of Nagel's from The Possibility of Altruism to force a wedge in the internalist's reason-motive connection. Nagel contends that ascribing prudential reasons for acting to an agent

does not require checking to see if the agent has some overarching desire for his own future good or some motive that requires such an interest. According to his argument, motivation intelligible independent of the grounds that justify a reason statement and justify believing it is not always necessary. Since Nagel's account of reasons does not require pre-existing motives as conditions for having reasons to act and since it implies that motivation for acting can arise from considering circumstances in a particular way (which includes seeing that one will later have reason to act and that it is one's own life that is affected), the reason is not logically dependent on the presence of a motive or a desire to satisfy one's later desires. For Nagel, the fact that there is a reason can create the motivational connection. Thus, Nagel's view lends itself to an externalist interpretation. Insofar as Nagel's arguments against basing all reasons on desires work, the internal reasons position is definitely threatened.

Chapter Four takes up this question of how an agent's consideration of reasons or of the circumstances that give rise to a reason for acting can result in her being motivated to act or coming to accept a new reason for acting. It specifically examines whether it is helpful to talk of agents coming to "see" reasons for

acting and does so by examining a particular case, the case of a nineteenth century southern landowner coming to accept that he has reason to help fugitive slaves. John McDowell claims that virtuous agents and non-virtuous agents actually perceive differently the situations with which they are confronted and therefore see different reasons for acting. If McDowell's argument works, it will support externalism because an agent can perceive a reason for acting before being motivated to perform it. Therefore motivation cannot be a necessary condition of having a reason to act.

Although McDowell might be accused of merely gesturing at what occurs when an agent gains a reason for acting, when we look at an example in detail, it appears that in certain cases there is some advantage to McDowell's "perceptual" approach when compared with Williams' rationally deliberative model. Ultimately it is argued that to cover the full range of possible cases, both the Williamsian and the McDowellian view of gaining new reasons for acting need to be accepted.

Chapter Five takes up the question of why internalist theories of reasons are so appealing and argues that our predilection for self-interested theories of rationality is at least part of the explanation. The two types of theories arise from similar metaphysical views of the agent and similar value perspectives. Parfit has criti-

cized the Self-interest theory at length and here I extend some of his criticisms to internalist theories of reasons, showing how Williams' theory gains psychological support from the basic attitudes and values of the Self-interest theory of rationality. For example, the Self-interest theory predisposes us generally to a self-justifying view of the value of actions, a view that the rationality of any action depends on a quite specific relation of that action to the agent and his projects. Although internalism differs from the Self-interest theory, there are significant parallels between the two. Internalism's focus on the agent's psyche and its failure to consider the external situation except insofar as it is relevant to the agent's motives and projects is comparable to the Self-interest theories' focus on the agent's good, looking at others only insofar as they affect the agent.

This contrasts sharply with the common-sense view that factors external to the particular agent's psychology may be important in an appraisal of reasons. Internalism is oriented toward answering the question of what an agent should do given his projects and interests. It cannot deal so well with the question of what projects, given his situation, the agent has reason to adopt. (Or, alternatively, what he has no reason to adopt.) Just as

the Self-interest theory seems to put too much emphasis on the agent and his feelings at times when it is not obviously appropriate, internalism emphasizes the agent's desires and projects when it is not clear that those should be the focus of attention or the only focus of attention. There are cases in which the situation seems to give rise to demands on an agent despite her own aims and projects. From the standpoint of our shared form of life, one's choice of projects is not completely extrarational. Reasons for acting do not arise only after one's basic projects have been chosen.

The following chapter continues this theme. When considered as exclusive theories of rationality and reasons neither the Self-interest theory nor the internalist theory are adequate to explain all cases and situations. Chapter Six argues that there are both internal and external elements in reasons for acting. Denying the external elements forces us to adopt a subjective view of value that is problematic. Relying on the Wittgensteinian notion that complex practices can only be understood by those who share similar aims and, in general, ways of life, Wiggins writes in "Truth, Invention, and the Meaning of Life," that our shared form of life is important for judgments of meaning and value. If this is correct, then our shared form of life must be crucial for reason judgments as well.

Consequently, it is argued in this chapter that the meaning and importance of projects such as promoting justice do not rely only on the wants or values of the particular individual under discussion; they come at least in part from the way we are and the way the world around us is. What people in general tend to want, to value, and to need are crucial. On this view, an agent can obtain new reasons for acting (external reasons) because he can reflect on the importance of certain ends for our shared form of life. As a result of these reflections, a desire may arise to promote those ends. Therefore, the agent sees reason to promote an end before he desires to do so, a possibility internalism does not allow. This view also allows us to give a more balanced explanation of how individuals can come to care about certain projects such as the promotion of Justice.

Since this portrayal of how agents may acquire new reasons requires the agent to admit her place among others with similar needs, interests, and desires, the internalist's highly individualistic and separatist perspective is rejected. A different emphasis (if not an altogether different metaphysical view of the agent) from that fostered by internalism is wanted. Using suggestions from Carol Gilligan's work in psychology and from thinkers in the "deep ecology" movement, we might more

appropriately think of the individual as an element in a vast web of relationships and interactions rather than an isolated agent. Internalism puts the particular agent in the foreground when it comes to making reason judgments; everything else is in the background except insofar as that agent, by his projects, draws it forward. But relationships, situation, and such are part of what makes the agent who she is and should not be relegated to the background of judgments about reasons for acting. There is an interdependence that cannot be avoided.

On this alternative view of the agent, the situation and the agent's relations to others in it might provide external reasons for acting. If the agent sees herself as having reason to act not because she has adopted the good of others as one of her projects, but because she is integrally connected with a much larger whole, it is unnecessary to examine her subjective motivational set before knowing what reasons for acting she has. Instead of relying on an assessment of her projects and motives, the reason judgments rely heavily on the agent's meta-physical view of herself, a claim which fits in neatly with Nagel's claims about prudence and prudential reasons for acting.

Chapter Seven takes up in a different way the theme of how we have been misled into accepting internalism and argues that the psychology on which internalism depends

is incorrect. Contrary to what internalism about reasons maintains, externalism is possible because agents do not always care about reasons that they have for acting. Having a reason for acting is not necessarily motivating and therefore a connection to one's subjective motivational set cannot be a logical property of reasons for acting.

Internalism about reasons maintains that although an agent might not care about moral considerations, it is nonsense to say that an agent does not care about reasons that he has for acting. In other words, reasons for acting are automatically motivating in a way that morality is not. It would be nonsense for an agent to say "I see that I have a reason to do ø, but so what?" Reasons for acting are in some sense more basic or fundamental than moral considerations because they are more closely connected to the psychology of the individual than morality is. This becomes clear when we realize that it <u>is</u> possible for an agent to say, "I see that doing ø is morally required, but so what?" although the parallel claim about reasons is nonsense.

However, the arguments of Dostoyevsky's protagonist in <u>Notes from Underground</u> make quite plausible the view that it is not only possible but common for individuals not to care about reasons that they have for acting. In

fact, people could not stand it if everything was rational, he claims. Individuals value an independent will and the independent will refuses to be constrained by "precepts of justice and reason."[2]

With such a portrayal of human nature external reasons are possible because an agent could have a reason to act and yet not care about it. People can be perverse or froward. Knowing that an agent has a reason for action will not allow us to assume any motivation on his part for acting in accordance with it. In fact, knowledge of that reason may be the factor motivating him to do otherwise.

This should not be surprising -- paying attention to reasons is a way of orienting one's behavior and therefore it seems possible that an agent might reject that orientation once in a while. Recent brain research sup ports this in that it appears the action-directing part(s) of the brain are not concerned so much with reason as with emotion and various automatic systems. Hence, an agent might reject reasons for action at times and feel no motivation for acting as he sees he has reason to act. Contrary to Williams, external reason statements apply to the agent in such a situation.

That we may not actually <u>find</u> many external reason statements in ordinary speech Williams counts as evidence that there are no meaningful external reason statements.

However, alternative explanations for the dearth of such statements are available. One is that there are "natural reactions" to certain phenomena and that therefore we can generally (and correctly) assume a motivational connection (thereby allowing the reason statement to be given an internal interpretation). Another explanation relies on context of utterance considerations. The process of talking about reasons or considering reasons takes place in an atmosphere of concern. The correlation between motives or dispositions and reason statements arises because an agent who does not care about her reasons for acting will not be bothered to consider them or to discuss them. On the other hand, when someone cares enough to look around carefully for reasons for acting and sees that there is a reason to do ø, it is likely she will feel <u>some</u> motivation to act accordingly.

Overall, the conclusions of the project are that Williams' internal reasons theory is not as well supported as it initially appears, that there are ways of understanding reasons for action that allow for an external interpretation, and that internalism has misled us in various ways. Reasons for acting comprise a heterogeneous group and consequently the arguments that follow tend to make up a rather heterogeneous group as well. Taken together they offer a serious justification for rejecting

Williams' type of internalist theory.

Chapter One

Bernard Williams on External Reasons

Section 1

In "Internal and External Reasons," Bernard Williams argues that any reason statement not tied to some motive of the agent "which will be served or furthered" by his performing the action in question, is "false, or incoherent, or really something else misleadingly expressed."[1] Consequently, although there may be reasons for acting morally (based, for example, on the effects of the action on others), the agent does not have reasons to do so unless the action is related to his own "subjective motivational set" in the proper way.

Since as a society and as individuals we generally hold agents responsible for moral transgressions, if Williams is correct about the nature of reasons, then we regularly hold agents responsible for failing to perform acts they have no reason to perform. An agent may not care about morality; its demands may make no connection to his desires, projects, or ideals. Then, on this view, he has no reason to act as morality demands. Yet he is still expected to do so.

Do we hold agents responsible for failing to act

when they have no reason to act? Are we thereby requiring agents to act irrationally?

In addressing the uneasy relationship between morality and reasons for acting, it is worth examining Williams' argument in some detail because he raises many important and disturbing issues. To facilitate this goal I have reconstructed his argument below, leaving it largely in his own words but numbering the main ideas for ease of reference. It proceeds as follows:

Part A.

1. "Sentences of the forms 'A has a reason to ø' or 'There is a reason for A to ø' (where 'ø stands in for some verb of action) seem on the face of it to have two different sorts of interpretation. On the first, the truth of the sentence implies, very roughly, that A has some motive which will be served or furthered by his ø-ing. . . . On the second interpretation, there is no such condition."[2]

   Williams calls the former the internal interpretation; the latter is the external interpretation.

2. "Any model for the internal interpretation must display a relativity of the reason statement to the agent's subjective motivational set.[3]

   [This follows from (1).]

3. "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 actions."[4]

   This is Williams's general principle of reasons for action.

4. "[N]othing can explain an agent's (intentional) actions except something that motivates him so to act."[5]

5. "[N]o external reason statement could by itself offer an explanation of anyone's action."[6]

   [This follows from (1), (3), and (4).]

Part B

6. "So something else is needed besides the truth of an external reason statement to explain action, some psychological link; and that psychological link would seem to be belief. A's believing an external reason statement about himself may help to explain his action."[7]

7. Williams grants the plausibility of the idea that "believing that a particular consideration is a reason to act in a particular way provide[s], or indeed, constitute[s], a motivation to act."[8]

8. Then, because the agent has a motivation, "this agent, with this belief, appears to be one about whom, now, an internal reason statement could truly be made."[9]

   > For example, "A man who does believe that considerations of family honour constitute reasons for action is a man with a certain disposition to action, and also dispositions of approval, sentiment, emotional reaction, and so forth."[10]

9. Therefore, the content of external reason statements "is not going to be revealed by considering merely the state of one who believes such a statement, nor how that state explains action, for that state is merely the state with regard to which an internal reasons statement could truly be made."[11]

10. "[T]he content of the external type of statement will have to be revealed by considering what it is to come to believe such a statement."[12] (emphasis added)

11. The problem is that "[t]he agent does not presently believe the external statement. If he comes to believe it, he will be motivated to act; so coming to believe it must, essentially involve acquiring a new motivation. How can that be?"[13]

Part C.

12. For the external reasons theorist, "the agent should acquire the motivation because he comes to believe the reason statement, and ... he should do the latter, moreover, because, in some way, he is considering the matter aright."[14]

13. "[T]he external reasons statement itself will have to be taken as roughly equivalent to, or at least as entailing, the claim that if the agent rationally deliberated, then, whatever motivations he originally had, he would come to be motivated to ø."[15]

14. Based on the above, it seems plausible to conclude that all external reason statements are false. (Reason cannot give rise to a motivation. [Hume]) The agent starts with a particular set of motivations and must arrive at a new motivation which is not a member of the original set and cannot be arrived at by deliberating on motivations that he already has. Williams sees "no reason to suppose that these conditions could possibly be met."[16]

15. We cannot avoid the difficulty by claiming that a rational agent is an agent who "has a general disposition in his S to do what (he believes) there is reason for him to do. . . . [T]his reply merely puts off the problem. . . . What is it that one comes to believe when he comes to believe that there is reason for him to ø, if it is not the proposition, or something that entails the proposition, that if he deliberated rationally, he would be motivated to act appropriately?"[17]

16. From the external reasons theorists's point of view, an agent who ignores external reasons statements is not just "inconsiderate, or cruel, or selfish, or imprudent" -- he is irrational.[18]

Part D.

17. The external reasons theorist must show that the words "A has a reason to ø" or "There is a reason for A to ø" mean something different when used by someone who makes a false reasons statement "from what they mean when they are, as he [the external reasons theorist] supposes, truly uttered."
For example, in "James' story of Owen

Wingrave, ... Owen's father urges on him the necessity and importance of his joining the army since all his male ancestors were soldiers, and family pride requires him to do the same. Owen Wingrave has no motivation to join the army at all, and all his desires lead in another direction."[19] What "A has a reason to ø" means "when uttered by someone like Wingrave is almost certainly not that rational deliberation would get Owen to be motivated to join the army -- which is (very roughly) the meaning or implication we have found for them, if they are to bear the kind of weight such theorists wish to give them."[20]

18. "The sort of considerations offered here strongly suggest to me that external reason statements, when definitely isolated as such, are false, or incoherent, or really something else misleadingly expressed."[21]

Section 2

In arguing against Williams that there are plausible interpretations of external reason statements or that we can make some sense of the idea of external reasons, there are two basic approaches one might take. One can point out defects in Williams' argument and try to propose a solution that is clearly better (the direct approach). Or, one can give a number of reasons for doubting that Williams' claims provide the only plausible interpretation of the phenomena in question and try to show that there are other possibilities at least as good at providing explanations (the "alternatives" approach). Presenting alternatives allows for the introduction of possibilities not one of which, by itself, would convince a reader to abandon the view under attack, but which may

at least create doubt regarding the original position when many such possibilities are offered.

Although the direct approach has obvious benefits, it is difficult to use here for various reasons which will be explained later (one of which is the varied and interconnecting uses we make of the word "reason"). Therefore, the alternatives approach has been adopted. Although I do at times attack the internalist position directly, I more frequently propose alternative interpretations of external reasons which do not seem to be "false, or incoherent, or really something else misleadingly expressed."

This first chapter lays the groundwork for the others by examining Williams' argument and hinting at some of the modes of attack taken up in later chapters. Considering the steps of Williams' argument as laid out in Section 1, it at first appears that what I have labeled "Part A" rules out the possibility of external reasons as reasons for action by itself, rendering further argument unnecessary. The five steps in Part A establish that external reason statements (ERS's) need not be connected to the agent's motives and that nothing that does not motivate can explain an agent's (intentional) actions. Hence, it seems that the rest of the argument is not needed -- since ERS's are not connected with

the agent's motives (or are not required to be so connected), they cannot automatically explain action or operate as reasons for action, two functions that internal reason statements (IRS's) can fulfill since they are necessarily tied to the agent's motives.

However, the actual conclusion of this section of the argument is simply that ERS's cannot function as reasons for action alone. They will function as reasons for action only when they connect up with some element in the agent's subjective motivational set (S) or when they generate motivation themselves.

Consequently, the rest of Williams' argument aims to show that ERS's cannot generate motivation when there is no preexisting connection to the agent's S. If an ERS does connect in the proper way with the agent's S or it generates motivation, the ERS can be expressed as an IRS and, consequently, the ERS is unnecessary. When an ERS fails to make such a connection, it cannot function as the agent's reason for acting -- it cannot be used to explain his action. Therefore, the ERS is useless. Taking these together, it is concluded that ERS's serve no purpose -- either they can be expressed as IRS's or they are not reason statements in any significant sense inasmuch as they do not function as explanations for action.

It should be noted that since Williams explicitly

tries to show that ERS's cannot coherently or truly be said to give reasons for action to an agent and concludes from an argument to this effect that ERS's are false, incoherent, or misleading, Williams' argument fails if ERS's serve some purpose other than giving reasons for action to a particular agent. One possibility, suggested by Michael Slote, is that ERS's might explain long-term tendencies rather than particular actions, an idea dealt with in a later section.

For now, direct implications of Williams' claims are our concern, and, returning to a specific analysis of the argument itself, we find (5) is acceptable even to an external reasons theorist as long as it is made clear that, strictly speaking, an IRS cannot by itself offer an explanation of anyone's action either. The truth of an IRS requires that the action will further some motive of the agent. Hence, the truth of an IRS makes it rational ceteribus paribus for the agent to perform the action in question. However, this does not mean that the IRS will explain the action without some further specification of motive any more than it will do so with an ERS. Explaining an action seems to involve making understandable the appeal of the action to the agent. With an IRS, there is necessarily a motive present, but this motive need not be made explicit -- often the motive is so obvious as to

render its expression unnecessary for the purpose of explaining the action. An IRS such as "Sidney has good reason to wear his earmuffs today -- the temperature is five degrees below zero," is taken to give a reason for acting because we assume Sidney wishes to keep his ears warm. Nevertheless, on the view of action espoused by Williams, if Sidney wears his earmuffs, the reason statement by itself cannot completely explain Sidney's action. The mere fact that it is quite cold does not give Sidney a reason for acting, Sidney could want frostbitten ears so that his wife will feel guilty about borrowing and losing his winter hat.

Considering a different type of case makes this point even clearer. Clarence is a businessman who eats at a different restaurant every day of the week, but follows the same pattern each week. Thus, Clarence's friends can easily predict where Clarence will eat. If one of them is asked for the reason Clarence ate at Bentley's today, the reply might well be, "Because it's Tuesday." Clearly, however, this reply offers an explanation of Clarence's action only to someone who is aware of his Clarence's motivations. No one else would take this to be an explanation of Clarence's action. Clarence may have a principled but extreme dislike of irregularity and lack of order (so he acts out of respect for the principle that one's habits should be regular and order-

ly) or he may feel uncomfortable breaking a pattern originally established because each restaurant had "specials" that appealed to him on particular days but which has persisted despite changes in the menu. Hence, although in one sense Clarence eats at Bentley's "because it's Tuesday," the fact that it is Tuesday only functions as a reason (or is part of an IRS for Clarence) in conjunction with various psychological characteristics of his. The reason does not explain his action unless these other factors are made clear.

So, what is needed to explain an action is at least partially relative to the individual to whom the explanation is being offered. IRS's often appear to explain actions by themselves because the recipient is capable of realizing what motivated the action. To someone ignorant of human nature or of the individual in question an IRS will not explain the agent's intentional actions. An IRS alone is not necessarily sufficient for an explanation. Hence we should not be deceived into thinking that ERS's are unusual in being unable to explain actions without additional assumptions.

Considering Williams' principle of reasons for action (3), it also appears less straightforward upon closer inspection than it does initially. The principle states, "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 actions."[22]

As stated, this principle allows for several interpretations. It might be taken to permit reasons based on false beliefs to be classified as reasons for action. Reasons that move agents to act can obviously be based on false beliefs. And they can function truthfully in an explanation of the agent's actions. But Williams specifically states he does not want to allow that such reasons can be or can function as internal reasons.[23] So he seems to require not only that a reason explain (or be capable of explaining) <u>why</u> an agent acted, but that it be accurate in its assessment of the way things are. To use Williams' example, an agent has no reason to drink the petrol that he thinks is gin. If we ask the agent why he wants to drink the liquid in question he might well reply, "Because it is gin and I am thirsty for gin." And, if he drinks it, we would normally say that the reason he gave figures in a correct explanation of his action. The fact that Williams does not want to call this a reason for action despite the fact that it fits his principle of reasons for action indicates that there is more to the principle than meets the eye. Williams is concerned with what reasons <u>there are</u> for that agent and not merely what reasons the agent takes there to be or is

moved by. For Williams, not all of what Frankena calls "motivating reasons" are reasons, some of those are only pseudo-reasons.

This is problematic however, because interpreting "reasons" to mean "motivating reasons" in Williams' general principle of reasons for action is necessary to making the principle obviously true. Why should we believe reasons must figure in a correct explanation of action unless we assume motivating reasons are those in question? After all, the reasons that make an action good or make it the right one to perform are not always those on which the agent acts. He might act only because his mother told him to.

Williams' principle of reasons for action must also be restricted so that it is applied to each agent individually although that is not clear in his statement of the principle. As stated, the principle might equally well be taken to establish a class of reasons for actions -- a class composed of reasons for which individuals have acted and perhaps also including those for which agents would act if they had the relevant knowledge. If it were so interpreted, there would be nothing obviously inconsistent or inappropriate in ascribing a reason for action to an agent who does not have the necessary subjective motivational set for actually acting on it. The reason

would be one for which "people sometimes act" and that reason would "figure in some correct explanation of their actions" as called for by the principle.

But Williams thinks reasons for acting are relative to the actor. As such, they may include what has appropriately moved him to action in the past, what will do so in the present, and what would do so if he were to deliberate rationally on the motivations and reasons he already has (with the requisite knowledge of his circumstances, effects of his actions, etc.). This restriction of the principle to the individual arises because Williams focuses so exclusively on explaining action as a criterion that a reason must meet. And although this throws the emphasis onto motivating reasons, we have seen Williams also requires that the reasons provide a kind of justification apart from the agent's beliefs. (If it's not gin but petrol, the agent has no reason to drink.) There is a relativity of motivation but not of justification in Williams's view of reasons.

Interestingly, Williams' restrictions yield an implausible result in conjunction with his claim, "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 actions."[24] If an individual has some motive M on which she never acts (it never actually moves her to action

perhaps because of the comparative weakness of it in the situations in which she finds herself), then we cannot say she has a reason to act even though there <u>is</u> a connection between a reason statement and her subjective motivational set.

To be unable to say that the agent has at least a weak reason to ø in this case is strange. For example, Cheryl has some inclination to attend lectures on Art History. In college one of her required courses introduced her to the subject and she enjoyed it. She lives within a reasonable distance from a major art gallery in which related lectures are frequently given. When Cheryl sees the lectures advertised she feels some inclination to attend. We would normally say she has some reason to attend. But she also has reasons for not attending and it is those that ultimately, she always acts on -- she is too tired, the lectures fall on the same night as "L.A. Law", it's raining, it's cold, it's hot, etc. There is always <u>something</u>. Consequently, she never attends.

Ordinarily we would say that Cheryl has a reason to attend the lectures but the reason obviously does not carry much weight with her. However, Williams must claim that Cheryl has no reason to attend the lectures. On Williams' other general criteria, Cheryl does have reason to attend the lectures, but on this specific one <u>with all</u>

his restrictions operating she does not.

Williams may wish to use counterfactuals to escape this conclusion. That route will not be generally good for Williams' position however because exactly what can and what cannot be included in such counterfactuals will be open to dispute and it may look as if external elements should be allowed in. For example, can we include connections to S that are lacking? Or, more plausibly, can we say if the agent were simply more sensitive or less selfish he would ø, therefore he has reason to ø? To say that Cheryl has no reason to attend the lectures is highly counterintuitive and the use of counterfactuals seems Williams's most promising escape from this. But considering the view he wants to defend, allowing this move may open a real Pandora's box.

Perhaps it is not fair to claim that both motivation and justification of reasons must be completely relative to the individual agent or completely nonrelative, but Williams seems to want to take a middle ground without arguing for it. He states the general principle of reasons for action in a nonrelative way and then applies it as if it were strictly relative to the individual agent. The basic problem here for Williams's argument is that his principle of reasons for action sounds more plausible as stated (in its nonrelative way) than it does when all the restrictions are added. With the restric-

tions added, the internal interpretation has been built in. Therefore, someone who does not already accept Williams' view is only likely to accept the principle with the qualification that reasons are relative to the agent if he reads "reasons for action" as "motivating reasons". But then the principle is no longer saying something particularly interesting. And we have seen that it may not be true that a consideration is not a motivating reason for an individual unless he sometimes acts for it (Cheryl and her lectures).

To recapitulate this argument, it appears that Williams bases his argument against reasons that are unrelated to an agent's subjective motivational set on a principle that rules them out right from the start, and is therefore begging the question. The external reasons theorist can agree with Williams' principle, but not the interpretation of it that Williams wants to use. The only interpretation of it that would seem to be generally accepted (i.e., accepted even by those not already convinced of Williams' conclusion) is the interpretation that does not take reasons for action as necessarily relative to each individual agent, but as part of a general class which includes reasons for which individuals have acted and perhaps those for which they would act if they had the relevant knowledge. Williams then needs

to show that reasons and their applications are not general but relative to specific agents. And, presumably, that is the purpose of the rest of his argument.

One additional complicating factor for any discussion of reasons can be seen in the previous pages -- ordinary language uses "reason" in different ways. Sometimes when we ask for an agent's reason for acting we are requesting information as to what motivated him to act as he did. In Williams' gin and petrol example, a correct reply might be, "He drank from the jug because he thought it contained gin." Here we have the agent's reason for acting. We have been told his beliefs regarding the situation and we assume his motive for acting to be a desire for gin or a thirst he thought the gin would satisfy. In this sense the agent had a reason for acting and acted on it. But in another sense, a justificatory sense, the agent had no reason for acting -- he was thirsty for gin but there was no gin present, only petrol. Because he was mistaken about the facts, the agent thought he had a reason for acting when he did not actually have one. Playing with these two senses of "reason", we can say the agent had a reason for acting as he did and he did not have a reason for acting as he did.

The truth of the statement that the agent had a reason to drink requires that both senses be satisfied according to Williams. Therefore, since the drinker's

action was not justified he did not have reason to drink. In fact, the agent was not simply lacking a reason to drink, he had a reason not to drink. There is a true IRS to the effect that the agent has reason not to drink the solution -- a very strong reason. (An unknown fact's relevance to the agent's actions "has to be fairly close and immediate" in order to give rise to a reason, according to Williams. The relevance can't be much closer or more immediate than it is in this case.)

Having a very strong reason to refrain from drinking and no reason to drink might appear to provide justification for calling the agent's action irrational if he drinks. But common sense considers rationality of actions to be more closely tied to the agent's actual knowledge than reasons for action are. An agent can have reasons for acting (or refraining from acting as in the above case) without being aware of them. He is not generally considered irrational however for failing to act in accordance with reasons of which he is unaware. So the agent drinking the petrol is not considered irrational despite his strong reasons to refrain from drinking. (We might wish to criticize him for not checking more carefully before drinking, but perhaps not if the petrol was in a container closely resembling the one that usually holds gin.)

So common sense does not tie rationality of action to reasons for action, only to known reasons. This is of interest because in writing that the externalist interpretation of reasons requires accepting that an agent who ignores ERS's is irrational,[25] Williams implies that the external reasons theorist links the concept of rationality of action to that of reasons for action. If this is so, then externalist theories would differ in a significant way from common sense, a thesis that I am disputing. At several points later I will argue that the external reasons theorist need not tie rationality of action to simply having reasons for acting. Reasons for action and judgments of rationality in acting can satisfactorily be allowed to run somewhat separate courses.

We might ask here however whether, given his other views, Williams can sever reasons for action and rationality of action as ordinary language usage appears to. If reasons for action are not completely relative to what the agent knows, why should the rationality of his actions be relative in that way? Williams gives no reason; he simply adopts the common sense view that one is not irrational if one is unaware of the relevant facts. Perhaps common usage is the only justification Williams can give for separating reasons and rationality of action. But it would be preferable from Williams' point of view if there were another justification. If common

usage is the only one then Williams cannot complain if common usage separates reasons that the agent has not only from his actual knowledge, but also from his actual projects and desires (his S).

Since these speculations arose from noting the different and competing uses to which the word "reason" is put, it is worth noting a third use of "reason" in addition to the motivation-related and justificatory uses already mentioned. This is the use of "reason" to indicate cause. Williams refers to this use when he writes of unconscious motives as the reason for an agent's action. For example, we might say, "The reason he treats his children so badly is because he was abused as a child," and thereby refer to unconscious motives or motivations with the same word that we employ in indicating factors in an agent's careful deliberations. Ordinary language therefore links causal accounts, explanations based on motivation, and justification (the "there is a reason" types of cases). Is it any wonder that there are vast differences of opinion about what we can and cannot legitimately say with regard to reasons and when an agent has reasons?

Section 3

In "Part B" of Williams' argument parallels appear

between Williams' beliefs regarding the operation of unknown facts in giving rise to reasons and his view of the operation of ERS's. Williams says an unknown fact can give rise to a reason for acting if it is closely and immediately related to the agent's actions -- which seems to mean, as in the gin/petrol case, that if he knew this fact the agent would see he has reason to act (differently) and would be motivated to act accordingly. This appears to serve as Williams' model for interpreting reasons that fail to motivate the agent. An ERS that cannot be expressed as an IRS does not motivate the agent. Therefore if it does provide a reason somehow, says Williams, it must do so because the agent would be motivated to act if he came to know/believe it (just as an unknown reason would motivate him if the facts became apparent to him). But once he believes the ERS and becomes motivated, an IRS is possible and the ERS is unnecessary.

Specifically, steps (6) and (7) establish that for an ERS something more than a simple belief in its truth is needed to explain action, "some psychological link", and grant the plausibility of the idea that "believing that a particular consideration is a reason to act in a particular way provide[s], or indeed constitute[s], a motivation to act."[26] But, because a motivation to act is now present, an IRS can be made about the agent (step

8). Hence, it appears that external reasons are simply reasons that, if the agent believes them or comes to believe them, are or become internal reasons. An agent may come to believe an ERS because (a.) she becomes aware of a motivation in her S of which she was previously unconscious or (b.) she becomes aware of the connection between an ERS and the contents of her S or (c.) she only now becomes aware of the ERS itself or only now comes to believe it.

Therefore, on Williams' view, if we knew A was incapable of being motivated in certain ways and hence certain IRS's could never be true of her, then the related ERS's would not apply to her either. They are irrelevant. From the internal perspective that Williams adopts, external reasons that cannot already be expressed as IRS's can, at best, be potential internal reasons that have not yet been internal-ized due to ignorance of the facts, lack of self-awareness, or not realizing that there are other motives rationally related to the motives one already has. Because they have not been internalized, such reasons are useless in explaining action and explaining action is Williams' criterion of reasons for action.

Recall that statement (7) grants the plausibility of the idea that, for an agent, coming to believe there is

reason for him to do ø can generate or "constitute" some motivation to do it. Coming to believe such a statement involves acquiring a new motivation somehow. There can be no such thing as A believing there is a reason for him to ø and not feeling that he has some motive that will be furthered by ø-ing. So one cannot believe external reason statements without transforming them into internal reason statements (loosely speaking).

This conclusion about reasons parallels a conclusion Frankena has attacked regarding obligations. According to Frankena it is always open to an agent to say, "I see that I have an obligation to ø, but why should I?" In other words, an agent can believe he has an obligation to ø without being motivated to fulfill that obligation. Again, somewhat differently, he writes, "A man who is seeking to determine if he has a duty to do a certain deed need not look to see if he has any motives for doing it, and he cannot claim that he does not have the duty simply on the ground that he finds no supporting motivation."[27]

If we grant Frankena's point that a man may admit to an obligation and still ask, "But why should I?", is it so bizarre to say, "I see that I have a reason to do ø, but so what? . . . I have no desire to be rational"? In both cases the question may be interpreted as admitting there is some kind of justification for doing ø (moral,

rational, or whatever), and indicating that that type of justification does not move the agent. For example, one might say, "I know I have reason to paint my house; it really looks atrocious. But frankly, I don't care."

Although such a position may seem more plausible in the case in which a moral or aesthetic justification is presented than it does with other types of reasons for acting, the arguments of Dostoyevsky's protagonist in Notes from Underground do much to undermine such a belief, an issue taken up in Chapter Seven. If it is possible to say, "I know that I have reason to ø, but I don't care," then we should not accept (7) of Williams's argument which claims that believing that one has a reason to act "provide[s]" or "constitute[s]" a motivation to act.[28]

An alternative possibility is that Williams' claim is largely correct but that its truth is based on a fact about human psychology and not on the logic of reasons. And, as such, it would not be a telling point against the external reasons theorist. It would mean that, while in practice there is no significant difference between a believed ERS and the corresponding IRS, the two are not logically the same or equivalent. Perhaps we tend to believe there is no difference because the grounds supporting the ERS are grounds that would make doing ø a

good thing (or at least prima facie a good thing on some scale of value -- moral, self-interested, aesthetic, etc.) and people are constructed so as generally to care about such things. Then coming to believe this kind of statement might not always provide motivation, but it would be natural to assume it does.

If Williams' point cannot be so construed, then it is not clear why we should accept his view that having some motivation to act is to be considered logically part of believing a reasons statement. Why should we think that having motivation is part of the meaning of believing a reasons statement? We do tend to focus on action (or even dispositions to act or motivations) as standards of judgment, saying disparagingly of someone, "Well, he says he believes it, but since he never shows the slightest inclination to act on it I don't think he does." We also judge individuals' motives by resulting actions. However, this may be due to epistemological considerations -- it is hard to know how to obtain knowledge of an agent's motives otherwise. But as the case of Cheryl and the art history lectures made clear, lack of action does not imply lack of motive(s). Likewise the agent who never acts on a particular belief B may really believe but because B generates weak motives for him we can never be sure he believes (and are inclined to think that he does not).

In brief, what Williams says about belief in reason statements constituting motivation for acting appears to be true if we focus only on motivating reasons and exclude consideration of other sorts. And even Williams himself does not want to do that. He requires that reasons must both motivate and justify.

Williams continues in Part B with (9) which claims, based on his earlier points, that the content of ERS's "is not going to be revealed by considering merely the state of one who believes such a statement, nor how that state explains action, for that state is merely the state with regard to which an internal reasons statement could truly be made." Although it is not exactly clear what Williams means here, it does not seem that the external reasons theorist should have any difficulty in agreeing that the content of an ERS will not be revealed by considering the state of someone who believes it. He will differ with Williams only as to <u>why</u> that is true. The ERS theorist will not agree that believing an ERS and having an IRS be true about oneself are necessarily the same. From the externalist perspective, examining what it is to come to believe an ERS will not be expected to show some motivation being acquired.

Furthermore, the ERS theorist should certainly balk at accepting (10) which says that "the <u>content</u> of the

external type of statement will have to be revealed by considering what it is to come to believe such a statement." This is a peculiar claim. Why should the content of a statement be revealed by considering what it is to come to believe it? If we were trying to reveal the content of the statement, "My new sweater is green, not blue," questioning what it is to come to believe such a statement would be a backwards kind of approach. Considering the meanings of the words and concepts involved would certainly be more appropriate.

Williams' reply to this will be that since ERS's and IRS's differ yet the meanings of the words and concepts in an ERS are the same as in an IRS, to find the difference we must look elsewhere such as how one comes to believe the statements. Furthermore, it is unreasonable to expect statements of practical reason to operate in the same way as statements of plain fact.

Williams' position that the content of a believed ERS would be discovered by considering what it is to come to believe it assumes that a believed ERS involves motivation. If I say, "I ought to help my mother until she recovers from her injuries," do we figure out my meaning by examining what it is for me to come to believe this? Such a claim is not completely implausible. But suppose I add to the statement so that it reads, "I ought to help my mother until she recovers from her injuries, but I

don't want to so I won't." Examining what it is to come to believe this statement will tell us something, but it is surely a peculiar way to determine its content.

Williams is correct in claiming that motivation is typically thought to have something to do with pronouncements of practical reason. And it is true that motivation will not be revealed by an examination of the meanings of the words in a statement. But a statement's connection with motivation may arise from contexts of utterance; it may not be a connection required by the logic of the concepts but one that we assume is there because in the kinds of situations in which someone makes a statement such as those above there is some motivation present. It is not logically necessary that it be there, but it is practically necessary. This idea will be taken up in more detail in a later chapter.

Section 4

Williams continues in "Part C" with the claim that for the external reasons theorist, "the agent should acquire the motivation because he comes to believe the reason statement, and ... he should do the latter, moreover, because, in some way, he is considering the matter aright."[29] But once again, it is only necessary to accept this if one accepts that believing an ERS consti-

tutes or produces motivation. This initially appears plausible in the case of an ERS giving a prudential reason, but, according to Nagel, not even here is this necessarily an accurate description of what occurs. If the agent in question is considering the matter aright he may come to believe the (prudential) reason statement and come to have a desire to act on it, but the desire may be motivated by the same reasons as the belief so "the desire obviously cannot be among the conditions for the presence of those reasons."[30] There may be no independently intelligible desire (an issue taken up in Chapter Three).

Statement (13) again relies on the necessity of motivation and (14) and (15) follow from it. If Williams is correct about the role of motivation, then all is well. If not, then this part of the argument suffers accordingly.

Claim (16) is worth examining independently. It says that from the external reasons theorist's point of view, an agent who ignores external reasons statements is not just "inconsiderate, or cruel, or selfish, or imprudent" -- he is <u>irrational</u>. The assumption here is that, if there is a reason to do ø, then not doing ø is irrational. However, the external reasons theorist might claim that although there are reasons for acting morally, an agent who refrains from acting on them, choosing self-

interested reasons instead, is not acting irrationally if the reasons she acts on are strong enough. Reasons that are not the best or the weightiest may be good enough to keep one's action from being labeled irrational.

Consider the different senses in which "irrational" is used. Bond writes, "Unfortunately the expression 'rational act' is sometimes used, confusingly to mean 'rationally motivated act' and yet again to mean 'rationally grounded act.'"[31] "A rationally motivated act is one done on the basis of what one takes to be a reason; such an act is rationally grounded when one is not mistaken in one's belief, i.e. when one really has the reason one thinks one has."[32] So there are at least four senses in which we may call an act "rational" according to Bond:

1. when it is not "stupid, senseless or crazy" -- Bond calls this the "primary sense"[33]

2. when it is rationally motivated (even if not rationally grounded, as when I run out of a building because I think it is on fire, but it turns out that I was mistaken),

3. when it is rationally grounded,

or 4. when it is rationally justified, "i.e., where a reason or reasons not only exist(s), but is (are) sufficient to determine that the act is, all things considered, one to do or to have done."[34]

Consider how these distinctions might be applied to

the question whether ignoring an external reason is irrational. Suppose doing ø should be avoided because it causes serious harm to several people and little benefit to the agent. From this an ERS can be generated. If the agent has nothing (or little) in his subjective motivational set that would provide him with a motive for not doing ø, then for him to ignore the moral reason against doing ø is not "stupid, senseless or crazy" (sense #1 of "irrational") and there does not seem to be any reason why the external reasons theorist must claim it is. Furthermore, ignoring the ERS is "rational" in the second sense of "rationally motivated" in that he perceives there is a little benefit to himself in acting otherwise and proceeds on that basis. Therefore an agent who does ø despite reasons against it need not be irrational in this second sense. He is rationally motivated -- he has a goal and is taking the necessary means to achieve it. So, neither sense #1 or #2 support Williams's claim (16) that, for an external reasons theorist, an agent who ignores an ERS must be irrational.

Sense #3 of "rational" is "rationally grounded". In this sense of "rational", my action may not be rational because the beliefs on which my action is based are not true. The agent who sees smoke and runs out of the building thinking it is on fire is not acting rationally in this third sense if it turns out that the building was

not on fire. It is irrelevant here whether the agent had good reasons for believing that the building was on fire -- she may have heard alarms, smelled smoke, and seen the fire department trucks roaring up on the front lawn, but if there was no fire then she was acting irrationally. On this interpretation of "rational", every time I act on an incorrect assessment of the situation (whether it is my assessment of "the facts" or of the values involved that is mistaken), I act irrationally.

Although this third interpretation supports Williams' point, I suggest Bond errs in this interpretation of rationality, and therefore it cannot be used to show that the external reasons theorist must claim that the person who acts wrongly is irrational. In Bond's favor here it might be admitted that we sometimes say things such as, "The rational act to perform in that situation is ø, but I don't know if John has enough sense (or knows enough about the situation) to realize it." This use of "rational" could be understood in Bond's third sense, but we would not call John irrational for not doing ø under these circumstances. We would be more likely to regard him as ignorant or even stupid. If the act is rationally grounded but the agent has no way of knowing that, we would not consider him irrational for not acting appropriately. If there is plenty of rather

readily available evidence to the effect that the action is rationally grounded then we might consider it irrational for the agent to act otherwise, but we're more likely to call him irrational for ignoring the evidence and even then, "irrational" is a less likely epithet than "short-sighted," "ignorant," "insensitive," etc. Curiously, Bond himself admits that a person who ignores reasons of type (3) and (4) is not necessarily irrational because he may simply be ignorant of those reasons. However, this admission does not go far enough because the individual who hears alarms, sees fire trucks and thinks he smells smoke seems to be doing the only rational thing in leaving the building. It's not just that he's not irrational due to ignorance, but to act otherwise than he did would be irrational.

However, Williams is not concerned with cases based on ignorance. Williams is concerned with cases in which the agent is aware of the reasons. So what it comes down to is that John thinks there are reasons for doing ø (i.e., he is aware of the relevant ERS statements) and it is the case that the reasons John believes he has really are reasons for doing ø (the reasons are not based on false beliefs as in the gin and petrol case). For John to do ø then would be for John to act rationally. So far, no problem. However, Williams states that the ERS theorist must hold that if John does not do ø in these

circumstances then John is acting irrationally. This need not follow however even if we could formulate IRS's relating John to ø because of the possibility of rational supererogation.

The idea of rational supererogation comes by analogy from the idea of moral supererogation. In morality many people will accept the idea that some actions are supererogatory -- they are not morally required but are actually "above and beyond the call of duty." One can do less and still be acting morally. Slote argues that the same is true of rationality, that "our ordinary thinking about rationality is sometimes tolerant of less than rationally optimal choices and thereby treats optimal choices as supererogatory."[35] The idea here is that there are degrees of rationality. Therefore, although an agent might know that the most rational thing for him to do is to tell off his boss and to do it in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear, that may be so difficult to do that if he manages simply to confront the boss and "express his opinion in conversational tones" he has done well enough.[36] Although it would have been more rational given the situation and the agent's values to tell the boss off more loudly, that may be too much to expect. Doing so would then be rationally supererogatory.

The man telling off his boss is not someone simply

satisfied with less than the best outcome; he desired to optimize but found he could not carry it off. Nevertheless, it appears to him afterwards that what he did was pretty good -- it was something he had good reason to do; he certainly wasn't acting irrationally even though he did not do what he had most reason to do (confront the boss loudly).

If Slote's analysis here of the possibility of rational supererogation is correct, then it shows that ignoring good reasons for acting or even the best (all-things-considered) reasons is not enough by itself to show that an agent is acting irrationally and the external reasons theorist can take advantage of this to avoid Williams' charge.

Returning to Bond's suggested senses of "rational", similar considerations apply to sense #4, that an act is rational when it is "rationally justified," "i.e., where a reason or reasons not only exist(s), but is (are) sufficient to determine that the act is, all things considered, one to do or to have done."[37] If an agent who is aware of the justification does not do the rationally justified act it does not necessarily follow that he is acting irrationally because of the phenomenon of rational supererogation. What he does may be "good enough" not to be considered irrational without being the act that is best all things considered.

Hence, contrary to Williams' criticism, on externalist views an agent who ignores external reasons is not necessarily irrational even if we allow that believing external reasons gives rise to motivation.

Much of Williams' argument in "Part C" relies on the difficulty in understanding the idea that coming to believe an ERS must involve acquiring a new motivation. As we have seen, there are problems with this strategy. One is that coming to believe the ERS has not been shown to require the acquisition of new motivation. However, since the assumption is frequently made, arguments against it will be taken up in later chapters. In Chapters Three and Four, we will address the additional suggestion that even if coming to believe an ERS does enable an IRS to be made about the agent, that IRS may not be based on any independently intelligible desire.

Section 5

There is one further step worth looking at in Williams' argument. The external reasons theorist must show that the words "A has a reason to ø" or "There is a reason for A to ø" mean something different when used by someone who makes a false reasons statement (for example, Wingrave Sr.), as Williams puts it:

> from what they mean when they are, as he [the external reasons theorist] supposes, truly

> uttered. But what they mean when uttered by Wingrave is almost certainly <u>not</u> that rational deliberation would get Owen to be motivated to join the army -- which is (very roughly) the meaning or implication we have found for them, if they are to bear the kind of weight such theorists wish to give them.[38]

In the example, which Williams has adopted from Henry James, Wingrave Senior thinks his son Owen should enter the army and "urges on him the necessity and importance of his joining the army, since all his male ancestors were soldiers, and family pride requires him to do the same."[39] Family pride and its demands are here offered as the reasons for Owen to enter the army. But, Owen has no interest in this course of action; it is, in fact, repugnant to him.

Williams claims this causes a problem for the external reasons theorist. Williams' basic idea (I assume) is that the ERS given by Wingrave Sr. would not generally be accepted by external reasons theorists as giving a reason for Owen to act against his own interests. The ERS is false. Given Owen's interests and life-plans, it is simply not true that Owen <u>has</u> a reason to enter the army or that <u>there is</u> reason for Owen to enter the army. Those statements must be shown by the external reasons theorist, Williams claims, to mean something different when used by Wingrave Sr. than they would mean if they were correctly used.

Consider this charge that the external reasons

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theorist must account for the difference in meaning the words "A has a reason to ø" and "There is a reason for A to ø" have when truly uttered from the meaning they have when uttered by Wingrave Sr. Surely the words do not mean anything different when the statement is false from what they mean when it is true? The proposition expressed by the words is false, but the words have the same meaning.

When a political campaigner says, "I will win the election next November," the words mean the same thing regardless of the truth of the statement. The campaigner may use the statement (as Wingrave Sr. appears to) in order to convince someone to act in a particular way. He could be using the words to express the sentiment that he intends to do everything he can to bring about victory and expects everyone else to do the same regardless of polls and predictions. Nevertheless, the meaning of the statement "I will win in November" is not affected. Williams ignores the distinction between meaning and use. It seems that what the ERS theorist actually needs to explain is why some ERS's are false and others are true.

Such an explanation must rely on values and the relative importances of various pursuits and not the meanings of the words. For example, in the above case, Wingrave Sr. may be expressing the belief that upholding

the family tradition is of more value than pursuing one's own individual wants and desires. The external reasons theorist (along with the rest of us) may well think Wingrave's reason claim is false because family pride is usually not taken to be worth the sacrifice of one's major goals and projects (except under highly unusual circumstances -- members of a royal family may have more reason for acting in that way than the rest of us perhaps). At other times in history this may have been a more controversial claim, but from our perspective such a reason statement appears false -- deliberation on our way of life and what is important would not support such an evaluation. (One of the topics to be taken up in a later chapter is the importance of our shared form of life to reason judgments.)

And, even if an external reasons theorist must maintain that rational deliberation (and the requisite knowledge of how things are) would get the agent to believe the ERS, we have seen that this may not imply that accompanying motivation would be generated. There are two possible reasons for this. One relies on the phenomenon of rational supererogation discussed above. If Wingrave's statement were true and yielded a reason "sufficient to determine that the act is, all things considered, one to do or to have done,"[40] then if Owen deliberated rationally he should come to see that he has

reason to join the army. But if Owen cares only about doing what is "good enough," then knowing that all-things-considered it would be best if he joined the army may not motivate him at all. In other words, although Owen accepts the reason statement of his father, the statement may have no motivational force for Owen. And this does not make Owen irrational. It does not seem to be a condition of rationality that one be as rational as possible. Thus, the fact that Owen is indifferent to being so and chooses to do something else does not make him irrational.

The second reason why accepting an ERS may not generate any motivation comes from Dostoyevsky's Notes from Underground. This will be taken up later, but the protagonist there argues that acknowledging the best reasons for acting could motivate an agent to do something quite different because sometimes agents are rationally perverse. Such an agent would probably be considered irrational, but nevertheless, the agent can accept a reason statement without being motivated by it. In fact, Dostoyevsky's protagonist argues that many or most of us are perverse in this way at times.

Another question to consider is whether rational deliberation is the correct model for an external reasons theorist to use in describing how an agent comes to

accept or to acknowledge an external reasons statement. Perhaps an agent needs not only to deliberate but also needs to be willing to look around for new reasons and consider them seriously as reasons for acting (before accepting or rejecting them). Since decisions about reasons and actions deal in values and in questions of the importance of various options, considering reasons in this way would have to mean something like "trying them on," and not simply seeing if they match up with motivations, reasons, or projects that one already has. McDowell uses a model of sight or perception in discussing reasons. One "sees" that there is a reason for a particular action, one does not necessarily deduce it from other facts and reasons. This may be useful (as we shall see later).

The external reasons theorist might say this type of interpretation better describes what Wingrave meant by his statement to Owen -- that if Owen would think seriously about his actions and try to see what's really important in the situation, he will realize that he ought to go into the army. Owen is not seeing the value in that option. The fact that we think Wingrave is wrong is based on the fact that we disagree with Wingrave's implicit value claim.

Taking this sort of model rather than the model of rational deliberation would put us in agreement with

Williams -- at least in his claim that rational deliberation cannot be the right model for the method of coming to apprehend ERS's (or at least not in every case). Rather than the idea that careful thought will enable one to reach the right conclusion about what should be done, it seems rather that paying careful attention will yield the best results. And, just as on the former model, one could not reach the right conclusion without certain premises or facts being available to one, on the latter model, one must have certain capacities, sensitivities, and perhaps the habit of paying attention to particular types of things.

The externalist cannot provide the motivation Williams requires for a reason for action without a psychological theory. With such a theory he might be able to make a contingent connection between reasons and motivation. Williams thinks this shows that ERS's do not give reasons unless IRS's can be made from them and therefore are unnecessary. But an ERS may be said to apply to an agent for whom an IRS will later be appropriate at times when that IRS cannot correctly be ascribed. If so, ERS's serve at least one purpose.

Frankena's summing up of the internalism/externalism problem with regard to moral obligation seems relevant to the question of reasons for acting as well. Frankena

writes:

> Externalism ... in seeking to keep the obligation to act in certain ways independent of the vagaries of individual motivation, runs the risk that motivation may not always be present, let alone adequate, but internalism, in insisting on building in motivation, runs the corresponding risk of having to trim obligation to the size of individual motives.[41]

It appears true that if we are exclusively concerned with the actions of agents and explaining why they acted, then ERS's will not be of much use to us. After all, if the agent acted, then some motivation obviously was present and insofar as the agent acted for a reason at all, we can formulate an internal reason statement to explain his action. For such purposes, when no motivation is generated, it is irrelevant that there is an ERS because the agent will not be acting on it.

However, if we are concerned with what might have been or ought to have been, then we have some use for ERS's. Williams himself admits that unknown facts and unknown motives may sometimes be closely enough related to the agent's projects that they generate reasons in the sense that the agent has a reason for acting. Perhaps that could also be stretched to include motives or even values the agent does not have now but will have shortly. Especially if these are important motives and values it may not be bizarre to say that they give the agent reason for acting. And then we might ask: what about motives

that will not arise until sometime further in the future? Once facts and motives not currently available or present in the agent's consciousness are admitted to give him reason to act, this may be stretched much further than Williams would like, as we shall see.

Conclusion

This chapter, as noted earlier, does not aim to prove Williams wrong. It is intended to cast doubt on Williams' conclusion that ERS's "when definitely isolated as such, are false, or incoherent, or really something else misleadingly expressed" and to propose some questions and problems for Williams' position which will be dealt with more completely in the following chapters. Suggestions to be considered include: (1) the idea that since obligations provide reasons for acting apart from motivation, reasons can as well (especially reasons based on obligation); (2) that context of utterance is more crucial to the belief that reasons require motivation than the logic of reasons is; (3) that motivation is so closely connected to reasons because of the way people are rather than because of the logic of reasons; (4) that motivation intelligible independently from the grounds that justify the reason statement and believing it may not always be possible or necessary; (5) that rational deliberation is not the correct model for an agent to

acquire new reasons; and (6) that ignoring ERS's need not be irrational. Our tendency to accept theories of rationality which prejudice us in favor of internalism even though there are other acceptable theories will also be examined as well as the idea that internalism unnecessarily restricts our metaphysical view of ourselves as agents.

Chapter Two

Reasons, Obligations, and Consistency

Obligations seem capable of externalist interpretation and, if they always gave rise to reasons for acting such reasons would be external reasons. However, although it is natural to assume that there is some connection between obligations and reasons for acting, it is not easy to argue that obligations universally give rise to reasons for acting. Still, it appears some ways of undertaking obligations give rise to external reasons for acting. In particular, making a promise in good faith will, along with considerations of consistency over time, create reasons for acting that need not presuppose any connection to the agent's subjective motivational set.

Section 1

"Ordinary moral consciousness" (to use Williams' phrase) assumes that obligations or duties do not always motivate the agent to whom they apply.[1] As Frankena writes, "A man seeking to determine if he has a duty to do a certain deed need not look to see if he has any motives for doing it, and he cannot claim that he does not have the duty simply on the ground that he finds no

supporting motivation."[2] There is nothing odd about a man acknowledging an obligation and at the same time wondering why, in terms of motives, he should fulfill it. For example, "I can see that I have an obligation to pay my library fines, but why should I?"

"'Why should I ...?' and 'Why ought I ...?' are ambiguous questions," Frankena points out. "They may be asking for an ethical justification of the action proposed, or they may be asking what motives there are for his [the agent's] doing it."[3] In fact, there is a third possible interpretation -- the agent could be requesting a rational justification of the action proposed. Such a justification need not be the same as an ethical justification or a simple request for motives -- for example, we have seen that for rational justification Williams requires the inclusion of both appropriate motives and appropriate beliefs regarding the situation (an agent who desires gin has no reason to drink petrol even if he believes it is gin). Obviously, depending upon whether one takes oneself to be responding to a request for ethical justification, rational justification, or motivational factors, different replies will be offered to the agent's request "Why ought I ...?"

According to Frankena an agent can accept that there are reasons for believing that he has an obligation and

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that acting on it would be right and yet feel no inclination to perform the action. Ordinary moral consciousness seems to agree with Frankena there; it maintains, for example, that parents are obligated to take care of their children and that this obligation is independent of particular motives or inclinations on the parents' part. Ordinary moral consciousness also holds that once someone has made a promise he has an obligation to fulfill it apart from consideration of motives he might have at the time the promise comes due.

Not everyone accepts an external interpretation of obligations. In Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy Williams argues that if we are to use the concept of obligation at all (which he advises we do not), the concept should be relativized to the agent's projects because obligations are connected to reasons for acting. Leaving aside these arguments for the present, let us examine the implications of Frankena's position for internal and external reasons theories.

Obviously accepting external interpretations of obligations need cause no difficulties for internal reasons theorists unless it is possible to show that some obligations automatically provide agents with reasons for acting. Obligations voluntarily incurred (through promising for example) are perhaps most likely to yield this result.

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Insofar as it is an intentional act, the act of making the promise is explainable in terms of the agent's motives and projects and is therefore susceptible to an internalist interpretation. However, the obligation thereby created need not be permanently linked to the agent's projects. By the time the promise comes due, the same motives or projects may no longer be part of the agent's subjective motivational set. Then the internal connection is gone, but the obligation is not. In this situation, any reasons that arise from the obligation must be external reasons for the agent.

Consider an ordinary case of promising. I feel sorry for Ted, a co-worker, whose car needs major and expensive repairs so I promise him a ride home from work for the next three days while his car is in the shop. I thereby create an obligation to give Ted a ride which does not depend on the continuation of my feelings of compassion for Ted. My spoken promise is not taken by myself or by others to mean that I will help Ted out for the next three days as long as I continue to feel sorry for him. If on the third day I am tired and irritable and want nothing more than to go straight home to bed, I still have a moral obligation to Ted. No examination of my motives, projects, or inclinations is necessary to reach this conclusion.

I want to argue that having this obligation gives me a reason to act in a certain way. There is an external reason statement which applies to me in this situation and this reason statement is not synonymous with the claim that I have a moral reason for acting or that giving Ted a ride is the morally correct action in these circumstances. The reason is based on the obligation or on the way in which I undertook it.

From the perspective of ordinary consciousness it is not implausible or unusual to maintain that I have reason to give Ted the ride I promised but perhaps this is simply a reference to the moral reason and no other. Alternatively, an internalist might object that although I have a not-specifically-moral reason to fulfill my promise, the reason is not based simply on the fact that I have an obligation to Ted. It is based instead on one of the following considerations (either in conjunction with the moral concerns or apart from them) and any one of the following can provide an escape from the conclusion that it is possible to judge that an agent has reason for acting without examining her motivational set. These considerations are:

(1) In general I care about keeping promises despite the fact that I want to renege on this one, or, more generally,

(2) the obligation in question is the result of an action of mine that is in keeping with my overall projects, character, etc., or,

(3) I took on this obligation voluntarily and to give it up now would be inconsistent and therefore possibly irrational (which, as a rational agent, I must want to avoid).

Actually all three of the conditions rely on considerations of consistency in some way -- (1) consistency of what I care about, (2) consistency of character and projects, and (3) consistency of intention. Regarding the first two, if it is either the fact that this obligation is in keeping with what I usually care about or with my overall character that provides the basis for my having a reason to give Ted a ride, then the internalist might claim a more or less direct connection to my subjective motivational set based on those conditions. It is important to note though that this move relies on viewing my uncharacteristic current desires and resulting intentions as a kind of a fluke, a temporary aberration of sorts that is not really part of the essential me. The fact that at this point I care nothing about keeping my promise to Ted or maintaining a certain kind of character is, for all practical purposes, ignored. The idea seems to be that my more typical state (of character and of concern for my projects) gives me reasons to act even if I am not in that state at this time.

This is one way to view individuals acting "out of character," but a different perspective on human nature might ask whether it really is the case that any devia-

tions from my ordinary behavior patterns are somehow "not really me." And, even if it is not "the real me," should I regard desires unlike my ordinary ones as not giving me reasons for acting? Even if we say such desires only yield reasons if there is no conflict with any of my more common reasons for acting, the result is disturbing. Perhaps we should not so quickly gloss over desires to act in unusual ways.

Given the complexities of human behavior and human desires, the internal reasons theorist should not be allowed to get away so easily with saying that I have a reason for acting because my current desire to break a promise is "not really me" and that my general project of keeping promises provides a connection to my subjective motivational set and a reason for acting. For one thing, I have explicitly repudiated my general project of promise-keeping. For another, since our idea of a person's character (and even of our own) is a generalization of sorts, the answer seems too pat. Besides, in the opposite kind of case, the case in which my general character does not care about keeping promises, we would not want to say that that provides a reason <u>against</u> keeping my promise to Ted. Characters do not give rise to reasons on their own; rather, we attribute specific characters to individuals because of the reasons on which

they generally act.

Since (3) from above does not involve consistency based on generalizations regarding my projects or character but simply consistency of intentions, it seems likely to fare better than (1) or (2). It says: I took on this obligation voluntarily and to give it up now would be inconsistent and therefore possibly irrational (which, as a rational agent, I must want to avoid). Since I promised in good faith to give Ted a ride and had every intention of fulfilling the obligation voluntarily created thereby, it would be irrational of me to change my intention now without some serious reason to do so. Although my feelings of compassion for Ted stimulated me to make the offer, they do not thereby become part of my intention. Consequently, the fact that I do not feel like fulfilling my obligation is an irrelevant consideration.

Since consistency of intention forms some crucial part of rationality -- an agent who maintained no consistency with regard to her projects would surely be considered irrational -- in this case I may be rationally obligated to do what I am also morally obligated to do. If so, I have a reason for acting which is not dependent on my subjective motivational set and consequently, is an external reason. So instead of helping the internal reasons theorist save his position, consist-

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ency of intention aids the externalist instead.

The internal reasons theorist might try to save his position by claiming that my reason for action is connected to my subjective motivational set through my original performance of making a promise which was capable of internal explanation. Notice how much the resulting claims resemble those an external reasons theorist might make however. I have consciously rejected the project I took on earlier. I am no longer concerned about helping Ted out and am not bothered by failing to keep my promise. If I have a reason now that is connected to my subjective motivational set then the connection must be a rather tenuous one or must be based on the kinds of considerations mentioned above about my overall character and general projects and behavior. Since, as we have seen, there are difficulties with the character/projects approach it is unlikely to provide a satisfactory or reliable basis for the internalist's position.

On the other hand, the considerations of consistency of intention which appear to help the external reasons theorist support his view do not provide unproblematic support for that either. After all, we surely do not want to maintain that individuals can never change their intentions without being irrational, or that agents

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always have reason to act on intentions formed in the past about which they no longer care. So, it is necessary to ask: When is such consistency required?

We noted above that someone who is always inconsistent would surely be considered irrational. But this may only imply that an agent need to be generally consistent regarding his intentions and therefore, in any particular case, consistency of intention need not provide reasons for him to act. Consistency of intention is perhaps only relevant to long-term tendencies and the sorts of reasons that one might have for attending to those, but not to acting in the one case at hand. (As Emerson said, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.")

The generalization that consistency only applies to long-term tendencies may be too simple as well, however. Consider the following case. Suppose I intend to put together the best possible collection of pig mugs (mugs with pigs portrayed on them) and work rather hard on this in my spare time for several years, visiting novelty shops, combing obscure catalogues, etc. There will be times during these years when I am not as "gung-ho" on my project as I am at other times, sometimes due to more pressing concerns or because fatigue may cause a temporary lull in my interest and activity. And, it may be that once in a while I just do not feel as interested in the project. Overall, though, suppose I am so persistent

in my project that one might call me a devoted collector of such mugs.

Can I then pass up a chance to obtain a good mug or two for no reason (such as financial difficulties or pressing business) without being irrational? Skipping such an opportunity would certainly be prime evidence of inconsistency of intention but I'm not sure whether we would call my act (or non-act) irrational. Given the zeal with which I attack the project most of the time, we may be tempted to say it is irrational of me to pass up a good mug without reason. (In actual practice we may attempt to come up with an explanation that will make sense of my behavior and escape the charge of irrationality. "She's not feeling well" or "She is distracted by her work/the state of her love life" are possibilities. However, these explanations may not apply -- I may simply have lost interest temporarily.)

Even though in this case the rationality of the overall project seems significantly more dependent on desire than the project of keeping promises does, my answer that I "just don't feel like it" when passing up a good mug is not satisfying. Looking only at the immediate moment, and given that I don't feel like pursuing the project now, my specific lack of action may not appear irrational, but then my lack of desire must itself appear

inconsistent and irrational (given my desires, intentions, and projects the rest of the time). Unless I have abandoned the project altogether for some reason, reason seems to require that I pick up a good mug that is easily obtainable. When the original intention was formed, I had a desire to have the best collection. Now I no longer have the desire but my originally formed intention was certainly not formulated as, "I will work at having the best collection during the moments that I so desire." The intention itself was not made dependent on maintaining the desire in this fashion. In fact, since in any long-term project relevant desires tend to wax and wane, we probably would not want to make the reasons to which the intention gives rise rely on explicit desires that must always be present at the time when action is indicated.

If this is the case and if consistency of intention is a requirement of rationality, then I have reason to go on collecting mugs and to keep my promises even at times when there is no current connection with my subjective motivational set. I may be interested in these projects again in the future but am not now, so my reasons for acting in these cases are really external reasons.

If the objection is made here that, in this case at least, any reason for acting based on consistency has to do only with long-term tendencies then it could be main-

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tained that I do not necessarily have a reason to act in any particular situation when a mug is available but only a reason generally to obtain mugs. This does not seem adequate though given the nature of my original intention or project. That intention entailed not letting a good mug be missed. If my intention had been merely to form a fairly good collection rather than the best possible, then the results would have been different.

Michael Slote has suggested that perhaps changing one's intentions or projects suddenly for no good reason is also irrational. For example, suppose I suddenly lose interest in collecting pig mugs altogether. Slote suggests that even if I weren't going to care in the future (the suggestion made above for why I have reason to purchase a mug even when the desire to do so is lacking), there is something irrational about dropping an interest so suddenly. In other words, there can be irrational transitions in one's choices of projects. If I now no longer care about pig mugs and never will again, the transition I have made is irrational. This irrationality is not relative to my present selection of desires. Given my <u>present</u> desires, abandoning the project is rational. However, given my history, my friends and relatives might well judge it "flighty." Therefore, as a rational agent, I may have reason to continue a project

and to act in accordance with it even when I have no desire to do so. Personally, I am not quite as certain about this case, but it is a possibility and one that works in favor of my line of argument.

Applying these ideas to the promising case yields different results. The general intention or project of keeping promises appears to be more like the intention to form a reasonable mug collection than the intention to form the best collection in the state. Furthermore, it is more like a project that one temporarily loses interest in at times than one that an agent would suddenly drop altogether. If one of my projects has been to be as true to my word as possible, then consistency would seem to require keeping all promises unless serious reasons for doing otherwise obtained. The more relaxed intention of generally keeping one's promises (which may be the intention most individuals actually have) is not so strict in its requirements. With that intention, breaking one not-terribly-important promise is not seen as irrational and my status as a rational agent may not give me reason to act.

Of course I may never have formed any intention about how often I would keep my promises. My specific intention in the situation under discussion was only to help out Ted. Keeping of promises as a general project of mine may be relevant to my reasons for acting but is

it necessarily so? I no longer feel willing to help Ted out and since general promise-keeping considerations were not part of my original project, perhaps it need not be.

To sum up: this discussion has been directed towards examining whether consistency of intention is a requirement of rationality. The promising case made it look as if we might only be able to say that rationality requires consistency in general tendencies in one's behavior or intentions, but that generalization turned out to be too sweeping. The degree of consistency required seems to depend at least in part on the specific intention or project. For some projects, any deviation not based on good reasons may appear irrational. If so, external reasons for acting are present and make sense in the times when the agent no longer has any motive for so acting.

In the promise case there is at least some support for the idea that the agent has a reason for acting which is not specifically connected to her subjective motivational set. To account for this common sense intuition (that in that situation the agent has reason for acting), the internalist must argue that promises are something that connect to her subjective motivational set even in the particular case in which she does not actually care about the promise she has made -- a very strange a claim

for an internalist to be making! Maintaining that a promise gives the agent a reason to act because she usually cares about keeping promises is a case of claiming that she has a reason for acting although she has no motive for performing the particular act under consideration. If rationality does require consistency of intentions over time, then in the case under discussion above my reason for giving Ted a ride is based on that consistency requirement and not on any desires, etc., that I might have. So I have reason to give Ted a ride because if I do not I will be acting irrationally and this is exactly the kind of conclusion that the external reasons theorist wants. So rather than shoring up the internalist position, reliance on consistency accomplishes the opposite. The possibility of external reasons is established and it is also shown that reasons do not necessarily motivate.

Besides the fact that it appears to give rise to external reasons, the internal reason theorist might well avoid considering consistency in intentions and projects a stringent requirement of rationality for a more general reason. As will be discussed later, one of Dostoyevsky's characters argues that human nature cannot stand complete consistency. It's too boring; irrationality is more appealing. If so, the internalist cannot say that consistency requirements necessarily give an agent an inter-

nal reason for acting. The agent might not value consistency, she might value the contrary instead.

It does not appear to me that cases in which agents make false promises can harm the basic arguments here in any way. However, it may show that reasons cannot be claimed to arise from moral obligations alone, at least without substantial further argument. Suppose I falsely promise to give Sam a ride. (I actually have no intention of giving him a ride but only say that I will do so in order to stop his whining about how long it takes him to get home on the bus.) Because of my offer and the fact that Sam accepts it in good faith, I have a moral obligation to help him just as I had a moral obligation to help Ted. However, we might claim in this case that I do not have any reason to help Sam (apart from concerns about how other people will view me, whether his consequent anger with me will affect projects at work that matter to me, etc.). Obviously if I do have a reason to help it cannot be based on considerations of consistency of intention because I never had any intention of fulfilling my [false] promise. Consequently, we may judge I have no reason to help Sam in this case and moral obligation <u>by itself</u> may be irrelevant to reasons for acting.[4]

Perhaps the moral obligation by itself is irrelevant to an evaluation of my reasons if I never intended to

fulfill the obligation I have taken on. Reasons may not be generated by moral obligations that the agent does not incur in good faith. It is, rather, the changing of one's intentions that makes one irrational and not the rejection of an obligation. Once the intention is adopted, the agent has a reason to perform the action regardless of his later subjective motivational set.

If so, then this can establish external reasons. The external reason theorist cannot use it to claim <u>all</u> agents have reason to act morally, but it will take care of any moral obligations that agents accept in good faith (intending to comply). Therefore, for most of us there are cases in which external reason statements referring to reasons for acting morally apply.

As mentioned above, the only objection available to the internal reasons theorist is that since I care in general about being moral, or more specifically, about keeping promises, the reasons statement generated is not actually an external one. However, if I am aware of how my current desire or project conflicts with my overall or general view and can honestly say, "Yes, usually I try to keep promises, but not this one," surely it is perverse to insist that there is a direct connection to my subjective motivational set. After all, I have made an explicit exception in this case and have specifically designated this as a promise I do not care about keeping. The

internalist must fall back on consistency considerations and this leads to a more external interpretation.

Section 2

The internal reasons theorist has at least one more possible arrow in his quiver. He can say that, for the rational agent, reasons can never be external, an agent can never say, "I can see that I have reason to ø, but so what?" because as a rational agent one must care about one's reasons for acting. A rational agent always has motives for paying attention to or acting on reasons because reasons matter to him.

But if we allow this move against external reasons, then it may become impossible to maintain an external interpretation of obligations as well. It would have to be the case that the agent, as a moral agent automatically has some motives for acting on his moral obligations because this is (at least part of) what it means to be a moral agent. The agent is someone to whom moral considerations matter.

However, the internal reasons theorist who does not favor rejecting an externalist interpretation of obligations can reply that there are significant non-parallels between the relation of reasons to the rational agent and obligations to the moral agent. The moral agent may only

have reasons to act on moral obligations insofar as he is a morally good agent. It is not enough simply to be a moral agent, i.e., capable of responding to such claims. But although we do not so often speak of it as such, the term "rational agent" may be used either to refer to an agent capable of responding to reasons or to an agent who does respond to reasons. If we use the term to refer to those capable of responding, whether to moral considerations or to reasons, it is surely open to the agent in question to ask why he should act on such things, the externalist might maintain. A rational agent has internalist-style motives for paying attention to what is rational only inasmuch as he is a good rational agent just as a moral agent has internalist-style motives for paying attention to moral considerations only insofar as he is a good moral agent.

In either case, if he is capable of responding to such concerns, but not in the habit of doing so (i.e., he is not a good moral agent or good rational agent but only one with the capacities for being such), he can ask, "What's it to me?" or something similar. He can ask "Why should I be moral?" or "What's the point of being rational?" In the former he wants to know what reasons there are for fulfilling the moral obligation other than simply because it is an obligation and because he is capable of comprehending and acting on such. And, in the latter

case, he wants to know why it should matter to him that doing ø is rational or supported by reasons. Reason certainly does not rule our actions in every case. Psychologists maintain (and a little reflection on our own actions and those of our fellows will support the claim) that more of our actions are directed by emotion and habit than by reason. An agent can admit without talking nonsense that he doesn't plan to be rational, that he's going to act on whatever whim assails him at the time.

All in all, despite some differences between the obligation and the reasons cases, there seem to be enough similarities that we must either say the agent is able to admit to having either a reason or obligation and yet still able to ask "So what?" without engaging in nonsense or else he cannot do it in either case. If he can ask such a question, then motivation is not logically necessary for having reasons or obligations. If it is impossible to ask such questions, then motivation <u>of some sort</u> is included in the concept and the internalists must maintain that some of our ordinary uses of the terms "obligation" and "reason" are incorrect. A rational agent is then someone who cares about reasons and is not only an agent capable of responding to reasons. Consequently, an agent who does not care about reasons for

acting and prefers to act on whim or emotion is not a rational agent despite his possessing the capacity to act for reasons that he has.

The internalist who supports external interpretations of obligations might say we still have missed the heart of his objection which is that although in the obligation case one can say, "I see that I have an obligation to do ø, but why should I?" which allows for external interpretation of the concept of obligation, the only thing that can legitimately be said in the reason case is "I see that <u>there is</u> reason to do ø, but so what?" The agent cannot sensibly ask the more personal and directly parallel question, "I see that <u>I have</u> reason to ø, but what of it?" A speaker admitting that <u>there is</u> a reason can ask why it should matter to him because he is only admitting that from some perspective or valuation it would be a good thing if ø were to be done. Therefore he can request information as to a connection between himself and the reason that justifies the action. He can admit that there is justification for doing the action, but that he does not care about it. In contrast, if he admits that whey has reason to act, he is making some kind of practical judgment and thereby implies that he sees some connection between the action and his own projects or motives.

Consider this in terms of a specific example. The

impersonal admission might be "It would be good if more people recycled their garbage because there is a serious problem with waste disposal in this country." The agent who admits this can go on to say, "However, recycling is a pain in the neck and I can't be bothered to do it myself." The speaker is admitting that there is reason for recycling (justifying reason), but also admitting that he has no motivating reason for so acting. If the agent makes a totally impersonal statement about reasons for recycling much as he might say, "The circumference of the earth is roughly 25,000 miles," can we then say that the agent <u>has</u> a reason or only that <u>there</u> <u>is</u> a reason?

The internalist cannot get his conclusion rushed through here by claiming that the question that can be asked in the obligation case makes no sense in the reason case. When the agent says, "I know I have an obligation to ϕ, but why should I do it?" he must be admitting that not only is he unconcerned about this particular obligation but that he also does not care about obligation for its own sake (in other words, he is not the type of agent who is moved to act simply by the knowledge that he has an unfulfilled obligation). Likewise the agent who says, "I admit that there is reason to ϕ, but what of it?" is acknowledging that he does not care about this particular reason or about reasons or being rational for their own

sake. He is being perverse, but need not be contradicting himself motivationally. The question has a somewhat peculiar sound to it, but the question "Why should I do what I have an obligation to do?" sounds equally peculiar to the truly virtuous or moral agent.

It at least appears, given these considerations, that obligations and reasons may operate in similar ways, given human psychology, and that either one should take an internalist interpretation of both (as Williams does) or allow for externalist interpretations of both. Since common sense heavily supports the external interpretation of obligations, common sense may be required to accept externalist theories of reasons.

One further objection can be made to the conclusions of this chapter by attacking the concept of obligation on which some of the claims depend. Anscombe and Williams have each argued that the concept of obligation is outdated or confused and should be dropped altogether. Williams claims that if an obligation applies to an agent who cares nothing about it or that to which it points, then the obligation applies to him only in the sense that it refers to him. The only way that the relevant "ought" can be made "to stick to the agent" is with a "glue" that is "social and psychological."[5] Anscombe argues we should get rid of the concept of obligation altogether. Since we actually use the concept in a non-relativized

way, the concept needs something like divine law if it is to make sense she claims. Laws apply to individuals regardless of whether the individuals consent to or are ignorant of or indifferent to the laws.[6]

We might well ask ourselves why should we accept Williams' picture of obligation. Williams refers to "ordinary moral consciousness" in support of some of his points but that same consciousness holds agents' motives irrelevant to obligation. As for Anscombe's claims, various authors (Rawls, Baier, Darwall and others) have defended the view that there are moral obligations based on self-regarding reasons -- agents are better off if they accept such obligations.[7] Without entering these debates and while admitting that none of the views are unproblematic, it should be pointed out that although the arguments of the last section will suffer if Anscombe and Williams are correct, the initial argument for external reasons still works. That argument relied on a voluntarily assumed obligation and therefore can be subsumed under the notion of contract which is not liable to Anscombe's and Williams' primary objections. Furthermore, it was pointed out that consistency requirements may lie at the heart of such an agent having reason to act rather than the fact that he is obligated per se.

Chapter Three

Nagel and the Possibility of Externalism

In this chapter, an argument of Thomas Nagel's from The Possibility of Altruism is used to force a wedge in the internalist's reason-motive connection. Nagel argues that there may not always be motivation for acting that is intelligible independently from the grounds that justify a reason statement or justify belief in a reason statement. This turns out to be helpful to the external reasons theorist. Furthermore, the motivational content which Nagel requires of reasons is of a type more compatible with Williams' description of an externalist theory of reasons than with an internal one.

Nagel's arguments also yield a possible response to the question raised by Williams in step #11 of his argument (as reconstructed in Chapter One): how coming to believe an external reason statement can involve the acquisition of a new motive or motivation. External reasons theorists have difficulty explaining the transition from the state in which an agent does not believe an ERS to his believing it and acting on it. Since intentional action requires motivation, if an agent acts on an ERS it means motivation must have arisen somehow at some

point. Williams wants to know how this happens.

To bridge the gap which the externalist faces between the agent's knowledge of the situation and her acting on a reason, Williams suggests reliance on the plausible idea that coming to believe a reason statement implies at least some disposition to perform the act in question. This however has the result of not allowing agents to perceive reasons (and, indeed, denying the existence of reasons for them to act) if the situation provides no (fairly close) connection to the agent's subjective motivational set. Since external reasons theorists repudiate the necessity of this connection and wish to avoid this limitation as regards the existence of reasons, they need to explain why agents might accept such reasons and/or act on them. In this chapter Nagel's arguments are appropriated and used (against the author's intentions at times) in an attempt to offer such an explanation. It is an effort aimed at bridging the possible gap between the situation or conditions perceived and action on the basis of a reason.

As mentioned earlier, Williams defines the internal interpretation of reason statements as maintaining that the truth of "A has a reason to ø" or "There is a reason for A to ø," "implies, very roughly, that A has some motive which will be served or furthered by his ø-ing."[1]

There is (must be) a connection between the reason and the agent's subjective motivational set (S). Without this connection, the reason statement cannot be true, says Williams. However, the success of Nagel's arguments for the conclusion that rationality of action does not require unmotivated desires allows a wedge to be driven into this internalist account of reasons. Nagel does not require already existing motives as preconditions for reasons and implies that "motivational content" can arise from considering circumstances in a particular way. Furthermore, Nagel's concept of "motivational content" pushes his position toward externalism if we use Williams' definitions. For example, Nagel writes:

> The alternative which I shall defend does not require one to abandon the assumption that reasons must be capable of motivating. It merely points out that they may have this capacity precisely because they are reasons, and not because a motivationally influential factor is among their conditions of application.[2]

This means that while Williams requires that the motivational connection (connection to the agent's S) be present before we are allowed to speak truthfully of the agent as having a reason, on Nagel's account the fact that there is a reason may create the motivational connection (as long as we accept certain basic metaphysical ideas about the nature of the agent). This makes an externalist interpretation of Nagel plausible -- after

all, if it is awareness of the reason that gives rise to the motivation, then there are reasons before there is motivation. These would be external reasons. Or, even if awareness of the conditions that justify the reason give rise to the reason and the motivation simultaneously, the reason does not require motivation as a precondition of its existence. Hence, the possibility of externalism.

Williams would respond here that when motivation is generated then an internal reason statement is possible and when no motivation is generated the external reason statement cannot function as a reason for the agent to act. Therefore, there is no need for external reason statements. They serve no purpose. In the first case they turn into or can be expressed as internal reason statements and in the second they do not actually provide reasons for acting. But couldn't we say that external reason statements are useful for speaking of the situation before motivation has been generated in the agent or perhaps even to describe a situation in which motivation or motives should be present in the agent even if ultimately they are not? Although it might sound strange to speak of a reason coming into existence or to ask whether the reason exists before motivation arises or only after, it is difficult to know how else to talk about this problem. Williams says that if a situation or statement

of conditions has no connection to the agent's S, there is no reason for action on the part of the agent. But presumably, if such a connection arises later, then there is at that time a reason for so acting. So it is not totally bizarre to talk about when the reason comes into existence. And if, like Nagel, we talk of an agent's awareness of a reason arising from her consideration of the circumstances in which she finds herself (circumstances that justify action), speaking of reasons coming into existence is a kind of shorthand for talk of certain kinds of conditions arising and is not metaphysically troublesome. Furthermore, since the conditions that justify action are frequently present before the agent is aware of them and/or is motivated by them (Nagel says the awareness itself may be what provides motivation), there would seem to be a use for external reason statements.

Section 1

Nagel begins the portion of his argument with which I am most concerned by stating that it is necessary to examine the general role of desires in rational motivation "in order to demonstrate that what they can explain is limited, and that even in simple cases they produce action by a mechanism which is not itself explicable in terms of desires."[3]

Desires are of two types, motivated and unmotivated, according to Nagel. Motivated desires are arrived at by decision and deliberation. Unmotivated desires are those that simply assail us. The desire to eat when hungry is an unmotivated desire. The desire to shop for groceries when we feel hunger pangs beginning and have found nothing good to eat in the refrigerator is a motivated desire. It is motivated by hunger in conjunction with various beliefs about grocery stores.

Nagel wants to show that a desire underlies every act only in a weak sense -- a logical sense, not a causal one. He explains, "The claim that a desire underlies every act is true only if desires are taken to include motivated as well as unmotivated desires, and it is true only in the sense that whatever may be the motivation for someone's intentional pursuit of a goal, it becomes in virtue of his pursuit ipso facto appropriate to ascribe to him a desire for that goal."[4] One must realize that a motivated desire need not refer back to an unmotivated desire (at least not in any straightforward way). As Nagel explains it:

> Often the desires which an agent necessarily experiences in acting will be motivated exactly as the action is. If the act is motivated by reasons stemming from certain external factors, and the desire to perform it is motivated by those same reasons, the desire obviously cannot be among the conditions for the presence of those reasons.[5]

Here Nagel sounds as if he espouses an externalist position on reasons and motivation. This impression intensifies as he continues. He says, "The fact that the presence of a desire is a logically necessary condition (because it is a logical consequence) of a reason's motivating, does not entail that it is a necessary condition of the presence of the reason; and if it is motivated by that reason it cannot be among the reason's conditions."[6] It appears that Nagel believes there can be reasons prior to any sort of motivation or desire on the agent's part. The reason (which might then be expressed in an external reason statement) is what gives rise to the motivation or desire. So Nagel has a use for external reason statements. They are not necessarily "false, or incoherent, or really something else misleadingly expressed" as Williams has charged.[7]

Nagel might seem not to be an external reasons theorist because, as noted above, he still requires that reasons be capable of motivating, and because he calls himself an internalist. However, Nagel's interpretation of internalism which requires that reasons be capable of motivating, differs from Williams' claim that reason statements presuppose an existing relevant desire or project in the agent's motivational set. On Williams' view the external reasons theorist need not deny that reasons are capable of motivating (although whether they

do will depend on various characteristics of the agent); the external reasons theorist simply claims that motivation is not a necessary pre-condition for the existence/presence of a reason for a particular agent to act. And this is at least a defensible interpretation of Nagel's claims. Of course if an agent acts for/on a particular reason we can ascribe to him an appropriate desire, but no one (internalist or externalist) denies that. If the agent acts intentionally, then there must be appropriate motivation.

The Williamsian externalist interpretation of Nagel's views cannot be avoided by claiming that since Nagel claims reasons arise from the agent's metaphysical view of herself and since the agent must have this view (on pain of serious dissociation from the reality of herself), reasons will of course motivate. Since such dissociation is at least possible and it is actually a contingent fact whether the agent is dissociated in this way, it cannot be true that reasons are logically required to motivate the particular agent to whom they are relevant. And since the reason can be prior to the motivation, it is hard to see how Nagel can escape being considered an externalist using Williams' definition. Motivation is not a necessary pre-condition of having a reason to act on Nagel's view and this is all the exter-

nalist needs to admit.

Nagel may be seen as combining an external interpretation of reasons with the belief that because of the way people are (the metaphysics of the person, etc.), reasons will motivate them. This is not an implausible position for an external reasons theorist. The general claim that people are motivated to act on (at least basic sorts of) reasons due to psychological or emotional characteristics that we all share (unless perhaps we have been warped or stunted in some way) will be taken up later.

A response open to Williams at this point is that it simply does not happen that acts are motivated by considerations stemming from external factors unconnected to some motive of the agent's (i.e., it is not the case that the motivation for acting arises from consideration of the reason or the circumstances that justify it without any preexisting motivational connection). Therefore, there are no grounds for denying the necessity of desires (or other pre-existing motives) as preconditions for the presence of reasons. Since Nagel's structural account is aimed at least in part at showing that this is a real possibility, evaluation of this claim coincides with evaluation of the overall argument.

Section 2

Nagel's structural account of the origin and opera-

tion of reasons is intended to replace the natural view that all reasons have some basis in desire. Nagel's account is preferable because certain difficulties or inappropriate results that arise on a desire based construction are not problematic on his account.

"Structural influences are apparent even when an unmotivated present desire motivates action," Nagel writes.[8] For example, when he is thirsty and desires a Coke, Nagel is motivated to put a dime in the soft drink machine. How is that best explained? By means of a postulated desire to deposit his dime? No, claims Nagel because "any arbitrary desire might be added on in that capacity."[9] Depending on what kind of bizarre conditioning he had experienced earlier in his life, TN (as Nagel refers to himself in examples) might have the desire to put a dime in his pencil sharpener when he wanted a Coke. But having such a desire does not give TN a reason to put a dime in his pencil sharpener. This illustrates why explaining reasons by postulating desires yields a faulty solution to the overall problem -- on such an account inappropriate desires that arise will produce reasons for acting where there really are no reasons, claims Nagel.

We have seen in Chapter One that Williams need not agree that inappropriate desires produce reasons for acting because on his view having a reason rather than simply thinking one has a reason requires not only motive

but also the proper connections with the reality of the situation. Williams cannot be said to have a completely desire-based account of reasons since he brings in this external element or external perspective with regard to the "facts" of the situation. If TN's desire to put a dime in the pencil sharpener is dependent on his belief that this is how to get a Coke, then TN has no reason to act in that way since his beliefs regarding the situation are in error.

Williams might have a bit more difficulty with the case in which TN has an unmotivated desire to put dimes in his pencil sharpener. Then it appears TN does have a reason to treat his pencil sharpener as a kind of piggy bank. Williams could of course claim TN has stronger reasons to keep the sharpener functional but that is not to claim that TN has no reason to put dimes in his sharpener. It appears that Williams' criteria will not allow inappropriate motivated desires to give rise to reasons, but unmotivated desires are more problematic. In that case Williams may not be able to escape the counterintuitive claims that there are no inappropriate unmotivated desires or that if TN wants to put dimes in the sharpener then he has reason to do so.

Nagel's suggestion for avoiding these difficulties which arise on desire-based accounts is to rely on a

structural account of reasons. Because TN wants a Coke and has certain beliefs about how drink machines work, he has a reason to put his dime in the machine. There is no need to postulate a further desire to put the dime in the machine. TN has a reason to put the dime in the slot because reasons "transmit their influence over the relation between ends and means."[10] We do not have to say that desiring the end entails or requires desiring the means. We can say that if an agent has reason to pursue the end, he has reason to bring about the means of achieving it. This transmission of the influence of reasons over ends and means is a general property of reasons on Nagel's account and is crucial to his arguments regarding both prudence and altruism.

On Nagel's account if TN puts his dime in the machine we can describe him as having a desire to do so, but only because being able to describe the situation thus is a logically necessary condition of an intentional action. The desire is a "ghostly" kind of desire that seems to serve no important purpose.[11] We need not presuppose the presence of the desire to claim TN had reason to act in that fashion and when TN acts the postulated desire is not necessary as part of a causal explanation of his action. "[N]othing follows about the role of the desire as a condition contributing to the motivational efficacy of those considerations. . . . It is not

necessary either as a contributing influence, or as a causal condition," Nagel writes.[12] Desires do not account for the system by which reasons transmit their influence over means. Rather, desires extend their "motivational influence beyond the scope of . . . [their] immediate, spontaneous manifestations" through their interaction with this system.[13]

Why should we think this account better explains prudence (and other reason-giving phenomena) than "the most plausible alternative account . . . one according to which prudential reasons stem from a present desire for the satisfaction of future interests and desires (or for the long-term satisfaction of all interests, present and future)"?[14] There are three basic reasons, says Nagel. One is that the idea of "a covering prudential desire" as the operative factor in prudence "does not take care of the actual cases."[15] Secondly, "the cases it does accommodate are not handled in the right way, so that their motivational nature is obscured by the theory."[16] And, overall, Nagel's alternative "sheds more light on the operation of prudence and human nature in general."[17]

If we picture an agent as requiring present desires in order to have reason to act for his future good or to have reason to promote desires or projects that he will have in the future, our view of the agent is skewed,

argues Nagel. We are portraying him as "insular . . . he reaches outside himself to take an interest in his future as one may take an interest in the affairs of a distant country."[18] And, indeed, this is the picture that more or less must come from Williams. On his account, an agent does not have reason to act to further his own future interests or welfare unless he cares about his future (or unless his current projects are tied up with the future somehow). He does not have reason to take medicine unless he happens to care about recovering or has projects for whose completion it is necessary that he recover. The individual <u>is</u> an island in the present unless he cares about his future or his future projects, etc. Williams does admit that it would be very unusual psychologically for an agent not care about his future at all, but it is possible. If there is such a person, he has no reason to act in ways that will further his future welfare and/or goals.[19]

Consider the case of a teenager who smokes cigarettes. Her parents point out to her that when she is thirty-five her skin will look older and more wrinkled than the skin of non-smokers her age, her lungs and heart will be in worse condition, and she will run a significantly higher risk of dying from cancer. The girl replies that she does not care what happens to her when she is thirty-five, she only cares about the fact that every-

one who belongs to the "cool" group at school smokes and she does not want to be left out. Assume (what may well be true) that at this time she does not care what will happen when she is middle-aged. Even if she knows she will care in the future, a desire-based view gives her no reason to take precautions now to ensure that she will even have a future unless she has some kind of general desire for the fulfillment of her later hopes and ambitions, and it is not impossible that she may lack a general desire of this nature. She may be quite short-sighted as far as practical judgments go and perhaps markedly future concerns (those farther away than next week or next month) do not relate to any of her current "projects." Then, on Williams' view, she has no reason to refrain from smoking.

If we think that, based on future effects and/or future desires, this girl has reason now to quit smoking, then we cannot accept Williams' view of reasons. The two positions cannot be made compatible by dragging in weakness of will or by saying that the agent has urgent present desires that are overriding future considerations. Weakness of will allows that the agent has reason to act for her future and this agent (as described) actually has no reasons to act in ways that will bring about a better future for herself on Williams' account.

The case thus illustrates Nagel's claim that "a covering prudential desire" as the operative factor in prudence "does not take care of the actual cases,"[20] at least insofar as many of us would judge. The girl has prudential reasons to stop smoking despite lacking a prudential desire to serve as the basis for them.

Nagel objects to the picture of the agent that the desire-based view gives us. He writes, "A person's future should be of interest to him not because it is among his present interests, but because it is <u>his future</u>."[21] Or, as he claims a few pages earlier, "The relation of a person to temporally distant stages of his life must be closer than that. His concern about his own future does not require an antecedent desire or interest to explain it."[22] This relation is not contingently based on desires that might be absent due to apathy, shortsightedness, or mistaken value perceptions.

Nagel's case against relying on a prudential desire, a (general) desire for the satisfaction of future or long-term interests and desires, to establish or justify prudential reasons is also based on the fact that such a system would yield prudential reasons in some cases in which it should not. Requiring or allowing desires to give rise to reasons allows "the derivation of reasons for action from <u>any</u> desire with a future object -- not only the prudential one," writes Nagel.[23] On such an

account, because I desire now that X obtains next month, I have reason to act to bring it about even though I realize that I will not want X by the time next month arrives and I realize that X is not really a good thing for me to have.

The solution to these difficulties, according to Nagel, lies in realizing that reasons represent timeless values. "[T]he influence of reasons is transmitted over time because reasons represent values which are not time-dependent."[24] If an agent accepts that there is reason for a particular action, then he must "attach value to its occurrence."[25] The influence of this value is capable of being transmitted over time just as valuing a present end transmits influence over the means necessary to obtaining the end. There is reason for the agent to do now what is necessary to bring about the future occurrence. To have a reason to act now the agent does not need a present desire for the future end or a desire for the means to obtain it. She has reason to act in those ways because she realizes there is reason for valuing the future occurrence.

If TN will be in Italy in six weeks time, he has reason to learn Italian now because there is value in knowing Italian when one is in Italy and because he will have reason to want to speak Italian at that future time.

TN is not required to have a current desire to further his future interests in order to have a reason to learn Italian. The value in TN knowing Italian while in Italy is timeless in that it is not only a value present at the actual time of his presence in Italy, but is a value transmitted across time. Hence, we can conclude (as we would naturally do in everyday life) that TN has reason to begin learning Italian now. On this theory of Nagel's, that reason is based purely on the future value of knowing Italian completely apart from any possible desires TN might have for facilitating his future desires.

This might seem like just another example of the fact that reasons transmit their influence from desired ends across means necessary to achieving them. After all, TN could not possibly learn Italian fast enough once he gets to Italy to serve his purposes; therefore, the necessary means to his ends require that he begin now. But this interpretation requires that the agent presently desire the end of speaking Italian in Italy (much as TN desired the Coke and therefore had a reason to put money in the Coke machine). But part of Nagel's point with this example is that knowing that one will have a reason in the future gives one reason <u>now</u> to do what is necessary to bring the future occurrence about even if one does not currently desire the future end. We need some

way to account for these common sorts of cases and a completely desire-based account or one that relies on desiring the end in question can not do it.

If we deny that future reasons represent timeless values, then we deny an aspect of the generality of reasons and are limited to dated reasons (reasons which "support . . . action to promote a given end only if the reason-predicate can be ascribed to that end in the present tense at the time of action," says Nagel.[26] To accept only dated reasons is to be seriously dissociated from one's future self, he continues. If TN is able to identify with future stages of himself, then he will accept that a reason that will apply to him in six weeks is timeless in the sense that it can give him reason to act now. "[T]he influence of reasons is transmitted over time because reasons represent values which are not time-dependent."[27] "[T]here is reason to promote that for which there is or will be a reason."[28]

This condition of timelessness "is an aspect of the condition of generality which characterizes all reasons."[29] Instead of saying that there will be a reason for A, we should say that "there is, tenselessly, a reason for A to occur at t, and derivative reason now to promote its occurrence."[30] And, since Nagel thinks all reasons must have motivational content, tenseless

reasons must be shown to have motivational content. Hence, the topic of the next section addressing the messier parts of the argument.

Section 3

Even if we accept Nagel's general account of reasons, questions arise as to the kind of motivational content reasons can have without relying on desires. For example, what kind of motivational content do timeless reasons have?

Nagel's concept of motivational content is not easy to understand. He writes:

> The belief that a reason provides me with sufficient justification for a present course of action does not necessarily imply a desire or a willingness to undertake that action; it is not a sufficient condition of the act or desire. But it is sufficient, in the absence of contrary influences, to explain the appropriate action, or the desire or willingness to perform it. That is the motivational content of a judgment about what one presently has reason to do.[31]

Consequently, it appears that an agent may believe that he has reason to do ø without doing ø or even desiring to do so, since this is not a sufficient condition of either. Motivational content is only a kind of after-the-fact thing which can be used to explain the willingness to do ø.

However, since the agent believes he has reason to do ø, Nagel maintains there must be motivational content

present because reason statements are practical judgments and practical judgments have motivational content. This makes it sound as if Nagel is referring to what Frankena called "exciting reasons"[32] and which I tend to refer to as "motivating reasons." As Frankena puts it, they offer the agent a motive for actually performing the action and are contrasted with "justifying reasons" which offer a justification for the action. "Thus a motive is one kind of reason for action, but not all reasons for action are motives."[33] In the longer quotation above, Nagel does not sound as if a motive for the agent is a necessary condition of the reasons for action to which he is referring. Believing that one has a reason for acting is not even a sufficient condition of a desire or willingness to undertake that action, he writes. Hence, no motive on the agent's part seems to be required for him to believe he has a reason for acting and yet that judgment possesses motivational content. I suggest that in using the phrase "motivational content" to describe a quality all reasons must have, Nagel's reasons come to sound more like Frankena's exciting reasons than they should, given the other restrictions or qualifications Nagel makes.

Keeping this in mind, let us return to the idea of tenseless practical judgments, reason statements possible from a standpoint of temporal neutrality. Even tenseless

practical judgments must have motivational content, believes Nagel -- that is part of the nature of a practical judgment.[34] His arguments proceed as follows.

If we take tenseless statements to "express what is asserted in common by past, present, and future statements about the same circumstance or state of affairs," then it is possible to claim, "The conditions for the correctness of a tensed statement can . . . be divided into two parts: (a) a tenseless truth about the time which is the subject of the statement; and (b) a relation between that time and the time of utterance which makes the tense employed the appropriate one."[35] Furthermore, since we can also make practical judgments about different times, it should be possible to divide (in a similar way) the conditions of their correctness yielding tenseless practical judgments and beliefs about the relation of those times to the present.[36] The significant difference between statements and practical judgments is that the latter has motivational content and Nagel is then concerned to say where in this division the motivational content will be found.

It is in his reliance on tenseless practical judgments as having motivational content that Nagel seems to go wrong. Of course the "motivational <u>effects</u> of a given tenseless practical judgment will vary with one's temporal relation to the circumstance being considered," he

admits.[37] If the time is present, one may be moved to act. If the time being considered is past, one may instead be moved to express regret that one did not act as one had reason to do. But, he argues, this is really no different from the effect that place in time has on factual statements. Just as motivational effects of a practical judgment vary according to time location (we are moved to act differently depending on whether the situation is in the past, present, or future), the evidence we look for to support the truth of factual statements depends on whether the event took place in the past or whether we anticipate its occurrence at some time in the future.[38]

Since practical judgments have motivational content and since the conditions for the truth of such judgments can be divided into tenseless practical judgments and time beliefs, the motivational content must be in one of those parts, claims Nagel. And, since knowing the time relation (e.g., that the situation is taking place now rather than last week) does not by itself motivate, the motivational content must be part of the tenseless practical judgment, Nagel concludes. The beliefs about the situation are what provide the motivational content not the beliefs about whether the situation is in the past, is presently occurring, or will occur in the future.

Nagel wants to show that reasons rely on timeless values and therefore that reason statements or beliefs about what there is reason to do can be reached from a tenseless specification of a situation. Reasons stretch across time; they are timeless in this sense. However, it is worth asking whether an agent would conclude that a certain act should be undertaken from only a tenseless specification of circumstances. Perhaps a practical judgment arises instead from the interaction of the tenseless specification of circumstances with some belief regarding the temporal relation. Nagel cannot allow this because he wants to maintain that motivational content is not dependent on beliefs regarding the time relation, but it seems to work better than his account.

Consider Nagel's example of TN's house burning down. He writes that, given a "tenseless assertion" about the burning down of his house, TN "can conclude that a certain act should be undertaken. . . . Such a desire will form even if one does not know what time it is. Information about one's temporal location merely tells one whether the opportunity of acting on this conclusion is available."[39]

But what practical judgment would it be reasonable for an agent to make given a tenseless assertion about the burning down of his house? Suppose, given this "tenseless specification of the circumstances which

provide reason for action," TN (who, we will hypothesize, is basically an optimistic sort) makes the judgment that he has reason to install a sprinkler system in his house and get his furnace serviced. On Nagel's analysis, this tenseless practical judgment has motivational content for TN. Remember, the fact that a judgment has motivational content means that if the agent were to act on the judgment or to develop a desire to do so, this would explain his doing so -- it does not mean that one who accepts the judgment will necessarily be motivated to act on it.

The motivational effects, however, will differ depending on the time relation. This would seem to mean that what desires for acting arise or what actions the agent actually performs will depend on the temporal location. This creates a problem because it is hard then to say what motivational content the practical judgment that one ought to call sprinkler installers has. Nagel himself says that one would not know whether acting is actually called for until one is aware of the temporal location. Practical judgments or judgments about reasons for acting have to do with the agent believing that he has justification for a course of action. As Nagel says, he may not act on it or even desire to do so. In addition he may be mistaken about what he is justified in doing. However, until or unless he knows whether the

house has already burned, it appears the agent cannot make a practical judgment. Practical judgments appear to be impossible to make from a temporally neutral specification of a situation. To say that the "motivational effects" vary with temporal location is a way of saying that different actions appear justified to the agent depending on temporal location, a conclusion which implies that different practical judgments are justified depending on temporal location as well. Only the underlying value (that of not having one's house burn down) remains the same throughout changes in temporal location.

Perhaps some kind of judgment might be made from the tenseless specification of the situation, but it is unclear how such a judgment could be practical. For example, when TN is told that his house was/is/will be burning down and he is unaware of the relation of this tenseless statement to the present, it seems likely that he could form several judgments. They might be:

a. That he should get he furnace fixed and install sprinklers.

b. That he should call the fire department.

c. That he should call Allstate so that they can send a claims adjuster out immediately.

These are the kinds of practical judgments to which information about one's house burning would tend to give rise and they seem to be equally justifiable from the tenseless specification of the situation. TN might make

any one of these three judgments from the standpoint of temporal neutrality or he might even make all three if other constraints are not applied. If he makes all three, then since they all have motivational content (which, as practical judgments, they must) then TN seems liable to succumb to a sort of motivational or practical schizophrenia.

One possible reply for Nagel to make here is that, as we noted earlier, motivational content does not imply motivational efficacy and hence there is no real difficulty. Motivational efficacy may be impaired not only by various kinds of "motivational interference" including "weakness, cowardice, laziness, [and] panic," but (as we noted) it is also true that "the belief that a reason provides me with sufficient justification for a present course of action does not necessarily imply a desire or a willingness to undertake that action."[40] So, despite the fact that the reason is spoken of as having motivational content, accepting a practical judgment may mean nothing in terms of whether one is actually motivated to perform the action and may be consonant with the agent lacking even the slightest desire or willingness to perform the action. It is not the case that the motivation is present but is so weak that other factors outweigh or override it. It is not there at all. So, to say as

Nagel does, "The content I have suggested may be considered weak"[41] is to understate the situation considerably. If we use the term in any substantive way, there is no motivational content.

Another reply Nagel might make is that although from the standpoint of temporal neutrality each of the three judgments is equally reasonable, motivational schizophrenia is not a problem because an agent can only make one practical judgment about a situation. But then which one of the judgments listed above should TN make? And why should we believe this anyway? Are we not all familiar with cases in which we want two (or more) different and conflicting things?

Even though the house burning situation cannot actually arise in TN's life, consider what we might conclude if it could (later I will propose a case that I think is the closest we can get in real life to making practical judgments from a standpoint of temporal neutrality). If, in real life, the house burning scenario were tenselessly specified to TN, he might well think something such as the following, "If the house will be burning sometime in the future, I had better get the furnace fixed, but if it's burning now, I had better call the fire department, and if it has already burned, I might as well call the insurance claims adjuster." TN would most likely make these "conditional practical

judgments" which are expressed in the form of hypothetical imperatives. But then TN can only conclude something like "I should call the fire department or the insurance company or the furnace repairman." This is as practical as he can be from a standpoint of temporal neutrality.

But this is not satisfactory given what Nagel is trying to conclude. A practical judgment is supposed to have motivational content. This means TN considers himself to have a sufficient justification for developing a desire to act on this disjunction or actually acting on it. What exactly would this be like? Acting on this disjunction would be to perform one of the actions. However the temporal relation (which is unknown) only justifies <u>one</u> of the actions and it is difficult to argue that TN, not knowing the temporal relation, would consider himself justified in acting on one of the disjuncts without that further information. It would be strange if TN thought he could just pick any one of the three and be justified in acting. He would not normally think himself justified in calling "911" or developing a desire to do so unless his house <u>is</u> burning down. If it burned down last week, he is not justified in calling the fire department or wanting to. If he does not see a particular course of action as justified, then, on Nagel's own account, TN does not believe he has a reason for acting.

He has not made a practical judgment.

Therefore, the most sensible conclusion seems to be that of denying that practical judgments can be made from the tenseless specification of a situation. Motivational content cannot exist for (a), (b), and (c) together and from the tenseless perspective there is no way to pick one option as clearly preferable (except possibly with the addition of various gambling assumptions). Denying the judgments even the very weak motivational content (or justifying content) that Nagel allots them leaves one with the conclusion that at most it is possible to make conditional practical judgments from the standpoint of temporal neutrality and the practicality of these judgments is highly questionable.

These considerations (that real practical judgments arise from tenseless specifications plus knowledge of one's temporal location) are supported by what we would say in the type of real life predicament closest to the tenseless specification of a situation which would justify action. The house burning case is not plausible for this, but the following case may be.

Stan has made a serious mistake in one of his advertising accounts at work. He does not know yet whether anyone else has discovered the error. His boss has just called him into her office. He knows that if the boss has already found out about his error then he will be

better off if he makes a clean breast of things immediately. On the other hand, if the boss has known about the error for the past week and has been waiting for him to mention it, Stan is likely to be fired and will have great trouble finding another job, so he should resign claiming that his resignation is a matter of principle.[42] However, it might be that the boss knows nothing about the error to date and Stan may be able to control some of the damage or improve the situation before it is discovered, thereby salvaging his job and professional reputation.

Stan's knowledge of the situation can be expressed in the tenseless proposition that the boss knew/knows/will know about his blunder. But the action he should perform and hence the action he sees himself as justified in performing depends importantly on which tense is the accurate one. Stan does not know the relation to the present of the statement that his boss knows about his mistake -- and he needs to.

We can think of Stan's judgments as conditional practical judgments because they are all of the form "If X, then I ought to do Y," or he could make one disjunction of the form "I ought to do M or N or P." The question that concerns us here is whether it makes any sense to speak of these as having motivational content.

I suggest the results here are the same as they are in the house burning case. There are two types of motivational content that we might think of such judgments as possibly having. One is the type of motivational content that Williams refers to which indicates that there is some connection to the agent's subjective motivational set. This type of motivational content at least gives us reason to think that the agent will have some disposition to perform the action in question. The second type of motivational content, Nagel's sort, can explain the agent's performing the acting or wanting to do so; the agent sees himself as having sufficient justification for desiring to act.

In Stan's situation above, all the judgments have motivational content in Williams' sense. The connection to the agent's subjective motivational set is made through the agent's self-interest in each instance and Stan is clearly concerned about his self-interest. So the judgments all have motivational content (or at least conditionally have such content) in the motivating sense.

But consider the difference when we ask whether they have motivational content in Nagel's justifying sense. Stan does not see himself as having sufficient justification for any of the actions mentioned until he knows <u>when</u> his boss knew/knows/will know about his mistake. He will not consider himself as justified in so acting except in

the sense that he will obviously have to do something and therefore must gamble. (He might think, "Since I do not know how much the boss is aware of and I must act, I am justified in doing [should do] M because M has the best payoff if correct [or avoids the worst payoff].")

Similarly, in the house-burning case, TN might judge from the tenseless perspective that he should call the fire department because although he does not know whether his house has burned, is burning, or will burn, the case in which his house is burning calls for the most immediate action and has the worst payoff if he fails to act quickly. Of course, TN would feel pretty silly if he acted on this judgment and it turned out that his house burned to the ground last week -- or, that it won't burn until next month -- but he may judge the embarrassment to be worth the price given what is at stake. However, this kind of justification of practical judgments involves issues regarding decision-making under uncertainty, issues with which Nagel is not concerned here.

In general, it seems that in cases of temporal uncertainty we would probably not make practical judgments (if practical judgments are taken to be non-conditional "should" or "ought" judgments) except when circumstances force us to act. Here we can see why the disjunction is not helpful as a solution -- it is not of any

practical use when the agent is forced to act. How could disjunctive judgments made while the agent suffers from a lack of knowledge of the relevant time relations have any motivational content either in the sense of exciting one to action or of seeing oneself as justified in acting or desiring to act? Of course it would be emotionally moving to be presented with information about your house burning down even if one did not know the time relation, but it is not clear that one would be motivated to act or would see oneself as justified in acting in any particular way because, for one reason, the options would be so different and so confusing. One might well be all stirred up (adrenalin flowing, etc.) and want to DO SOMETHING, but one would have no idea what to do. It is not natural to make practical judgments under knowledge constraints like these largely because the time relation is so crucial to knowing what action would be justified.

Nagel often writes as if there is one action that is clearly justified from the perspective that a tenseless specification of circumstances provides and that the only uncertainty is the agent's uncertainty as to whether it will be appropriate for him to act on it. He writes that:

> The motivational effects of a given tenseless practical judgment will vary with one's temporal relation to the circumstance being considered. Whether that circumstance is past, present, or future will bear not only on the

> appropriateness of formulating practical judgments in a certain tense, but also on what those judgments lead me to do.[43]

He seems to ignore the point that what practical judgments one forms and not just their tense depends importantly on the time relation. He merely says that "the possibility of acting on a practical judgment depends on an acknowledgement of one's temporal location."[44]

Nagel writes as if making a practical judgment is simply a matter of deciding to promote some end and that the action seen as necessary for this promotion is rather straightforward so that the only uncertainty is whether the time appropriate for doing so is now, in the past, or next week. But we do not view ourselves or our actions in that way. In considering a specific example such as the house burning case it does not make sense even to adopt the end of preventing the house from being destroyed unless one knows that the house still exists. From the temporally neutral standpoint one could adopt only very general ends such as promoting the most good for everyone concerned or containing damage as much as possible. Only such very general ends could have motivational content in Nagel's sense. But since no specific action is indicated, it is difficult to claim that we have a practical judgment. Saying that this general judgment is enough to move TN to act or to regard himself as justified in acting would be odd. If we do think of

this as a practical judgment, then the same tenseless practical judgment is relevant in all cases which is peculiar as well.

It seems that Nagel, in thinking that TN could arrive at a practical judgment in such a situation, must at least implicitly be regarding the house burning as present and seeing as justified the practical judgment that would be justified in that case. When given a tenseless statement regarding the burning of one's house, the natural psychological reaction would seem to be to imagine or picture one's house burning and this leads one to think of the event as presently occurring. Then Nagel's statement that one would be able to make a practical judgment but would not know if one should actually act on it makes sense. However, we have seen that as long as we are occupying the temporally neutral standpoint and have no idea of the time relation, several different judgments are possible. We are not presented with one judgment on which we are uncertain whether to act.

If Nagel's claim that one can make practical judgments from the tenseless specification of situations were convincing, then we would be left with the conclusion that practical judgments may not always have motivational content. However, since there is reason to doubt that

anything other than conditional practical judgments can be made from the temporally neutral standpoint and since conditional practical judgments have motivational content only when the antecedent of the conditional is fulfilled (or is thought to be), it is more reasonable to conclude that from a temporally neutral standpoint one cannot make full-fledged practical judgments. The judgment, "If the boss does not yet know about my mistake, then I ought to keep quiet and try to fix things up with the advertiser," does not justify or explain Stan's willingness to keep quiet unless he believes his boss <u>is</u> ignorant of his error (or, since Stan has to act now, unless this best fits his strategy for acting under uncertainty).

All this lends support to the contention that motivational content arises from the interaction of the tenseless specification of the situation with the temporal location statement. It is the interaction of the two which creates or gives rise to practical judgments with motivational content. The motivational content is not in either one alone. The motivational content is produced by the interaction much as heat is produced by a chemical reaction but cannot be said to have been <u>in</u> any of the original chemicals.

In "Moral Arguments" Foot makes a similar point with regard to the evaluative force of words like "rude." Whereas I am suggesting that the motivational content of

the (tensed) practical judgment is not found either in the tenseless description of circumstances or in the temporal location statement taken separately, Foot argues that there need not be any specifically evaluative premise in a deductive argument with an evaluative conclusion. Rather, the evaluative element can enter when the premises are taken as a group. "It is not necessary that the evaluative element should 'come in whole'," she writes.[45]

Consider the argument that a certain piece of behavior is rude. The judgment that an action is rude has emotive meaning. "[I]n the wide sense in which philosophers speak of evaluation, 'rude' is an evaluative word. . . . [I]t expresses disapproval, is meant to be used when action is to be discouraged, [etc.]."[46] However, the evidence or argument given for calling a particular piece of behavior rude may be non-evaluative. The premises and evidence may all be "merely 'descriptive'." After all, whether we call a particular piece of behavior rude is based on whether certain descriptions apply to it. One may indicate that the behavior in question shows a certain lack of respect; the behavior is offensive. It is not possible to accept that the behavior causes a certain kind of offense and to reject the conclusion that the behavior is rude, Foot writes.[47] So we are able to

reach an evaluative conclusion from premises which, considered individually, are not evaluative.

Likewise, in my argument, the motivational content present in a tensed practical judgment is not present in either of its components -- the tenseless specification of the situation or the temporal location statement. Just as non-evaluative premises can yield an evaluative conclusion, these two non-motivating components of a practical judgment can give us something with motivating or even justificatory force. By itself the tenseless statement of the house burning down may produce anguish or frustration but will not justify the agent in deciding to act in a particular way. The statement may have emotive force but it has no practical force. The agent will not be motivated to act in the sense of seeing himself as having sufficient justification for doing so. The statement that the temporal location is the future will not provide such motivational content by itself either. It takes the two together to do so.

Insofar as they are thought to have motivational content, practical judgments seem closely tied to time judgments because justification depends on the conditions of the situation and this takes place in time. Implicit in such judgments must be some kind of decision that "the time is right." Because practical judgments are judgments having to do with the performance of actions and

because specific actions are only justified at particular times, it seems unlikely that practical judgments made from a temporally neutral viewpoint could work out.

Nagel writes, however, "If the sense of practical judgments were changed, or their motivational content lost, when one shifted out of the present tense, then practical reasoning would be an area divorced from the conception of oneself as equally real over time."[48] "[P]ractical judgments must share with factual judgments the property of being assimilable to the standpoint of temporal neutrality."[49] But since Nagel holds that the motivational content of such judgments requires that the agent see herself as having sufficient reason to act or to desire, the particular motivational content of practical judgments does appear to be lost when one shifts tenses. Actions that would appear justified to the agent if the time is present would not appear justified if it is past. Nagel says that from the tenseless specification of the situation "one can conclude that a certain act should be undertaken. . . . Information about one's temporal location merely tells one whether the opportunity of acting on this conclusion is available."[50] We have seen however that this is misleading. Different temporal locations will justify different actions. Nagel himself distinguishes between preparation for a particular ac-

tion, performing the action, and feeling regret or satisfaction.

Our practical judgments are so closely allied to time judgments that it seems impossible or at least implausible to argue otherwise than that they are importantly dependent on time beliefs. Contrary to Nagel's claim that practical reasoning would then be "divorced from the conception of oneself as equally real over time,"[51] we could say that prudential reasons' motivating force comes from our view of ourselves as equally real over time but that we only see ourselves as prudentially justified in acting in certain ways (i.e., as having prudential reasons for acting) because we see certain situations as parts of our futures. The time element is as necessary for the practical judgment as the description of the situation and the metaphysical view of oneself as existing over time.

Section 4

This excursion into Nagelian philosophy had two main purposes -- to consider the argument against the natural view of reasons as based in desires (a view that the external reasons theorist must oppose) and to examine Nagel's prudence argument (which can be used as a wedge against the internal reasons theorist's position).

If the desire-based view of reasons were correct

internalism would win the day, but the negative portion of Nagel's arguments, that explanations of reasons based purely on desires are inadequate, seems quite convincing. As Nagel has pointed out, the desire-based theory suffers from serious flaws -- e.g., it cannot even account successfully for the phenomenon of prudential reasons. The requirement of an independently intelligible desire to play a causal role is unnecessary; in some cases the desire may be only postulated as a logical necessity of explanation. Motivation can arise from a combination of awareness of certain conditions in the agent's situation, his metaphysical view of himself as real over time, and some value judgments ("It's good to be able to speak Italian when in Italy" for example).

The argument that prudential reasons cannot depend on some independently intelligible desire or motivation but follow from our metaphysical view of ourselves as continuing through time allows for the externalist wedge to be placed. After all, the result of the prudential argument is that reasons are not required to be connected to an agent's motivations. Sometimes motivations arise from consideration of the reasons themselves or of the conditions that give rise to them. Hence, reasons are logically independent of motivation. This is externalism with regard to reasons.

As for Nagel's other points, although he is persuasive in his claims that reasons extend their influence from ends across means, his contention that reasons extend their influence across time so as to be legitimately called timeless values has been seen to be less convincing if it is taken to imply that practical judgments are independent of time beliefs in important ways. Although Nagel might respond that none of the counterarguments offered seriously contradict his account because this is what he meant when he said that "the motivational effects of a given tenseless practical judgment will vary with one's temporal relation to the circumstance being considered,"[52] it has been shown that tenseless practical judgments do not seem possible. Insofar as they are tenseless, they are not practical. The practical judgment itself and not only the motivational effects differs radically depending on temporal location.

As long as we do not insist that reasons are timeless in the sense of capable of being formulated from a tenseless specification of circumstances, but only that their influence is capable of being transmitted across time, these criticisms do not seriously harm the account of prudence. Since we know the time, future reasons are able to transmit their influence to the present, giving us reason to act without relying on a desire to further our future needs or desires and this allows the external

reasons theorist to insert a wedge in the internalist's position.

Furthermore, since Nagel's arguments support the conclusion that motivation can arise from consideration of reasons or from the same considerations that give rise to the reason (a process addressed in the following chapter), it allows talk of reasons before there is motivation. This means that there is sense in speaking of external reasons, that external reason statements do have some function.

INTERNALIST AND EXTERNALIST THEORIES:

THE DIVERSITY OF REASONS

FOR ACTING

by

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Chapter Four

The "Perception" of Reasons

How can an agent's consideration of reasons or of the circumstances that give rise to reasons result in her being motivated to act or coming to accept a new reason for acting? How do agents come to have new reasons for acting in general? According to Williams, an agent only acquires new reasons by combining his motives and reasons in fresh ways through a process of rational deliberation or by discovering previously unrecognized motives in his subjective motivational set. This chapter argues that that cannot adequately explain the acquisition of all new reasons for acting. In order to explain the totality of cases, it is necessary to adjust our understanding of reasons for acting. John McDowell's perceptual account of reasons allows us to do this and is capable of an externalist interpretation.

Section 1

Consider the case of a southern landowner in the mid-nineteenth century who eventually comes to accept that he has reason to aid runaway slaves rather than simply to return them to their owners as he had earlier believed. A Williamsian explanation of the landowner's

change would require that the alteration be seen in terms of a combination of motives and reasons the landowner already had or the discovery of a previously unrecognized motive. So, for example, it might have been the case that previously the landowner was only concerned to maintain order, obey the laws, run his estate as efficiently as possible, and maintain a good relationship with those of his neighbors important in the community. Consequently, he had no reason to help runaway slaves unless it happened that some of his influential neighbors became abolitionists. (Aiding slaves certainly would not help maintain order, it was against the law, and even if his own estate did not need slaves that circumstance would give him no reason to help runaways from elsewhere, so the new project would not fall under any of his previous ones.)

On the Williamsian model the landowner might come to have reason to aid runaway slaves because he develops a desire to do so. After suffering himself in some way, his values are transmuted and he considers pain and suffering of sentient individuals as more important than maintaining the old order. As a result he pays more attention to what the slaves' lives are really like and consequently desires that their lot be improved. This gives him reason to help the slaves although he did not

have reason to do so previously.

Another explanation open to Williams is that the landowner might have the general project of being moral and he only gradually comes to be convinced that owning other humans conflicts with morality. Once this is realized, he desires to end the immoral practice and sees helping individual slaves gain their freedom as one means of doing so. Hence, the agent's adoption of the new reason for acting in this case is explained as a means to his overall end of being a good man. And, for some of the actual instances of southern landowners who came to see themselves as having reason to help fugitive slaves, this may give the best explanation of what happened.

However, Nagel's arguments regarding prudence should cause us to hesitate before we accept that every change of this type must be explained in terms of some changing desire or an overarching desire to be good. In the last chapter the desire-based view of reasons for acting was seen to have serious defects. McDowell has extended that argument specifically to cases of virtue. Some agents may have an actual desire to be as virtuous as possible or may have adopted the specific goal of following moral dictates, but this does not always appear to be the case.

In contrast to Williams, McDowell agrees with Nagel that an independently intelligible desire cannot always be ascribed to an agent as a necessary precondition of

his action. It may be inaccurate to claim that such a desire played a causal role in his actions. Rather, ascribing a desire to be virtuous or to act correctly to such an agent may be consequential to our taking him to act for the reason we cite. Explaining an action in terms of the agent's reasons involves showing how the projected action could appear to the agent in "a favourable light."[1] Although we tend to assume that this requires the inclusion of a desire, "[a]dverting to . . . [the agent's] view of the facts may suffice, on its own, to show us the favourable light in which his action appeared to him."[2] Since a conception of the facts is enough to give an agent reason to act in a prudential case, a conception of the facts can give an agent reason to act in the virtuous case as well. McDowell maintains that explaining behavior in terms of the favorable light in which it appeared to the agent will fit how things look from "the inside," how the process or occurrence appears to the agent.[3]

On Williams' view the virtuous agent and the non-virtuous agent may have the same conception of the facts but because they have different motives, desires, and projects, one agent may have a reason to act when the other agent does not. Presumably, the abolitionist and the southern landowner who supports the status quo both

see the same facts, but they differ in their desires and projects.

It is this reasonable-sounding claim which McDowell challenges. He argues that the virtuous agent and the non-virtuous agent do not perceive situations alike. A person learns to see things in particular ways, learns to pay attention to certain aspects of situations, and this affects what he sees as well as what he takes to provide him with reason for acting. Therefore, it could be that the unconverted landowner sees primarily the slaves' status as property and thus concludes fugitives should be returned to their owners. The abolitionist sees the slaves' humanity and suffering as casting a favorable light on an opposite action.

It is true that we tend to see what we expect to see and that our desires, background, interests, and needs color what we see. Not only do basic psychology textbooks tell us this, but we see evidence of it all the time. (To take a very prosaic example, consider how difficult it is to proofread one's own work -- one sees what one expects to be there.) A kind individual can see factors in a given situation which might completely escape the observation of others. A botanist notices different things on a trip through the Grand Canyon than a geologist does. Our abolitionist is an empathetic individual and sees the slaves' suffering in ways that

the man whose life focuses primarily on business does not.

So, rather than it being the case that agents see the same things or have the same conception of the facts and merely differ as to how their own projects and desires relate to that conception, agents' projects and desires will affect what their conception of the facts is -- conflicting information may not even be perceived at all.

Section 2

Ways in which an agent gets from his conception of the situation to having a reason for acting is another issue on which Williams and McDowell differ. We saw in Chapter One that Williams finds implausible the idea that an agent will come to believe a reason statement and then will acquire the motivation to act on it. In contrast, McDowell claims that in some situations the motivation may arise from the same considerations that the reason for acting does. This sounds as if awareness of the reason and the motivation for acting on it may arise simultaneously or as if it is possible for the awareness of the reason for acting to arise before any specific desire to act on it. If it seems to the agent that his reason for acting is constituted by his conception of the

circumstances alone and we reanalyze his mental state as a neutral conception of the facts plus a desire, then we may not "get right" the favorable light in which the act presented itself to the agent, points out McDowell. "[T]he idea of the world as motivationally inert is not an independent hard datum."[4]

Applying this to the case we have been using, the landowner might (through the influence of some respected friend) gradually come to focus on or pay attention to the similarities between himself and the slaves and, ultimately, may see those similarities as giving him reason to act differently than he did before. He need not develop a desire previous to accepting this reason. He may have grudgingly agreed, for the sake of his friendship, to "re-consider" the situation and, due to the influence of his friend, he now sees things differently. This can even take place more or less against his will. Sometimes we experience a Gestalt switch and our new vision places demands on us, demands which we would rather have avoided.

In coming to accept new reasons for acting which do not arise from rational deliberation on previous projects and desires, perhaps what happens is that an agent tries on new reasons in a sense; he looks around at reasons others take as sufficient for acting and essentially experiments with them. At the start, such reasons may be

external to his subjective motivational set (they make no important connections to his psychology, there is only the attenuated connection of "seeing if I am missing projects for which I should be acting").

McDowell would argue that such actions cannot be completely external because our shared form of life underlies all our reasons to an extent. Comprehension of the favorable light in which the agent sees his action and therefore his reasons for acting depends on our "shared forms of life." If the reasons were completely foreign to our way of life, it is implausible to think the agent could understand them as reasons for acting, even in a limited sense. Comprehension of reasons for acting cannot be done simply by looking at an agent's desires, projects, and situation, as on Williams' view. We have to share a certain amount of the agent's psychology and his concerns.

This notion of a shared form of life comes from Wittgenstein and will be dealt with again in Chapter Six.[5] According to Wittgenstein, it is the fact that we have similar concerns that allows us to develop complex practices such as language. We cannot learn the rules of use/meaning for practices that are completely foreign to our way of life because there is no common understanding from which to begin, no shared concerns that can serve as

a basis for explanations of the new practice. For example, because the form of life and concerns of a lion are very different from ours, writes Wittgenstein, even "[i]f a lion could talk, we could not understand him."[6] Similarly, if a builder and his helpers have their own language to refer to materials and processes that they use, other builders could learn this language game because they share similar concerns and projects. However, the rules cannot be taught to the non-builder, not even by pointing out various items and naming them; the non-builder will not know to what the pointing refers -- the object? the process? the color? the texture? the grade of material? etc. Even being able to list these possibilities assumes some familiarity with the practice of construction.

Of course the amount that needs to be shared will vary widely depending on what we are assessing or judging. Just as continuing a number sequence requires much less in the way of congruence of subjectivities than completing a novel that Jane Austen left unfinished, the rationality of some kinds of actions will be evident from a more external perspective (a perspective which demands less shared) than is the case with others. Those actions whose rationality is based on a relatively independently intelligible desire (as in the case of a hungry agent who orders a pizza) will require less congruence of subjec-

tivities to be understood as rational than virtuous actions may require. It may be that for some practices the rationality is recognizable as such only from within the practice itself, says McDowell. It may simply be impossible for the non-virtuous man to understand reasons for being virtuous. To the extent that the non-virtuous individual does not share or comprehend the way of life of the virtuous man, he will not be able to see certain actions in the favorable light that the virtuous man does. Hence, he will not see them as providing reasons for acting. By presenting analogies and "juxtapositions of cases," the virtuous individual may help his non-virtuous counterpart to understand, but some reasons may just be too foreign for comprehension by those outside of the practice.[7]

What this means then is that the agent who is "trying out new reasons for acting," as was suggested above, will need to have a certain kind of life in order for the new reasons to make sense. Reasons that are too removed from the agent's life will be incomprehensible to him as reasons for acting. If, however, there is a certain amount of shared concerns, needs, etc., then the agent may be able to focus on aspects of the situation previously overlooked and come to accept new reasons for acting.

A defender of the Williamsian view might argue that it is not so much a matter of paying attention to or noticing different things that explains the adoption of new reasons in our sample case and others like it, but rather that in the past the landowner did not take enough care with regard to the facts of the matter. There is a certain legitimacy to this objection. Of course the landowner knew that the slaves were human. If asked, he could point out various ways in which they were similar to himself. He concluded however that any differences were more important. So rather than seeing the slaves differently, the objection runs, he appraised them differently. Indeed, whoever it was who "opened his eyes" may not actually have told him any new facts about slaves but rather encouraged him to value those facts differently.

Although McDowell's theory depends on the insight mentioned above that there are available to us no neutral conceptions of the facts and that what we value makes a difference to what we see, it is still surprisingly difficult to describe what it really explains to say that an agent "sees things differently" now. That concept is intended to explain why the agent views a situation as giving rise to a reason for acting that he did not previously accept. But if "seeing things differently" simply means that now the agent believes the situation provides

a reason for acting, then no explanation has been provided, just another way of referring to the switch.

However, McDowell's explanation does provide some way of thinking about how the agent made the switch. The Williamsian theory is really only useful after the fact of the change in the agent. It says that since the agent now sees aiding the slaves as a reason for acting, he must have adopted a new project. No explanation is forthcoming as to how this came about unless the new project was required by previously-held projects and concerns or unless a new desire just came to him. With regard to the latter possibility, for all we know, the agent's new goal may have simply appeared "out of nowhere." McDowell's explanation may only gesture at what takes places within the agent's psychology, but the gesture is more than Williams' theory provides.

Note that insofar as McDowell's theory is plausible, at least for some cases, external reasons are possible. We can judge that an agent has reasons for acting without consulting her subjective motivational set. Furthermore, she can accept a reason for acting and that in itself can provide motivation for acting.

Section 3

Philippa Foot would object to this picture. She

believes that we only think morality provides reason for acting apart from any consideration of the agent's subjective motivational set because we have been seduced by our moral education into thinking that moral 'oughts' have a "special dignity and necessity."[8] We see morality as having a special pull, as inescapable, and as having some kind of automatic reason-giving force due to "the relative stringency of our moral teaching."[9] No one proves that morality has these characteristics, Foot complains; it is simply stated.[10] With morality as with anything else, we do not know if an agent has reason to act unless we know his desires and projects.

Quite a few philosophers have of course suggested that it is possible at least in part to reconcile morality and self-interest (i.e., to show that if agents have reason to act in their own self-interests they have reason to be moral). Foot has no quarrel with this project; she is only arguing that, in the cases in which the two are not reconciled and in which the agent does not care about morality or virtue or justice or whatever, he has no reason to act for the sake of morality. Morality has no automatic reason-giving force.

One way to respond to Foot's charge is to search for evidence that, contrary to her claims, moral commands have a special dignity or importance. Without attempting that here, we can still muster doubts as to Foot's claim

by considering what Foot must say in order to explain the fact that people care enough about justice (or any other moral ideal) to be willing to sacrifice their lives for it. On her view this is only a function of the kind and the intensity of the moral teaching to which the individual was exposed (along with certain natural tendencies on his part perhaps). She explains the reasonableness of some agents acting for the sake of justice and even sacrificing their lives for it simply by pointing out that people care about justice and that some obviously care a great deal. She writes, "Considerations of justice, charity and the like have a strange and powerful appeal to the human heart."[11]

Since Foot fails to explain what it means to "care about justice," it is hard to evaluate her claim that either it must be in one's interest to be just or one must care about justice in order to have reason to act justly. One is left wondering whether caring about justice is something that simply comes to one or whether there are reasons for caring about justice so that if an agent does not care, we can say that she should. Furthermore, when we say that an agent "cares about justice," might not McDowell be right in saying that that is a description we apply to the agent because of the way she acts and that caring about justice is not necessarily

a causal antecedent of the agent's performance or an independently intelligible desire she possesses?

Furthermore, as has been mentioned, McDowell believes comprehension of the favorable light in which the agent sees his action and therefore his reasons for acting depends on our "shared forms of life" and cannot come from a perspective completely outside the agent's way of life. However, because we like to believe that our actions, judgments, beliefs, practices, etc., are objectively grounded, we have a tendency to model rationality on the kind of case in which an agent acts on an independently intelligible desire. We may resist the picture of practices whose rationality is only evident from the inside, says McDowell, but after all, "[i]t is only an illusion that our paradigm of reason, deductive argument, has its rationality discernible from a standpoint not necessarily located within the practice itself."[12] Hence, to demand that reasons for being virtuous always be understandable from outside the practice is to demand more objectivity from virtue (in terms of its ability to provide reasons) than from our standard of reason itself (a topic explored further in the following chapter). Therefore, demands like Foot's for an external justification of the reason-giving force of morality are not only impossible to satisfy but are also confused.

On behalf of McDowell, it can also be pointed out that if the concerns of morality or virtue are taken to be the most important of human concerns, then justifying them in terms of other values may not be possible. This is what would be necessary in order to present an argument such that any rational being could see that he had reason to be moral. Why should we believe that the most important considerations or values can be vindicated in terms of the lesser ones? The reductionism of values that such a procedure assumes seems less plausible than other kinds of reductions. Instead, if anything, the inferior values would be explained in terms of the higher ones. Value would flow downwards from the greater to the lesser. Such is the Platonic and neo-Platonic conception as well as the Judeo-Christian one. It is one of the more common perspectives on value in our culture.

Not only does it appear that McDowell is correct in maintaining that the understanding of reasons for acting is based on shared forms of life, but there is also evidence that the reason-giving force of morality depends on our shared form of life. Consider Williams' non-moral case of an individual who (ex hypothesi) has no reason to take medicine that will make him better. Williams writes that this is true of an agent who cares nothing about his own health.[13] Presuming the agent does not believe that

suffering is good for his soul or that this is the best way to gain sympathy, this may place the agent so far out of our "shared forms of life" that his psychology is incomprehensible to us. Illness tends to cause pain and discomfort and if anything can be said to have automatic reason-giving force the avoidance of unnecessary pain would seem to be a good candidate. Individuals are not even required to share much of our form of life for this to apply to them. Williams' case seems implausible because the individual involved is outside our shared form of life.

Perhaps the case is similar to that of the amoral agent, one who is completely unmoved by the force of any moral considerations. Perhaps it is shared interests and needs that give morality (like prudence) its automatic reason-giving force, the force which Foot questions. Then the force of morality's reasons is automatic given the kinds of beings we are and given the way we live (our needs for companionship, cooperation, affection, etc.). Whether this force is only active within our shared form of moral life or whether it also holds within a broader spectrum of lives remains to be seen and will be taken up in a later chapter.

One last-ditch attempt at finding the kind of external justification for morality that Foot thinks is required in order to justify saying morality automatically

gives reasons for acting could be based on the method Mill used for distinguishing between higher and lower pleasures. It might be argued that if a life of morality or virtue were chosen more frequently by "experts" than any other kind of life, a kind of external justification for the moral life would thereby be provided.

Unfortunately, there are several basic problems with this approach to the matter. One is how to avoid begging the question in specifying what it would mean to have achieved the level of familiarity or expertise with the moral way of life necessary for making such judgments. All sorts of questions might arise here: What is it to be that well-acquainted with the moral way of life? Is one only familiar enough with the moral way of life if one has reached the stage where one realizes that it is the best form of life? Would we ever say that someone had the necessary understanding if they did not <u>live</u> a moral life? (After all, if the agent were not living a moral life, how could we be sure he possessed the necessary familiarity with all the internal and external satisfactions of such a life?)

A second problem with this approach arises when we ask ourselves whether we can expect the virtuous person to be familiar in Mill's experiential way with enough other types of lives to make the required comparisons.

We would need subjects who would each know from his own experience what it was like to live a virtuous life, an egoistic life, and presumably other sorts of lives such as those devoted to non-egoistic but non-moral projects, and consequently, we are left with a significant practical problem.

Finally, even if the above problems were solved and it was discovered that individuals familiar with the different ways of living do prefer the life of virtue, the fact that the moral or virtuous life is preferred will not eliminate the possibility that, as Foot suggests, the preference is due to the kind of upbringing the individual had. If lifestyle choices are based primarily on early childhood conditioning, then our findings regarding preferences will not imply that there is reason for <u>everyone</u> to live virtuous lives.

Insofar as McDowell is correct in his analysis of why such reasons cannot be given, he has at least provided an answer to Williams' charge that external reasons theorists must claim an agent who fails to accept external reasons is irrational. If the way agents arrive at certain sorts of reasons is by a process of perception or imaginative extension (processes which do not proceed on the model of deductive arguments), then it is not as if the agent has been led logically to a conclusion that she then rejects. Consequently, the external reasons theo-

rist may contend that the immoral agent is not irrational but guilty instead of something like narrowness of vision or lack of imagination.

Section 4

There are a few additional things that can be said in favor of the perceptual model. Reasons often feel from the inside like something we're presented with -- as do perceptions. Furthermore, like perceptions they are based on what is "out there" and cannot be manipulated completely to suit the whims of the individual. Reasons resemble perceptions in that they come from the situation and yet depend on an interaction between the external situation and an agent/perceiver.

Another factor supporting the perceptual metaphor with regard to reasons is based on the idea that we see or perceive wholes or Gestalts, except in unfamiliar cases. We do not perceive parts and then put them all together. Likewise the virtuous or prudential agent when confronted with a particular kind of situation sees reason for acting without engaging in a discursive deductive process of reasoning. However, when seeing objects in a dim light, in fog, or from far away we may engage in a more discursive process. Likewise in situations in which the reasons for acting are not clear, the agent may

cast his mind back on various general principles or ideals that seem appropriate.

Of course in the moral case just as in the case of visual perception much of the complexity may not even be noticed by the agent/perceiver. The virtuous or prudential agent will notice certain factors or types of factors in the situations with which she is confronted that, for example, the purely self-interested individual will miss.

That the perception metaphor fits various expressions we use regarding reasons is evidence that common sense finds similarities between the ways that reasons are apprehended and how objects come to be known. When someone misses regularly certain kinds of reasons we say that he is blind to such things. When an agent is not paying attention to the right things, we say that his outlook is too narrow, he has tunnel vision, etc. When confused, he's in a fog. The fact that we use visual metaphors in general for understanding ("I see what you mean") may unconsciously underscore our belief that reasons and ideas are similar to perceptions in significant ways.

Of course, "not getting the picture" is not the only defect agents suffer from. An agent may also be charged with not caring enough. And although we sometimes separate knowing from caring, one of the reasons the agent

may not see certain things is because he does not care. The two tend to be closely interconnected in many cases. As mentioned above, agents tend to see what they want to see, what they expect to see, what is relevant to things they care about. It may therefore be correct to say that will and reason cannot always be separated in such a way that we can picture the agent beginning with a neutral conception of the facts and checking it for relevance against his subjective motivational set in order to come up with reasons for acting.

McDowell's view accounts more accurately for what it feels like from inside when we act for certain kinds of reasons -- that we don't act because of the interaction between some pure cognitive state and an appetitive state but that we simply act "because it is the thing to do" (just as in prudential cases I might simply act "because it is my future at stake"). The agent is more unified than the Williamsian picture suggests with its talk of the subjective motivational set, reason, and the agent's view of the situation. Instead, the subjective motivational set is involved in the operation of reason and in the agent's picture of the situation right from the start.

Foot's arguments that morality does not automatically give reasons for all agents are unsuccessful in many

ways but are helpful in that they force us to focus on the extent to which our "shared form of life" may serve as the necessary basis for all judgments of reasons both moral and otherwise. Hence, moral concerns (and presumably prudential ones as well) are only automatically reason-giving when directed to a particular audience. This will be taken up later, but it does suggest the possibility of being able to make reason judgments without consulting agents' subjective motivational sets.

All things considered, it appears that McDowell's model is necessary along with the Williamsian model if we are to account for different sorts of cases of acquiring new reasons for acting. Some are best explained on the rationally deliberative model. For others, the process may be more like a perception.

There is one last obvious objection to McDowell's account that needs to be mentioned even though it is not one that Williams would make since he does not accept Nagel's prudential connection to reasons for acting. The objection that the prudential cases automatically make an important connection to the agent's subjective motivational set, a connection lacking in the moral case, can be raised against McDowell's claim that reasons to act virtuously, like reasons to act prudently, do not require an antecedent desire on the agent's part. After all, we are concerned with the agent's reasons for acting and

prudential concerns refer to her future. The focus is on her actions and her future. Hence, we do not need to refer to a desire in the prudential case to know that she has reason for acting. However, this connection is lacking in the moral case, the objection continues, and we cannot speak of a reason for acting without consulting the agent's subjective motivational set.

The idea that this is the salient difference between the two types of cases relies on a particular kind of theory of rationality, a specific view of agents' psychology, and even a certain metaphysical view of the agent. This idea cannot be said to come directly from the concept of reasons itself. It rests on a theory of rationality which assumes the rationality of self-interest -- it takes agents acting for their own good or even their own projects to represent the paradigm case of having reasons and considers all other reasons, including reasons to act for the good of others, as derivative. It takes the correct view of human psychology to be that virtue or moral concerns are less fundamental than egoistic ones, and implies that the proper metaphysical view of the agent is as something separate, independent.

We are not required to accept such theories of rationality, psychology, or metaphysics. In Chapters Five, Six, and Seven, these ideas are taken up and chal-

lenged. Insofar as those arguments are successful, this objection will not be decisive against McDowell's argument.

Chapter Five

The Self-interest Theory and Internalism

Our prejudice in favor of self-interested theories of rationality goes a fair way toward explaining our predilection for internalist theories of reasons. Although there is no logical reason why internalism must favor theories of rationality based on self-interest, the two types of theories seem to arise from a similar metaphysical view of the agent and suffer from some related flaws. The goal of this chapter is to explore problems raised by the value perspectives that these two theories seem inclined to adopt. The next chapter extends this examination to the foci of the theories and to the very individualistic metaphysical view of agents and action that they encourage.

We begin in Section 1 below by addressing an immediate objection to the thesis that our predilection for self-interest theories of rationality helps explain the appeal of internalist theories of reasons. The second section specifically explores parallels between the two kinds of theories.

Section 1

"It has been assumed for more than two millennia,

that it is irrational for anyone to do what he knows will be worse for himself," writes Derek Parfit in Reasons and Persons.[1] Parfit points out that even major religions such as Christianity frequently rely on self-interest to motivate individuals (through the rewards and punishments that God will mete out). In assessing what is rational, we tend to accept that at least acting in one's own self-interest is rational if anything is. We assume the rationality of self-interested actions does not require argument but that all other kinds of actions do need to be shown to be rational. The appeal of this theory of rationality in action is strong enough even to tempt philosophers to endeavor the rational justification of morality in terms of self-interest. All other theories of rationality come up against our prejudices in favor of this view.

Because of the seeming omnipresence of the Self-interest theory of rationality or reasons, it is hardly surprising to discover that some of the plausibility of the internalist position regarding reasons for action relies on a value-perspective promoted by the Self-interest theory (SI). [2] Criticisms of SI as well as of internalism are not easy to marshal as both SI and internalism are not only widely accepted but have many elements of truth in them. However, considered as exclusive

theories of rationality and reasons, they cannot adequately explain all cases and situations.

Parfit writes of the Self-interest Theory that it "gives to each person this aim: the outcomes that would be best for himself, and that would make his life go, for him, as well as possible."[3] It is irrational (in the sense of "open to rational criticism"[4] for anyone to do what he believes will be worse for himself. Hence, on SI, an agent who acts for the good of another is not acting irrationally in doing so only if the agent <u>at least</u> does not make things worse for himself. Otherwise, his action is open to rational criticism.

Of course an agent thoroughly conditioned by society (i.e., "well-socialized") may believe that it is in his interests to act in ways that will benefit others. Or, it may actually be in his self-interest to refrain from actions that harm others (to avoid highly uncomfortable feelings of guilt, for example). An extreme version of this position maintains that an individual caught in a situation in which he must choose between honor and survival might care so deeply about questions of honor that it is actually in his <u>self</u>-<u>interest</u> to protect his honor. Of course this only works if sacrificing his honor would ruin the rest of the individual's life and, on the whole, he would be "better off dead." Since it is counterintuitive to claim that death can be in someone's

self-interest (except in some cases of torture, extremely painful terminal illness, etc.), the agent would not only have to be devoted to considerations of honor but also have little possibility of changing this devotion in order for death in the protection of honor to be in his self-interest. [5]

A theory of reasons for action more inclusive than SI can be found in Foot's writings. She maintains that an agent has reason to act so as to further his own self-interest or to further other aims that he has. On this account (which will be referred to as "SI+A" for Self-interest plus other Aims), someone who cares about his children has reason to act in their interests quite apart from considerations of whether he himself will benefit (which, as Parfit has noted, is not the case on SI). On SI+A, the agent's concern for his family gives him a reason for acting in their interests. Note however that without that concern he has no reason to act.

In contrast, Williams' theory of reasons for action specifically rejects SI and, as we have seen, relies totally on the aims, projects, desires, etc., of the agent. Hence it can be designated simply as "A". Because it is conceptually possible for an agent not to care about his own future, it is possible for an agent to have no reason to act for his own good says Williams. An

agent has reason to act for his projects and desires, but if self-interest is not one of those (and is not necessary for furthering the other projects), it provides him with no reasons. Apparently such an agent would be acting irrationally (i.e., in a way open to rational criticism) if in acting he put his self-interest above one of his other aims.

Since Williams' internalist theory of reasons does not presuppose the truth of SI (and even explicitly rejects it), his theory may be advanced as evidence against the thesis of the present chapter that internalism favors a self-interest theory of rationality. However, if we examine why internalist theories seem so plausible, it appears that even Williams' theory relies for its credibility on assumptions about value that derive psychological support from the basic attitudes and values of SI.

Recall that, as Williams expresses it, internal reasons theorists hold that sentences such as "A has a reason to ø" or "There is reason for A to ø" should be interpreted as implying "very roughly, that A has some motive which will be served or furthered by his ø-ing, and if this turns out not to be so the sentence is false."[6] Reason statements must be tied to the aims of the agent. It is true that this statement of the internalist position, as it stands, fails to support SI as a

theory of rationality. From the fact that the aims in question must be the agent's aims, it does not follow that the aims must be selfish or self-interested or self-oriented at all. The aims of a moral saint will be other-oriented but will still be her aims and a necessary condition for her having reason to act in the ways required to achieve those aims. Therefore, it initially appears that rather than it being the case that the plausibility of internalism relies implicitly on the acceptability of SI, internalism leaves the question open.

But this is deceptive. The natural reasonableness of SI operates as a factor in predisposing us to a self-justifying view of the value of actions, a view that the rationality of any action depends on a quite specific relation of that action to the agent and his projects. SI makes the self the center of value and main focus of attention. Internalism makes the agent's projects the center of value; their relation to the agent's desires (using that term in a broad sense) is the focus of attention. And, because these are similar attitudes, they suffer from some similar problems.

Williams' view of rationality relies on the idea that only things that the agent considers important or desirable (or that are effective or necessary for achiev-

ing what he considers important or desirable) can provide him with reasons for action. Anything other than those and the physical facts of the situation (such as whether that really is gin on the table and not petrol when the agent wants a drink) is irrelevant. An agent who takes a very narrow view of things, even of his own self-interest, is not rationally criticizable unless he is somehow interfering with the promotion of his own aims. According to this view, there is no wider perspective from which criticism of the rationality of his motives is available.

But why should we believe that value for the agent's projects is the only kind of value relevant to reasons for acting? Williams admits that facts that an agent is unaware of may provide him with reasons for acting. Is it obvious that a value of which the agent is unaware cannot provide him with a reason for acting?

According to Williams' theory an unaccepted or unrecognized value cannot provide a reason for acting (unless, for example, it follows from the values the agent does accept) because it does not make any connection to the agent's subjective motivational set. On the other hand, an unknown fact about the agent's situation has such a connection (despite the agent's ignorance of it). This position relies on the intuitively plausible difference between saying that if the agent knew fact X

he would act on the reason provided by it and saying that if the agent accepted value Y he would act on the reason provided by it. After all, the first is simply saying that the agent is in a position to advance one of his projects but doesn't know it. The latter is calling on the agent to adopt a new project altogether. Surely this is a significant difference, the internalist would argue.

The difference between seeing a reason to act on a current project and seeing value in adopting a new project is important. However, the claim that an unknown fact can provide an agent with an unknown reason for acting but that an unrecognized value cannot do so requires argumentation. Those who are willing to say that a fifteen year old girl has reason to stop smoking even though she does not care about her future admit that a value not accepted by an agent can provide that agent with a reason for acting.

Admittedly Williams explicitly rejects this view and he would probably defend the rejection in terms of his analysis of reasons for acting. He says that it is a requirement of reasons for action that "[i]f 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 actions."[7] In the case in which a relevant and important fact about

his situation is unknown to the agent, he will not act and the reason will not be useful in explaining action. But perhaps we can still speak of him having a reason for action because this reason (the promotion of goal X) is one that "figures in some correct explanation" of his actions at other times.

This differs, Williams might continue, from the situation in which the particular project under consideration is one that the agent does not accept or care about (and bears no relation to his current projects and aims). There the agent has never acted on the particular reason (of promoting goal or value Y) and that reason has never figured in a correct explanation of his action. Therefore it is not a reason for acting for this agent. The two cases are not analogous.

But consider again the case of the fifteen year old who does not care about her future health. Barring some severe psychological abnormality she will care about her health in the future. Surely she has reason to stop smoking now based on the fact that quitting is a necessary means to accomplishing the future good that she will want to promote. To be in disagreement with Williams we do not need to conclude that this is the only reason the girl has for acting or even that it necessarily outweighs the reasons she has to continue to smoke, only that she has some reason to quit. This is Nagel's basic argument

-- reasons carry across time. A future project or value can provide reasons for acting now even if the agent is not currently concerned about that project or, we might add, does not yet care about that value. On Williams' view it seems there is no way to claim the girl has reason to stop smoking now. Prudence or her future good are not part of her aims or desires and all her goals are rather immediate, not future-oriented enough to make her future good health a matter even of derivative concern. Therefore the fact that she will at some point have reason to want good health cannot provide her with any reason to quit smoking now because the necessary connection with her subjective motivational set is lacking. From a common sense perspective, this conclusion is troubling.

It may be objected that the troubling nature of this case is due completely to the high probability of the agent later having the desire or concern she now lacks. This differs significantly from a case in which the agent does not currently accept a particular goal or value and we have no reason for thinking that he will change his orientation regarding this in the future -- he might or he might not. There is legitimate ground for complaint here but note that internalists cannot admit (with consistency) that the agent has a reason for acting even in

the case in which the agent is nearly certain to adopt later the project or concern she now lacks. Since there is no current connection to the agent's subjective motivational set, the reason, if it exists now, is actually an external one.

A more problematic kind of case is one in which we judge the agent to have failed to accept the value in question because he has neglected to generalize projects and goals to other relevantly similar cases. Perhaps this can be seen as a failure of rationality, but it is less likely than in the previous case. Would we say that a juvenile delinquent who steals social security checks from the elderly has reason to refrain from doing so if he would hate to have anyone harm his grandparents?

A possible argument might run along the following lines. Granted that the juvenile in question cares nothing about the people he is harming and does not generally care about acting morally, there is probably someone he cares about. It may be his mother, his baby brother, his girlfriend, or his dog, but generally there is at least one individual to whom a person feels some special ties, an individual whose good he cares about apart from considerations of his own interests. He sees reasons to act for this individual's good. (Even hardened criminals generally care about someone in this way.) If this is true for the juvenile under consideration

(call him Al), then Al knows what it is to act for the sake of someone else and he knows what it is to have reason to act for someone else. Granted he may never have described his reason for acting as anything other than "doing it for Grandma's sake," but the basic reason of acting because someone else needs help can be used to explain some of Al's actions.

Then, the argument continues, the fact that Al does not accept the reason expressed in the general form need not imply that Al has no reason to refrain from harming the elderly. He has simply failed to see that other elderly individuals are relevantly similar to his grandmother. Since a fact that the agent does not see or accept as relevant to his situation can provide a reason for acting on the Williamsian view, his ignorance of the fact that these other individuals are similar need not imply he has no reason to act.

Unfortunately, this argument does not work as neatly as the prudential argument because it is open to the internalist to claim that it is the fact of "Grandma's" historical relation to Al (she brought him up, has been through trying times with him, etc.) that is seen as giving the reason to act and nothing else. Therefore, any reasons relevant to her will not apply to anyone else. The externalist will then have to argue that if Al

sees relationship to himself as a relevant factor this starts him (albeit barely) on a path that could lead to the acknowledgement of broader goals and projects. Al might have reasons for acting for the sake of others with whom he has interacted positively. Or, if Al views closeness of one kind or another to himself as the crucial factor in an individual's importance, there is room for generalization and other reasons for acting may arise. If it is his grandmother's closeness to him that makes her important and Al fails to admit that the concerns of those a little less close can give rise to some reasons for acting (even if weaker ones), then the external reasons theorist might argue that Al is failing to generalize to relevantly similar cases and this is a failure of rationality.

The objection might be raised here that Al's reason for acting is expressed as simply "Because it's Grandma," and is not based on any particular characteristics such as their relationship. This is not generalizable at all. He only has reason to act because this particular individual is involved. However, when an agent takes himself to have reason to act "Because it's Grandma," or "Because it's Shirley," or whoever, it is legitimate to ask why Grandma's interests or Shirley's interests provide reasons for acting. If the agent can give reasons (because she needs help, because she's vulnerable, because she has

done so much for me, etc.), these can be generalized in a way favorable to bringing in moral considerations. Even if the agent's reasons for acting can most appropriately be explained in terms of a conjunction between "It's Grandma" and "She needs help," the fact that someone besides the agent himself needs help is seen as a relevant a characteristic of a situation and as part of what calls for action. This won't take the externalist nearly as far as he may want in establishing moral reasons, but it is at least a foot in the door.

According to this argument, caring about anyone else for their own sake can be the beginning of a kind of slippery slope that may lead to the realization that one has many reasons for acting unconnected to one's previous projects. Newspaper reports indicate something like this kind of psychological shift has occurred in the case of some very nasty prison inmates who adopted stray cats hanging around their prison grounds several years ago. It seems that initially the cats were regarded as a kind of property and any value they had derived purely from that. However, the inmates gradually came to care for the cats themselves, as individuals. Elsewhere, when official pet adoption programs were approved in state prisons, it was found that inmates allowed to adopt pets eventually began treating the other inmates and guards

with more respect than they did in their pre-pet days. The inmates themselves report that the experience has changed the entire way they see others. Seriously selfish agents who wish to remain that way should thus avoid caring seriously for anyone else.

Before the individual comes to have this change in perspective (a topic addressed in the previous chapter), the externalist might be able to say that he has reasons for acting because of values he will later accept (as in the prudential case). Whether externalist or internalist, it is hard to know quite what to say about the individual who, under proper conditions, would expand his values but who has not yet done so. Williams would presumably not allow that this gives rise to reasons for acting because he thinks that the connections even with unknown facts must be fairly close or immediate. And, in the case of the individual who will not ever acknowledge or accept the other values, even the avenue opened by introducing timeless reasons is blocked. Then any case made by the external reasons theorist would seem to have to rely on failure to generalize to similar cases as mentioned above or on considerations of common human nature and shared ways of life which will be taken up below.

Denying these possibilities and sticking to a Williamsian view avoids some difficulties but also limits

one to a very narrow view of reasons. And just as, according to Parfit, the Self-interest theory of rationality relies on too narrow a portrayal of value, so, I believe, does the internalist view that results from denying such possibilities (an issue taken up in detail in the next section).

The narrow view of value is actually tied to another problem with internalism -- its rejection of the idea that awareness of a possible reason for acting can give rise to the adoption of the project. As has been argued previously, for a not-already-convinced-internalist it seems natural to think that, in the case of a reflective agent, awareness of a reason for acting could arise from the realization that many other people accept such a reason and from a willingness to consider or to reconsider the reason's relevance to ways of life that we share and the values supported or presupposed by them. Consequently, insofar as we are rational and reflective beings, recognition of "external" reasons may bring about motives in ourselves, create new aims and goals. Agents can perceive value in new situations and, by developing desires to promote that value, have new motives for acting. [8]

Externalism relies on an intuition that the connection to the agent's subjective motivational set might

have to arise from her realization of the fact that she would be justified in so acting rather than the justification for the action arising from its connection to her subjective motivational set. On this view the agent's own projects and concerns are not necessary conditions of judgments of reasons for acting. In contrast, the internalist holds that since it is my action that is in question, the relation to me is crucial. The value for me and my projects that will come from performing this action must be established before we can speak meaningfully or accurately of me as having a reason for acting. Value to me is important because it is my acting that is under consideration.

The externalist wants to take a broader perspective, one which allows that my relation to the situation around me (a relation which is affected by the various projects which I have adopted but will not be completely determined by it) is also crucial and may establish a reason for acting. At times, heavier emphasis will fall on other aspects of the situation than on the relations my personal projects create. If I am circumstanced so that I can save someone's life or can save fifty dollars for another project of mine, the aspects of the situation unconnected to my projects and desires (that there is a life that can be saved and that it happens that I am in a position to do so) are more important than the project I

have created for myself. Internalism says I have no reason to act to save the life in danger if I do not care about morality, the person who will die, my public reputation, etc. Externalism can suggest that a motive for acting may be created by the recognition that saving this individual would contribute to our "shared form of human life" and the values it presupposes.

An argument that is useful to the external reasons theorist is that nearly all humans share certain very basic concerns/interests and that this serves as the basis from which reasons for acting might arise. The agent knows what it is to need help and hence is moved to act or to desire to do so by the recognition that another individual needs help. He does not rely on some desire of his to treat others well or a project of being as helpful as possible to provide him with a reason for acting in the situation in which he finds himself. The conditions that justify the reason can give rise to the motivation for acting on it, as Nagel puts it.

So, while internalist theories of reasons cannot criticize agents for a narrow selection of projects or for failing to acknowledge new reasons (unconnected to the agents' current motives), the externalist position includes not only the agents' own projects and concerns as part of the basis from which actions derive their

value and motivating power, but also considerations from our shared form of life. If an agent with all self-interested projects is in a position to perform an action which will spare others a major harm at little cost to himself, we are not forced to say that the agent has no reason to act because he has no project which will be furthered by doing so.

The internalist's question (What does the agent have reason to do considering only his situation and his subjective motivational set?), is one aspect of rationality or reasons with which we are concerned. Given that such and such an agent has particular beliefs, desires, and projects, what conclusions should he reach about reasons that he has for acting? This is not an unimportant question, but it is not all we normally mean to be asking when we inquire about reasons. We want to know not only what agents should do given the projects they have, but also whether they ought to have those projects at all or various other ones. We want to know whether there are irrational projects/aims (ones a rational agent ought to avoid) and whether there are projects that, as a rational agent, he ought to adopt. Because we do not always view these concepts as completely dependent on the desires and goals of the agent, these considerations are important to the external reasons theorist. Which brings us to the topic of the next section.

Section 2

Internalists, because of the way they assess reasons for acting, have difficulty supporting the judgment that certain projects are not worth having and therefore, in spite of the projects' connections to the agent's subjective motivational set, do not provide reasons for acting. It seems an internalist can only be completely consistent if he admits that anything, no matter how ridiculous, with a connection to the agent's subjective motivational set provides a reason for acting. Otherwise, one cuts the close connection between the agent's subjective motivational set and his reasons for acting. Any other element that is brought in will be external to the agent's projects (this is necessarily true since the internal elements, his projects and desires, have already been accounted for). Reasons for action (or judgments about them) will not then be based purely on the projects and situation of the agent. The fundamental principle of internalism is thereby compromised.

If, to avoid this result, the internal reasons theorists takes the aims of the agent to be not just necessary but actually sufficient to furnish reasons for acting (in an appropriate situation), then the internalist is required to admit that agents can have reasons to

engage in ridiculous projects. Consider here the project of avoiding cracks in the sidewalk that Frankfurt proposes (in another context). If some projects are simply irrational, this seems to be a good candidate. However, supposing a particular agent cares about avoiding the cracks and is in the position to do so, the internalist must agree that the agent has reason to act accordingly. In order to deny this he must bring in elements of evaluation that are external to this agent. As a result, consistent internalism cannot side with "ordinary consciousness" which would tend to rule that an agent has no reason to avoid sidewalk cracks. (In fact, we would generally not even talk about reasons to avoid sidewalk cracks or not. The idea somehow does not even seem worth discussing.)[9]

The position regarding value that comes most naturally to the internal reasons theorist such as Williams is that value (with regard to action) is value related to the agent's projects. To be precise, an action may still be said to have moral value (or other type of value) but if the agent cares nothing for such value, the action has no value for him. Consequently, he has no reason to act. However, this can, in some cases, result in too much emphasis being placed on the agent; the agent becomes the center of attention or the only focus of attention at inappropriate times. Given that the question addressed

is whether she has reason to act, attention is due to the agent, but perhaps she should not be the main or sole focus of attention.

This parallels one of the problems Parfit points out with the Self-interest theory of rationality. To justify the rationality of some action, SI focuses on the agent and his hopes, desires, feelings. (There are many different versions of the Self-interest theory, but for ease of description, I will refer only to the hedonistic version.) Many times this focus on the feelings and desires of the agent may be appropriate but not always. On SI, any reason that an agent has to sacrifice her life to save her children from torture depends on the amount of misery she (and she alone) will experience or the misfortunes that will befall her plans if she does not save the children. The pain they will suffer or the effect on their welfare is only indirectly relevant.

To take this as our paradigm of rationality is surely misguided. It requires that a rational agent deciding how to act in that situation must ask only, "How much will it affect me?" While effect on the agent is a component of reasonable deliberations, in such a situation it is not at all obvious that it should be the only one. This view of reasons and reasonableness leaves no room for the possibility that simply acting for the sake

of the other person or for the sake of doing the right (or compassionate) thing can be rational, points out Parfit. The basic fact that her children are in danger is not enough to give the woman reason to act on this theory. But we have no reason to think that the "bias in one's own favour" is supremely rational. As Parfit points out, an individual can choose to sacrifice his life to save others and, even if the rest of his life would have been worth living, it is not irrational for him to do so.[10] We do not call someone irrational for heroically sacrificing his life.

Just as on SI the endangerment of one's children does not automatically give one reason to act, on internalism it doesn't either. We have to consider the desires and projects of the agent. But considerations of the rescuer's feelings toward the victim might be taken to provide "one thought too many" to use a phrase of Williams' from a different discussion.[11] Is "I really care about them" what the mother should be thinking when deciding whether action to save her children is justified on her part? Internalism seems to require something like this. The mother's feelings for her children may be what spurs her to action but she could also be spurred by other things not necessary for having a reason -- instinct, for example.

This example lends support to the proposition that

caring is not a necessary condition for having a reason to act. Otherwise, if the woman were unsure as to what she had reason to do she would need to assess her feelings toward her children (whether she desires their well-being or their presence) in order to determine whether she has a reason to act. But the primary focus here should be on those who need help and not on something internal to the potential rescuer. The reason for acting is something like, "Betty and Kevin are in trouble," not just, "I'll feel so depressed if I lose my children."

In the above scenario, plausibility might be lent to the idea that the woman's affections (or lack of them) are relevant to whether she has reason to act by the judgments that if the woman never wanted children and has often wished that something would happen to them, then she has no reason to save them. But focussing on such a case in order to explain the more normal ones may give the wrong slant. Taken as a paradigm, the case in which hatred of one's children gives a woman reason to let them die may mistakenly lead us to think that in the more normal case one must care about them to have reason to save them. Likewise, perhaps focussing too much on sociopathic individuals who care nothing about anyone other than themselves or on amoral individuals and what reasons they have for acting may give us false impres-

sions of the reasons for acting for all the rest of us. One does not have to like a stranger to have reason to save her -- need it be different for one's children?

Returning to the main point here, just as SI seems to put too much emphasis on the agent and his feelings at times when it is not obviously appropriate or when his feelings are not the most or the only important factor, internalism emphasizes the agent's desires and projects when it is not clear that those should be the focus of attention. There are cases in which the situation seems to give rise to demands on an agent despite her own aims and projects. Williams' well-known criticisms of consequentialism accuse the utilitarians of not taking sufficient account of the psychology and projects of the agent, but in refusing to admit that agents might have reasons for action unconnected to their current projects and desires, Williams goes to the other extreme. He refuses to allow that, in conjunction with our common aims of survival, avoidance of pain, etc., reasons might arise from the nature of the situation in which the agent finds himself. On Williams's account the man who dislikes blacks has no reason to extend an arm to the young black boy drowning a few feet from the edge of the pool (as long as no one else is around to observe his failure to help). It is not even the case here that the man's dislike of blacks is strong enough to outweigh any reason

to help based on common humanity or decency. He has no reason to help. The fact that a boy is drowning does not give him one.

From a common sense perspective this claim is outrageous and, although common sense is obviously not the ultimate arbiter in philosophical matters, it is not wise to ignore it altogether. This seems especially true in questions of morality and rationality because here even our most certain judgments rely on a strong element of intuition.

Williams' response to such a case would be that in failing to aid the drowning boy the man is acting in a morally reprehensible way but that does not mean he has reason to act differently. We can say that the man is prejudiced or selfish or wicked, but moral reasons do not provide any reasons for this individual to act. Whether one agrees with Williams here seems to depend on how plausible one finds it that our common humanity or shared forms of life allow us to talk of reasons for acting apart from our own personal projects, a point we will return to later.

A second problem Parfit points out for the Self-interest theory of rationality also seems to parallel a difficulty with internalist views of reasons. The problem is that SI makes caring very deeply about an ideal or

cause (caring enough so that one is willing to make huge sacrifices in order to further the ideal or cause) irrational.[12] Dedication to causes may be a good thing for promoting self-interest, especially in terms of providing meaning and happiness, but only in moderation, SI claims. It makes more extreme dedication something for which the supremely rational agent needs to be on the lookout (in his own case at least) and which he must attempt to smother if it should rear its ugly head. However it is not easy to believe that it is a requirement of rationality that no matter what the cause, one must nip in the bud any inclinations to devote oneself so thoroughly to it.

SI+A and A fare better here than SI alone does. On A, as Williams points out, "There is no contradiction in the idea of a man's dying for a ground project--quite the reverse, since if death really is necessary for the project, then to live would be to live with it unsatisfied, something which, if it really is his ground project, he has no reason to do."[13] But even this concession can leave one with the feeling that something is askew. On SI+A or on A an agent may have reason to sacrifice her life to save her children from torture or to advance a cause such as Justice but only because the good of her children or the promotion of Justice for All are major "projects" or aims of hers. On both theories,

it is the fact that the agent cares about justice or about her children more than her own personal good which gives her a reason to act in this way. Because she does care so much, she has reason to act, but there is no allowance for the fact that the attachment has rational support and this is disturbing. If the agent happens to have the attachment, then she has reason to act but one cannot argue that there is reason for her to develop such an attachment.

Perhaps thinking that our major projects should have rational bases is a prejudice on our part. Perhaps as Sartre has suggested we convince ourselves of this to avoid facing our freedom. But can we really believe that picking one's main projects is not a rationally criticizable process, that it is just as rational to choose anything and that the act of choosing alone is what confers value on the choice? Can we believe that choosing to avoid stepping on cracks in the sidewalk is no less rational than choosing ministry to the sick and oppressed as life projects? If we can't believe this, then we are relying on external elements of justification; we believe that certain causes or projects are rationally worth having, worth adopting and that this does not completely rely on the particular desires and choices of the agent. Reasons for acting are not fully

relative to the agent.

There are really two elements to this problem as it applies to internalism -- whether there are projects not worth having despite the agent's subjective motivational set and whether other projects are rationally worth having apart from the particular agent's psychology. In neither case can the common sense view be supported without bringing in evaluative elements that may be external to the psychology of the particular agent in question.

Let us consider whether there is a way for an internal reasons theorist to support the common sense claim that it is irrational to adopt the project of avoiding the cracks in the sidewalk. The internalist's major concern has been what there is reason to do from the perspective of the agent given her projects, and consequently, he seems to avoid this prior question. But if the project is irrational, then it may not yield a reason to act even if the agent has adopted it for her own.

If we assume that the agent does not have any incorrect causal beliefs as to what happens when one steps on sidewalk cracks, then this is not like Williams' gin and petrol case in which incorrect beliefs about the situation mean that the agent does not have a reason for acting. As long as his beliefs about the facts of the situation are in order and the necessary connection to

his motives and aims is present, it seems an internal reasons theorist must admit that the agent has reason to avoid cracks in the sidewalk.

This individual who cares about something we think he should not care about is in some ways similar to the one who does not care about her own self-interest. For each, all the relevant factual beliefs are in order. If, as Williams maintains, we cannot claim that regardless of what she thinks an agent's own self-interest is important and gives her reason to act, then why should we be allowed to claim that stepping on cracks is <u>not</u> important and that even though the agent does care about it it gives her no reason to act? If internalists could separate these two kinds of cases it would be like having one's cake and eating it too.

Williams does not make this mistake and therefore Williams is consistent, but isn't this consistency a bit bizarre? Should we just conclude that agents can have <u>reasons</u> to act for whatever they happen to care about no matter how trivial or insignificant? Must we conclude that we are mistaken in thinking that some projects are simply irrational and therefore cannot yield reasons for acting regardless of the agent's psychology? Parfit has argued that some desires are irrational. He gives the example of a hedonist with "<u>Future</u>-<u>Tuesday</u>-

Indifference." With the exception of Tuesdays in his future, "he cares equally about all the parts of his future.... Throughout every Tuesday he cares in the normal way about what is happening to him. But he never cares about possible pains or pleasures on a future Tuesday."[14] This means that he will choose to undergo a more painful procedure on a future Tuesday in order to avoid a significantly less painful operation on a Wednesday. He has no unusual beliefs about time, days of the week, his personal identity and continuance through time, etc. Parfit concludes, "This man's pattern of concern is irrational."[15]

The fact that a pattern of concern like this is irrational is something for which the internalist theory of reasons cannot account. If the agent cares enough, he has reason to act period. One does not ask whether the agent has reason to care in that way. Hence, a normative element present in the common sense concept of reasons for acting is missing from the internalist concept. The common sense view holds that irrational desires or patterns of concern will not provide reasons for acting, at least in some cases (Parfit's for example).

The only recourse that the internalist who wants to support the common sense view would seem to have is to introduce an argument to the effect that it is not possible to care about just anything and therefore there are

limits to what one's aims and projects can be. There are boundaries to what one can have reason to do and the boundaries are established by the limits of what we can care about, not by reason itself.

The internal reasons theorist might here refer to Frankfurt's analysis of caring which claims that caring requires investing oneself in something, identifying with it "in the sense that he makes himself vulnerable to losses and susceptible to benefits depending upon whether what he cares about is diminished or enhanced."[16] Someone cannot care about avoiding sidewalk cracks, it would then be argued, because this is not a project capable of being diminished or enhanced. A work of art, a cause, an individual, a group, a relationship, or an idea can be diminished or enhanced, the argument would run, but not a project to avoid sidewalk cracks.

In response it could be said that if avoiding sidewalk cracks is something that can be done more or less well, then it can be a project that can be diminished or enhanced (although in very limited ways). After all, if we want to claim that some things really do not "matter" in any real sense and therefore cannot really be objects of concern or caring, then we are going to have difficulties in that many of the things people actually care about don't seem to matter in a much more significant

sense than this. Is this project so far removed from collecting bottle caps, postmarks, or beer cans? To claim that avoiding sidewalk cracks is not really a "project" seems only possible if we bring in external criteria for considerations of importance which is something the internalist must avoid. If we say that this agent does not care about what "<u>really</u> matters" and therefore has no reason to act, what is to stop us from saying that the projects that really matter give him reason to act regardless of whether he cares about them?

Internalists trying to support the common sense view might regroup and reattack by pointing out that Frankfurt's analysis maintains that "[t]he fact that someone cares about a certain thing is constituted by a complex set of cognitive, affective, and volitional dispositions and states,"[17] which is an impossibility in this case. To care about something is "not to be confused with liking it or wanting it; nor is it the same as thinking what is cared about has value of some kind, or that it is desirable."[18] It is not possible to have such a set of dispositions and states with regard to avoiding cracks in the sidewalk, the internalists could argue. The agent may think that it is desirable to avoid the cracks but that is not the same as caring about doing so. Frankfurt argues that it is impossible to care about just anything.[19] If one cares about stepping on the cracks in

the sidewalk, one cares about something not worth caring about because "it is not important to the person to make avoiding the cracks in the sidewalk important to him."[20]

Unfortunately for the internal reasons theorist, he cannot with consistency use this argument because Frankfurt has actually resorted to an external criterion for ruling out the stepping on sidewalk cracks case. Some things are not important to the person in a way that justifies making them important to him, says Frankfurt. Some projects give our lives meaning and make them worthwhile when we care about those projects. Avoiding sidewalk cracks is not one of them.

Of course this activity may <u>feel</u> important to the agent which makes it important to him in one sense -- he will be frustrated or upset if he cannot achieve his goal. And since people do regularly care about things that really are not worth caring about (such as the opinion of someone irrelevant to the agent's life in any objective sense), why should this case be any different? Although not worth caring about by any external standard, I may make a project important to me by wrapping myself up in it and worrying about it and investing time and emotional energy in it. In doing so, I may bestow on the project the power of generating reasons for me to act.

These considerations make it appear that the inter-

nal reasons theorist will be better off being consistent like Williams. The internalist must then admit that an agent has reason to act if he has adopted a project (no matter what it is) and that, if he has not, he has no reason to act. Furthermore, the internalist must admit that we cannot talk about the rationality of a project or of a goal unless that project or goal conflicts with or contributes to some other project of the agent. There are no projects that are more or less rational to adopt apart from consideration of the particular agent's subjective motivational set. [21]

This contrasts with the common sense view that in order to yield reasons for acting an agent's motives and projects must be ones that she is at least not unjustified in having. In other words, the common sense view is that reason is more globally normative than internalism allows. It accepts rational criticism of desires and projects apart from whether or how much the agent cares about the desires and projects. The normative element in internalism however is completely relative to an agent's particular plans and desires. The case of avoiding sidewalk cracks emphasizes doubts that reasons must exactly parallel the agent's psychology.

Again, once we admit reasons are not so closely tied to the individual's subjective motivational set, we may even think that in some cases circumstances give him

reason to act and that we do not have to examine his subjective motivational set to know what reasons he has. This leaves us with a position regarding reasons that is at least somewhat external since standards of evaluation that the agent may not accept are brought in to assess his goals and actions. This is, for example, how we decide that Future-Tuesday-Indifference is irrational. Such judgments seem to be made on the basis of our shared form of life, an idea taken up again in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

Reason and Our Shared Form of Life

Here we continue the examination of the value perspectives that internalism and externalism seem most likely to adopt. In the first section an argument is presented for the conclusion that reasons contain both internal and external elements and that if we deny this we are forced to adopt a problematic subjective view of value. Our shared form of life is important for reason judgments and provides a kind of background or basis for them.

The second section proposes an alternative metaphysical view of the agent, a view which does not seem to favor the internalist interpretation of reasons or of value.

Section 1

As noted previously, from a common sense perspective it seems that not just anything can provide a reason for action despite connecting up properly to the agent's subjective motivational set. Reasons for acting do depend in important ways on what agents care about but need not, and indeed should not, always be individualized or relativized to each particular agent. In that way the

concept becomes too subjective. Williams writes about morality, "The point of morality is not to mirror the world, but to change it; it is concerned with such things as principles of action, choice, responsibility," and yet "moral thinking feels as though it mirrored something, as though it were constrained to follow, rather than be freely creative."[1] This seems to be true of reasons as well. Reasons for action are also concerned with principles of action, choice, and responsibility and are not taken to mirror the world but to change it. The internalist view that only the things the agent cares about can provide reasons feels wrong because it allows reasons to be too "freely creative" and denies that they must follow something not completely relative to the agent.

One might well compromise here and suggest that there are both internal and external components to reasons for acting. The acknowledgment of an external element may be justified by the difficulty many of us have in agreeing that judgments of worth and importance are and must be completely relativized to the psychology and projects of the individual agent. A compromise view might hold that the internalist is correct in saying that reasons for acting depend on what agents care about but that internalism goes too far in claiming that reasons for acting depends on what the individual agent cares

about in each case. Reasons depend on what agents care about (and need and what is important to them) in a much more general way. Our shared form of life is important to such judgments. Considerations such as what people tend to act on, what is important to us in general, our common human nature, etc., are relevant. Thus, without considering her particular psychology, we can say that a teenage girl has reason to stop smoking.

In Chapter One we noted Williams' claim that a reason must figure in some correct explanation of people's actions. Although ambiguously stated, Williams meant that the reason under consideration must be one on which that particular agent will sometimes act. Therefore, if we are discussing my reasons for acting, the main focus needs to be me and my projects. Since Williams concentrates on motivating and explaining action, what other individuals take to be worth acting on is irrelevant to what reasons for acting I possess (except insofar as I care about them or their opinions). However, this psychologically individualistic portrayal of the agent may not accurately describe most of us, an idea explored later in this chapter.

Unless we consider our common human nature, what reasons people generally act on and generally consider important, we cannot avoid adopting a highly subjective theory of value which may well give us another reason to

avoid internalism if possible.

In "Truth, Invention, and the Meaning of Life," David Wiggins addresses problems confronting purely subjective approaches to value. Other things matter besides how the agent feels about what he is doing, argues Wiggins. On the subjective view (the view which the consistent internal account must adopt according to the arguments of the last chapter, a view which does not allow for the incorporation of standards of evaluation external to the agent's psychology and motives), if Sisyphus were happy about continually rolling the boulder up the hill and felt fulfilled in doing so, his life would have meaning.[2] Rolling boulders is then, at least for Sisyphus, worth caring about and gives him a reason for acting. On this view, "the locus or origin of all value has been firmly confined within the familiar area of psychological states."[3] Wiggins refers to this as the non-cognitive view of value.

According to Wiggins, one of the problems with the non-cognitivist view is that it does not correctly portray what is going on even from the inner perspective. For a theory which makes the inner perspective the correct perspective from which to address all questions of meaning and value, this is a very serious flaw, claims Wiggins. He writes:

> [B]y the non-cognitivist's lights, it seems that whatever the will chooses to treat as a good reason to engage itself is, for the will, a good reason. But the will itself, taking the inner view, picks and chooses, deliberates, weighs concerns. It craves objective reasons; and often it could not go forward unless it thought it had them. . . . for purposes of the validation of any human concern, the non-cognitive view must always readdress the problem to the inner perspective <u>without itself adopting that perspective</u>.[4]

So, from the outer view it is apparent that there is no objective meaning or value. From the inner view, objectivity does exist and may be a practical necessity. The outer view therefore says that the inner view craves or depends on an illusion. Wiggins writes that since all value can be found in psychological states according to the external perspective, that means all value belongs to the inner view. But, he continues, from the inner perspective that portrayal is rejected because from the internal perspective one looks for value outside one's own psychological states.

Wiggins is uncharitable here in his interpretation of the subjective view. The subjective position could be described as saying that since all value is found in psychological states, all value belongs to the inner view <u>in the sense that it is dependent on there being an inner perspective</u>. This is a claim much harder to find fault with -- after all, where <u>could</u> value come from if there were no inner perspectives?

Wiggins maintains that the conflict between the view of value one gets from the external standpoint and the view required from the internal standpoint results in the inner and outer perspectives being set against each other, thereby developing a "curious instability."[5] From the inner perspective it appears that "[t]he participant . . . descries certain external properties in things and states of affairs. And the presence there of these properties is what invests them with importance in his eyes."[6] The importance of these properties does not always come, as far as the participant is concerned, from how they affect him, from how much satisfaction they bring him. But the outer view says that this is the only source of value. As a result, "the outer view cannot safely rely upon the meaning which the inner view perceives in something."[7]

Other philosophical problems seem to result in similar tensions. In an essay titled "Subjective and Objective" (and more thoroughly in The View from Nowhere), Nagel argues for this thesis. He writes that such problems as the meaning of life, the problem of free will, personal identity, the mind-body problem, and the arguments over consequentialist versus agent-centered views of right and wrong can all be described in roughly this same way (stemming from a conflict of perspectives). We have a tendency to think only the external viewpoint

gives us information about reality but "often what appears to a more subjective point of view cannot be accounted for in this way. So either the objective conception of the world is incomplete, or the subjective involves illusions that should be rejected."[8]

What Wiggins is pointing out seems to be another example of this same problem. The two perspectives, the inner and outer are in conflict with each other -- what we cannot help but believe from the inside looks to be false from the outside. Wiggins might claim that this is especially problematic in terms of value questions since the outer view specifically attributes all value to the inner perspective and nothing comparable takes place in the other philosophical problems listed. However, if we consider in what sense such value is attributed, then the difficulty appears to be another version of this general problem that Nagel discusses. As indicated above, the outer view does not indicate that whatever the inner view perceives is <u>correct</u> -- only that value is dependent on having inner perspectives. And perhaps the most value is achieved by believing in an illusion. We are happier (find more value, experience better psychological states) if we believe (falsely perhaps) that there is objective value outside of ourselves. As James says in "The Will to Believe," believing may make our lives better even if

what we believe is false.[9]

If this is what the noncognitivist view maintains, then it is no more problematic or disturbing than the other cases mentioned. (I do not mean to imply that there is nothing disturbing about such dilemmas, only that the noncognitivists are not alone and if we accept the other cases we should not quibble too much over accepting one more.) As Nagel has pointed out, if we could identify the solution espoused by one perspective as yielding the answer to the problem we would not be bothered by such difficulties. But we find reasons to believe both. In our society we sometimes make the mistake of regarding the external view as giving the truth, but we must also occupy the internal perspective in carrying on our lives and we find it impossible to believe that what we experience there is always only illusion when it conflicts with what the external perspective yields.

So the problem that the noncognitivist view of value suffers from is hardly unusual and, despite what Wiggins argues, we cannot consistently reject noncognitivism for being embroiled in such difficulties if we do not reject the parallel external views in the other analogous cases. In other words, since consequentialism and determinism are not abandoned for contradicting the inner view, why is it required in this case?

A second (and related) "distortion" that Wiggins finds in such non-cognitivist views is that from the inner perspective diverse types of lives differ in important ways that this non-cognitivism cannot account for satisfactorily. As Wiggins puts it, if we accept the objective meaninglessness of life, the very different lives of "cannibalistic glow-worms," "a dolphin at play or a basking seal," "a Southern pig-breeder who . . . buys more land to grow more corn to feed more hogs to buy more land, to grow more corn to feed more hogs . . .," and the "life of a man who contributes something to a society with an ongoing history" cannot from the outside be accorded the differences in weight and importance which the inside view assigns them.[10] But the outside view cannot simply ignore what the inside view comes up with, says Wiggins, since the outside view claims that it is the inside view that is ultimately important.

What Wiggins seems to ignore here again is that the outside view need not indicate that what feels important from the inside has any metaphysical implications about value. The inside view is not designated as giving the true view or correct view of reality. From the inner perspective it <u>feels</u> as if external things matter. It feels as if being a hog farmer of the type described above is less meaningful, has less value, than being

someone who makes a contribution "to a society with an ongoing history." According to the external view such differences do matter but only because of this felt difference and its effect on psychological states, nothing else.

Since the externally-based belief that all value is located in psychological states tends to create unpleasant psychological states, it should perhaps be rejected from the internal view. We should train ourselves not to take the external view when assessing value. However, this need not imply that the external perspective gives us a false portrayal of reality. The noncognitivist must only claim that from the inner perspective it is better not to try to convince ourselves of the truth of noncognitivism. This is, after all, similar to the claim that utility will be maximized if people are not utilitarians or that the egoistic goal is best promoted by adopting principles other than the egoistic principle itself by which to guide one's life.

The third objection or difficulty Wiggins raises for noncognitivism with respect to value is that non-cognitivism also "distorts" experience in that it allows for "treat[ing] our appetitive states in would-be isolation from their relation to the things they are directed at."[11] Our activities and the value or purposes we see in them rely more on the outcomes of the activities than

that, he writes.[12] Although a man can find meaning and pleasure in helping his neighbor dig a drainage ditch, the realization that it would be impossible to complete the project would remove the enjoyment from the activity. Our experience of the activities we engage in depends at least in part on our beliefs and perceptions regarding the goal toward which the activity is directed.

In a parallel vein I may think my reason to act for Justice is distorted if my caring about Justice is treated in "would-be isolation" from its relation to the importance of Justice. From the inside I think I have a reason for acting because Justice is important and not simply because I care about it. Internalism is disturbing because it insists that I only have such a reason if I care.

To reply to these concerns the noncognitivist must say it is actually the perception or belief that the job is capable of being finished or that the project is important in some non-agent-relative way that matters and not whether it really <u>is</u> capable of being finished or important. But can such beliefs be completely divorced from the reality of the case? And if they can, isn't <u>that</u> profoundly disturbing?

The reply that these differences arise because we are looking at phenomena from very different perspectives

does not rid us of the problems, argues Wiggins. "Perspective is not a form of illusion, distortion, or delusion. All the different perspectives of a single array of objects are perfectly consistent with one another."[13] And since these views of value, meaning, and, consequently, reasons for acting are not consistent with one another, the analogy of different perspectives will not solve the problem, Wiggins continues.

But perhaps we should consider the perspective analogy a bit more closely. Different perspectives are only consistent with one another in the sense that they tell us how the objects look under different conditions. Likewise, the noncognitivist might say, from the external perspective value appears to be found only in psychological states. From the inner view, it looks quite different. However this is no more peculiar than the fact that objects look small in the distance and large up close or that a shirt that looks white in the sunshine looks purple under violet light. Of course if we do not know how to interpret such appearances we can become confused or misled about the situation.

This is analogous to what happens in the value case, the noncognitivist would continue. We have failed to realize that attributions of value are dependent on one's perspective. What we end up describing as "what the value of the activity really is" will depend on what

conditions we accept as being standard -- for judging colors of shirts standard conditions require white light, for value judgments the standard conditions are less clear. The fact that value looks one way from the outer perspective and a different way from the inner will not change. The data will remain the same. And another of Wiggins' criticisms has been defused.

In contrast, however, non-cognitivists need to take seriously Wiggins' point that their position runs into difficulties by assuming that for something to be objectively valuable or meaningful it must not rely on any shared form of life or shared sympathies. The idea that objective meaning or value would have to be "linked" with rationality, a "standard of rationality to which meaningful human lives conform and which every rational creature everywhere respects to the extent that he is rational," is highly problematic.[14] When looking for theories or principles which can be agreed upon from every perspective, we find the requirement is so strict that the only predicates which would count as objective in the sense given are primary qualities ("the properties which inhere in the world however it is viewed"). Even relatively basic concepts like "red," "chair," "earthquake," "person," and "famine," let alone value-concepts, are concepts that rely on a certain make-up in the participant,

certain physiological equipment and concerns, a shared form of life.[15] Because we cannot find any value properties (or reasons, I would add) that can meet such stringent standards and do not rely on shared concerns at all, it is concluded by non-cognitivists (and internalists) that all value (and reasons) must be internal to the individual. The implications for practical rationality of taking such an extreme view of what would count as objective, Wiggins continues, include "the manifestly absurd idea that all deliberation is really of means,"[16] which <u>is</u> basically what the internal reasons theorists such as Williams conclude.

In contrast, Wiggins supports a view which sees "value properties not as created but as <u>lit up</u> by the focus which the man who lives the life brings to the world."[17] Unfortunately, there is some difficulty in determining what Wiggins means by this. We are not going to be able to find one external thing, explains Wiggins, "from which all values can be derived and no one focus by which all other concerns can be organized."[18] Looking inside ourselves for this one focus will also fail. Rather, we need to proceed in two directions at once. He writes, "Surely it can be true both that we desire <u>x</u> because we think <u>x</u> good, and that <u>x</u> is good because we desire <u>x</u>."[19] The "because" in each direction is explained differently, says Wiggins. The purpose and the

meaning a man finds in helping his neighbor dig a drainage ditch do not arise from the pleasurable psychological states that the activity creates. Helping the neighbor is desirable from the agent's perspective for reasons that are not purely instrumental (one does not help just because ditch-digging provides aerobic exercise or because one expects reciprocal help later). And, on the other hand, ditch-digging is not an intrinsically worthwhile activity; it is done for the sake of having a ditch. But how can an activity which has value have neither primarily intrinsic nor primarily instrumental value? Wiggins's solution to this is to say that it has both. "[E]mbracing of the end depends on the man's feeling for the task of helping someone he likes. But his feeling for the project of helping equally depends on the existence and attainability of the end of digging the ditch."[20] So the meaning and importance and value flow both ways.

Applying this to the matter of caring and of reasons for action, insofar as it is comprehensible, it seems to accord with the position that one cannot care about just anything. In many cases, one's feelings for the project are part of what may be required to invest it with importance, but the project must have certain properties as well. And, vice versa, the properties one perceives the

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goal as having will be part of what induces one to care about it. These properties need not be such that any rational creature at all would find or consider them important, but they may need to be such that there is reason for human creatures to find them important. Stepping on cracks in the sidewalk will simply not make the grade. This idea can be used to develop a position between hard-core internalism and hard-core externalism, a position more plausible than either of the extremes because it takes advantage of the strong points of each. It will, necessarily, be more messy however.

If we take such a view, the question whether caring about Justice is rational and whether there are reasons for acting justly looks different from the way it looks if we take Williams' perspective. On the noncognitivist view, justice can only provide reasons for action insofar or insomuch as an agent cares about justice. It is implied that there is no objective justification for caring about justice, that justifications for acting or for caring are necessarily internal to the agent's psychology. In contrast, on a view like Wiggins' it could be claimed that, human nature being what it is and human concerns being what they are, Justice has value and provides at least some reasons for acting or caring. The meaning and importance of justice comes in part from the way we are and the way the world around us is and in part

from what people tend to want, to value, and to need apart from the wants or values of the particular individual under discussion.

If this is so, then because justice is important to people in general and to our "shared form of life," there are reasons for acting justly and reasons for caring about justice that exist prior to the particular agent's coming to care about it. That reasons for being just require the existence of individuals with wants and needs is not a problem. As Wiggins argues regarding value in general, to expect it to be otherwise is to demand an unnecessary and inappropriate objectivity.

This position allows for the possibility of an agent reflecting and deliberating, not only on the best means to achieve the ends he has adopted, but also on the importance for our shared form of life of certain ends which he may not yet have adopted. He may then begin to care about those ends. If so, his desire to promote them will be a motivated desire (a desire supported by reasons) not something that just happens to him.

That this is how an individual could come to care deeply about Justice allows for more satisfactory explanations of why we admire such individuals than the explanations available if caring about Justice were something that simply came to some individuals much as they might

come to care about stamp-collecting. The just individual is admirable because he immerses himself in our shared form of life rather than drawing himself off to the side, concerned only with his own desires. On the noncognitivist account it might be hard not to view someone who has spent the majority of his life in prison because he feels so strongly about Justice (Nelson Mandela for example) as highly unfortunate in being afflicted with such a desire (the desire for Justice). "Look what it has done for his life, poor man," we would say, perhaps thanking our lucky stars that we had not been similarly afflicted. It is not enough simply to admit, as Williams does, that once one has made Justice one's ground project it is rational to do whatever is required. This avoids the more basic question of whether one is rationally justified in making a particular project a ground project.

It might be objected that having desires based on things that can be justified externally (or morally) and acting accordingly is the basis for judgments of admirability rather than judgments of rationality. [21] Admitting that this is the basis for judgments of admirability, the pertinent question becomes whether it can serve as the basis for judgments of rationality as well. Given that the project of avoiding the cracks in the sidewalk in addition to the desire to do so or caring about doing so do not just fail to inspire admiration, they actually

seem irrational, I think the latter claim can be made as well. Judgments of rationality are based at least in part on a kind of importance external to the agent. The importance is centered in our shared form of life and therefore cannot be external to all agents but may well be external to the particular agent under consideration.

Introducing this idea of importance that is not simply importance to the feelings or acknowledged projects of the agent definitely introduces an external element and relies on some kind of objectivity in value. If we think our projects are or should be justifiable in some way more substantial than internalism or noncognitivism allows, then this external element is necessary to avoid a vicious regress of justification. On the former views, reasons cannot be given for an agent's most basic projects except relative to his own subjective motivational set. Reasons for adopting a project in the first place can only refer to projects or motives that one already has. So, taking the purely internal view, either we run into a vicious regress in our search for justification of adopted projects or we admit that there is no justification for adopting the project although once one has adopted the project one has reason to act for it -- possibly even to sacrifice one's life for it. This is troubling because when a project requires sacrificing all

the more normal goods of life we want to be able to know if the project itself is important enough to really give the individual good reason to act for it. That the individual cares about it is not enough. We want to be able to say that the followers of Jim Jones did not have reason to commit suicide although one may have reason to sacrifice one's life for other causes.

The basic argument used by Nagel and McDowell to show that not all reasons can be based on desires can be used to provide additional support for this claim. Nagel and McDowell argue that if we maintain that all reasons are based on desires we cannot explain adequately the behavior of the prudent or the virtuous individual. Feelings of interest in one's future or feelings of benevolence toward other individuals will not produce the same behavior over the long run as is performed by the truly prudent or charitable individual. Desires are not so steady and, presumably, are not so discerning. Likewise if caring about justice is unmotivated, the fixity of purpose seen in individuals such as Mandela could hardly be maintained over such a long period and through so many difficulties.

Frankfurt writes that a "person's moral judgments are one thing and the fact that he cares about them so much is another."[22] The same is true of judgments of importance. One can judge something important without

caring a great deal about it. As Parfit has noted there are so many important things that it is impossible for any of us to care about many of them. This need not keep us from acknowledging their importance however.

In conclusion, it seems the internalists are correct in saying that what we care about is important with respect to what we have reason to do but incorrect in relativizing that to each individual in every case. Furthermore, despite Williams' claim that it is rational to sacrifice everything for a ground project, internalism seems to support a subjective view of value which does not make adequate sense out of phenomena such as caring enough about Justice to sacrifice one's life for it. Since caring about things is taken to provide reasons for action, the questions of what we can care about and what we are justified in caring about deserve more attention than they generally receive. When given that attention, the questions raise some troubles for the pure or completely consistent internal reasons theorist because it looks as if all projects are equal if equally desired, no matter how ridiculous.

There is one last-ditch maneuver open to the internalist who sees himself forced to admit the importance of our shared form of life to reasons for acting. He can say that understanding motivations for acting (and there-

fore reasons for acting) is actually a practice in the Wittgensteinian sense. Motivation is only understood as a practice. It is only understood against the background of basic human wants, desires, interests, and needs that are shared. This means that when another agent's motivations are understood, the reasons in question are not really external. If the concerns were not already shared (as part of our general human kind of life perhaps), the agent's motivations would be incomprehensible. So being able to understand reasons for action presupposes a shared form of life and actually the reasons are internal reasons because the connections to the agent's S are present.

The internalist's ploy here is to expand the motivational set which he attributes to agents. However, even if it is legitimate to call such reasons internal reasons, it will be a hollow victory for the internalist because he will now have to allow as reasons for acting all those reasons that he used to exclude. If an agent says, "I understand there is a moral reason to ø, but I simply don't care," this will not imply that the agent has no reason to ø. Insofar as he can understand moral reasons for acting (and they will not be completely opaque to him unless he is a sociopath), he has the appropriate S for us to be able to say he has reason for acting.

So the result is that the theory is called internalism but ends up with all the conclusions that an externalist would want.

Section 2

Since the rational agent is now being portrayed as able to acquire new reasons by admitting her place among others with similar needs, interests, and desires, the internalist's highly individualistic and separatist metaphysical perspective needs to be rejected or at least revised. A different emphasis is necessary; focussing primarily or exclusively on the individual is inappropriate. We might more suitably think of the individual as an element in a vast web of relationships and interactions rather than as an isolated agent acting separately.

First consider how the internalist perspective fosters a separatist or insular view of the agent and why this is important. Nagel objects to the explanation of an agent's concern about his own future that requires an antecedent interest or desire because he says it portrays the agent as "insular ... he reaches outside himself to take an interest in his future as one may take an interest in the affairs of a distant country."[23] Instead, the agent's metaphysical view of himself should depict him as existing through time. In The Possibility of Altruism,

Nagel ultimately argues that the agent's metaphysical view of himself should also represent him as only one agent among many. Therefore he also has reason to act for the sake of others; and, as with prudence, it is not necessary to search for an antecedent interest or desire to know this.

Nagel's arguments are important for several reasons. They correctly imply that the agent's metaphysical view of herself will be significant in determining her reasons for acting. It can do so directly as we saw earlier in the case of prudence and it may do so less directly by affecting her general motives. For example, seeing herself as only one agent among many basically similar agents might foster motives of empathy or sympathy. [24]

Although personally I find Nagel's altruism argument compelling, not everyone does. To the internalist, the argument fails to show that altruism functions as a requirement of rationality for the agent who is in touch with the metaphysical facts of her situation. An agent may see herself as one person among many with similar feelings, but may have no reason to act because she has not adopted the general project of alleviating suffering, internalists maintain. She may view pain as bad and she may even wish that there were not so much pain and suffering overall. However, neither of these necessarily implies that an agent has reason to act when the pain is

not a threat to herself.

As long as we focus so exclusively on the agent, these conclusions seem inevitable. The internalists' axiom that agents have no reason to act unless there is a connection to their own desires and projects seems eminently reasonable from this perspective. Consequently, the insular view of agents that results appears natural or appropriate. It is purely accidental on the internalist view that people have something or someone else to act for. As we saw above, my goals may be selfless ones, but the fact remains that on this theory I have reason to act for them only because I care about them.

Alternative views of the self change this picture somewhat. I can furnish no direct justification for such alternatives because, as Nagel puts it, "a justification must proceed within the context of a system of reasons, by showing that certain conditions are met which provide sufficient reason for that which is being justified."[25] An alternative metaphysical view provides its own system of reasons and is not justifiable in terms of another. However, I can and will attempt to portray the view as one that people do take and that has attractive practical results.

The most appealing alternative view portrays the individual as part of a vast web of relationships and

interactions rather than as an isolated agent. Its plausibility stems from the fact that what we do and who we are both affects and is affected by many other things outside ourselves. Therefore, the individualistic picture painted by internalism appears skewed.

Along these lines, consider briefly a feminist critique of the way moral theory is done and its relevance to this problem. Carol Gilligan has argued that moral theory tends to express the male perspective on reality and that females often occupy a different perspective. Of course nearly all philosophers have been men. Furthermore, psychological studies of moral development have tended to reinforce any bias present since even relatively recent studies of moral development have used male subjects. (For example, Kohlberg's classic studies used only male subjects.)

Gilligan's work in psychology seems to indicate that with regard to moral reasoning males tend to focus on considerations of justice, a way of moral reasoning which sees others as equals and as independent, and then asks what is owed to them. Some women share this focus but others adopt a perspective that focuses on relationships and interdependence.[26] Gilligan calls this the perspective of care.

Gilligan points out that, like the ambiguous figure that can be seen as either a duck or a rabbit, most of us

are capable of looking at situations from either the justice perspective or from the care perspective. However, each of us has particular ways of organizing perceptual and moral reality and will tend to see a figure or a situation in characteristic ways. Although we can make ourselves aware of other ways of viewing the situation, we cannot combine them into one. Reduction is not possible. We can shift perspectives, but there still are two different figures or two different moral perspectives and, in the moral case, both perspectives emphasize things that we value.

Gilligan points out that the analogy with the ambiguous figure seems particularly apt in several ways. "The ambiguous figure directs attention to the way in which a change in perspective can reorganize perception and change understanding, without implying an underlying reality or pure form."[27] It also emphasizes the fact that the different views cannot be reduced or combined into one. And, just as in the figure cases shifting from one perspective to the other marks a restructuring of visual perception, such a shift in moral cases "denotes a restructuring of moral perception."[28] The salient points in the situation change, as do the terms of the problem, and often even what the problem is taken to be and how it should be solved. For example, the current public abor-

tion debate is expressed in the terms of justice reasoning. We ask what the rights of the mother and the fetus are, what respect for human life entails, etc. "Framed as a problem of care, the dilemma posed by abortion shifts. The connection between the fetus and the pregnant woman becomes the focus of attention and the question becomes whether it is responsible or irresponsible, caring or careless, to extend or to end this connection."[29] The justice perspective emphasizes "detachment . . . [as] the hallmark of mature moral thinking . . . signifying the ability to judge dispassionately, to weigh evidence in an even-handed manner, balancing the claims of others and self. From a care perspective [however], detachment is the moral problem."[30] "[I]t breeds moral blindness or indifference -- a failure to discern or respond to need."[31]

Although the justice orientation values dispassionate and detached decision making and the care perspective does not, these different outlooks are not opposites. It is not that justice is uncaring or that caring is unjust. "Instead, these perspectives denote different ways of organizing the basic elements of moral judgment: self, others, and the relationship between them."[32] From the care perspective, one tends to think in terms of a "network or web ... each organizing framework leads to a different way of imagining the self as a moral agent."[33]

In contrast, "From a justice perspective, the self as moral agent stands as the figure against a ground of social relationships."[34] In this case, relationships move from a main focus that defines the self and others to background.

These comments epitomize what I see as wrong with internalism. Internalism focuses on the self as agent and everything else (relationships, situation, etc.) is irrelevant unless the agent cares about such things or unless they will affect desires he has or projects he has adopted. The fact that I am in a position to furnish easy help to a drowning person cannot alone be said to give me with a reason to act. My place in the situation or my place as a member of the human community does not provide justification for judging that I have a reason for acting. We have to examine my projects and subjective motivational set in order to know whether I have a reason to act.

From the care perspective there is still a division between the self and others, but "[a]s a framework for moral decision, care is grounded in the assumption that self and other are interdependent, an assumption reflected in a view of action as responsive and, therefore, as arising in relationship rather than the view of action as emanating from within the self and, therefore, 'self

governed.'"[35] Externalism obviously gains support from the care perspective in that it will not always be necessary to examine an agent's subjective motivational set on this perspective to know what reasons she has for acting. That this strikes me but not Williams as the correct picture may simply indicate that we see the fundamental position of agents in a different way.

Although the individualistic view seems best when we focus on the fact that it is the individual agent who is going to be acting, it is also true that the way she acts and the choices and desires she has have been formed and influenced in important ways by others. She has been molded over the years by society, parents, environment, and her genetic heritage. Not only does the agent affect the web of life by her actions, she is affected constantly by the actions of many others. Why should it be more rational to focus on what separates her from others than on what connects her to others?

Gilligan emphasizes that there are strengths and weaknesses to both moral perspectives she describes but that in our natural desire to simplify, we concentrate on or focus on one view and miss out on what the other view has to offer. "[T]he focus phenomenon suggests that people have a tendency to lose sight of one moral perspective in arriving at a moral decision--a liability equally shared by both sexes."[36]

The individualistic metaphysical view of the agent is so firmly entrenched in our consciousnesses that it may be hard to take alternatives seriously, but this has not always been the case. The early Hebrews focussed on the tribe or race rather than the individual. It was the good of the whole that was important. Even the early Christians viewed themselves as part of the body of Christ and thought that their actions were to be guided by that image. A modern non-individualistic view comes from the deep ecology movement which emphasizes that we are part of a vast web of life and that nothing we do leaves this web unaffected.

Is not the view of the agent as part of a vast interconnected web at least as plausible as the alternative? We <u>are</u> smaller parts of much larger interconnected wholes: our families, our work groups, our communities, the human race, the ecosystem as a whole.

Whichever of these perspectives or foci we adopt for our primary conception of ourselves drastically affects what we take to be rational and what we consider reasons for acting. If we see ourselves as part of a web of life, an integral part of the life and lives going on around us, it is not that we <u>identify</u> with other people, animals, the land and water and therefore have reasons for acting in ways that someone with a different meta-

physical view does not. To express it that way is to misplace the emphasis. I don't identify with these other things, rather I see my place among them and my relationships with them as giving rise to certain reasons for action. Therefore, it is no more correct to say that I have adopted these as projects or aims than it is to say that I adopt prudence as a project. To describe the situation in that way is to change the emphasis with the result that what occurs is inadequately portrayed. It is not that I act because I care about the others or have adopted their good as one of my projects, but rather that I see myself as someone who has reasons for acting because she integrally connected with a much larger whole and not as an individual who can do whatever she wants against a background of these other things.

The reasons that arise from this alternative view can be called external reasons in that they may not connect to my subjective motivational set in the way internalism demands. Or, to be more precise, reason judgments can be made without examining my particular S. Just as prudence gives rise to reasons if one sees oneself as an agent existing through time apart from whether one has adopted prudence as a general project or aim, the good of other portions of the web of life can give rise to reasons for acting without reference to one's particular desires and goals. Although we might be tempted then

to say that one has adopted the good of the whole as a project, this is only because the good of the whole is seen to give reasons to act. Just as an agent's being moved to act by prudential considerations allows us to say he has the desire to act prudently but does not necessarily allow us to attribute to him a general and causally effective desire to promote his future desires, the agent's being moved to act by considerations of the whole need not imply a causally effective desire to promote the good of the whole. Making such an assumption would simply be to accept as axiomatic the main claim of internalism. In this alternative view, one does not really identify with the whole so much as take responsibility for one's place in it.

In conclusion, Nagel is clearly justified in emphasizing the importance of our metaphysical view of ourselves in the analysis of reasons for action. Those who take the internalist perspective as being the obviously correct or most appropriate view of reasons for acting are relying heavily on our individualistic heritage -- the primacy of the individual. Those who find the externalist perspective more appealing may have, for one reason or another, a different metaphysical view of agents. Viewing our connections as crucial to who we are makes the individualistic metaphysical view and the

theories to which it gives rise unappealing.

I am not claiming that one metaphysical view can be shown to be better than the other or more justified somehow. However, I think it is a mistake to assume that we need take the individualistic perspective. Alternative views emphasizing interrelatedness and connectedness may be healthier for us and for the planet. The individualistic heritage has led to feelings of sterility and alienation. Psychological studies have concluded that individuals who are part of close-knit groups and not just concerned with their individual lives and problems tend to be healthier physically and mentally. Ecologically the individualistic view has led to poisoning of the planet and disregard for the others with whom we share it to the point where the existence of our species as well as all others is threatened. And, while these consequences of the individualistic view do not necessarily show that the view to be incorrect, it may be that just as egoists have reason to abandon the egoistic principle as the basis for their individual actions (because they are more likely to increase their own personal good by using other principles), even individualists may have reason to try to take a less individualistic view.

For my purposes, this argument is important because it casts doubt on the metaphysical basis for internalism.

Internalism claims to give the only correct view of reasons but it relies on a metaphysical view of the agent which has rivals. And, on a view that emphasizes connectedness or relations it makes sense to speak of reasons for acting without examining the subjective motivational set of the agent. An external interpretation of reasons is therefore plausible.

Chapter Seven

Internalism and Human Psychology

This chapter continues the search for answers to the question why we find internalism so attractive and suggests that internalism is based on an inadequate view of human nature or human psychology. The internal reasons theorist maintains that reasons are necessarily motivating; the conceivability of an agent failing to be moved by moral or even prudential considerations has no analogue with regard to the agent's reasons for acting. However, this ignores certain basic facts of human psychology.

The internalists claim it would be nonsense for an agent to say, "I see that I have a reason to do ø, but so what?" Furthermore, we simply don't find such comments in ordinary language and, if external reasons made sense, we should be able to find some comments of the above type. An agent could admit that he had a reason for acting but that having a reason meant nothing to him, that he had no motive or motivation for behaving as indicated. But reasons for acting are based on the agent's own values and projects so he cannot be indifferent to his own reasons for acting say the internalists. Motivation must be internal to the concept of having a reason.

If this analysis is correct, then an agent certainly cannot say, "I have reason to do ø, but so what?" (I will hereafter refer to that question as Q and the parallel moral question, "I see that doing ø is morally preferable, but why should I care?" as M.) However, it is not always clear why the internalist thinks an agent cannot state Q without engaging in nonsense. If it is because internalism is true, then Q being nonsense cannot provide support for the internalist thesis; it is simply equivalent to the truth of internalism. If, however, Q's nonsensical nature (when spoken by an agent) is understood to provide support for the internalist thesis rather than simply being a logical implication of it, the underlying idea seems to be that reasons are somehow more fundamental to human psychology than, for instance, morality or prudence. To corroborate this idea, the alleged fact that external reason statements are not found in ordinary conversation can be advanced. Williams, for example, has claimed that when external reason statements do occur, they can usually be seen to be confused versions of other claims such as "We would prefer that he do ø" or "It would be morally better if he did ø."[1]

In this chapter I will first examine the idea that best supports the internalist claim that Q is nonsense, the idea that reasons are basic or fundamental to human nature or agency in a way that other considerations such as those of morality or prudence are not. To do so I will contrast some

varying pictures of human nature and psychology -- the amoralist as opposed to the arationalist, and the agent unmoved by his moral obligations in contraposition to the individual indifferent to reasons he has for acting. Rather than indifference to one's own reasons for acting being evidence of some bizarre psychopathic mentality, it turns out to be a relatively ordinary occurrence.

In addition, Williams' contention that all the uses of external reason statements fall into categories of misuse or misleading use will be taken up.[2] I will offer an alternative explanation for the alleged dearth of external reason statements. Since we use the term "reason" in many different ways, the truth of Williams' claim is at least not immediately apparent. The lack of true external reasons statements in ordinary discourse can be argued to stem from a cause other than the falsity or incoherence of such statements.

Section 1

Frankena has argued that obligations most naturally lend themselves to an external interpretation.[3] This means that an agent can admit that he has a moral obligation to do ø and, without engaging in nonsense, can ask for not-specifically-moral motivation for fulfilling the obligation. If reasons also are capable of external interpretation, it seems an agent should be able to make a similar

request. For example, "I see that I have reason to ø ... what of it?" In other words, the speaker can admit that he has a reason for doing ø but indicate that he is unmoved by that realization. His rational obligations do not move him.

This sounds odd at first; we find it easier to think of people as morally perverse or even amoral than rationally perverse or froward. While we rather easily accept that someone may be aware of moral considerations calling for a particular action and yet may reject those considerations, we find it harder to believe that someone may be aware of other types of reasons for acting, especially reasons connected to the agent's own good or a valued project, and be indifferent to them.

However, the psychologies of persons indifferent to moral obligations may be more similar to those of persons indifferent to rational obligations than the internal reasons theory leads us to believe. Consider first the psychology of individuals who are indifferent to moral obligations. We are all familiar at least with the <u>idea</u> of the amoral individual, someone who does not care about morality. We can imagine an individual saying, "I know I have a moral obligation to take care of my children, but why should I do it?" (For this question to make sense, the "should" here must obviously be taken to be other than a purely moral "should".) If an individual who generally cares about being

moral or about being kind or upstanding or whatever asks such a question he can at least be taxed with various consistency considerations, but in the case of a totally amoral and self-absorbed individual such possibilities will be lacking.

Interestingly, Bernard Williams has pointed out that it is extremely difficult for someone to be a true amoralist. If such an individual objects to the way another treats him, "his objecting [can only consistently consist] . . . in such things as his not liking it and fighting back. What he cannot consistently do is <u>resent</u> it or disapprove of it, for these are attitudes within the moral system."[4] He must resist the inclination to think that others "have <u>no right</u> to treat him in certain ways.

Since, apart from actual sociopaths, most human individuals are incapable of refraining from resentment of certain treatment, they cannot be true amoralists. Even convicted murderers become full of righteous indignation when they feel that police are not treating them as they deserve. Many individuals who behave in abominable ways are not amoral, they are immoral. Such an individual can admit that he has moral obligations (however unlikely it is that he will do so), and can be at the same time completely unmoved by such considerations. In fact, the knowledge that he has obligations may motivate him to act badly out of rebellion or sheer perversity. As long however as he thinks

others morally ought to treat him in certain ways, he is obviously not beyond the scope of all moral considerations.

Can comparable claims be made in the case of rational obligations? There are two kinds of cases to be investigated: the arational individual (the direct analogue of the amoral individual) and the individual who, at times, will not be motivated by reasons that he acknowledges (the analogue of the immoral agent).

To parallel Williams' picture of the amoralist, our portrayal of the arational agent must require that she never act on the basis of reasons she sees for acting. Just as the amoralist is not guided by any kind of moral consideration, the arationalist must not be guided by reasons. The picture of the individual we are presented with here is harder to accept as coherent or possible (when we think of sane individuals at least) than it is in the moral case. Hence this may be thought to provide a basis for the conclusion that rationality is more basic a part of human nature than morality. However, such a conclusion might be overhasty. The appropriateness of making generalizations about human nature from such extreme and relatively rare cases is questionable at best. Just as the less extreme immoralist can be aware of and yet be unmoved by moral considerations for acting, the part-time irrationalist can be unmoved by reasons she has for acting.

Consider the position Dostoyevsky proposes in Notes from Underground. Human nature is such, his protagonist argues, that if everything were arranged entirely according to reason, people would not be able to stand it. Of all human advantages, the most important or most valued is an "independent will, at all costs and whatever the consequences."[6] This will encompasses "one's own free, unrestrained choice, one's own whim, be it the wildest, one's own fancy, sometimes worked up to a frenzy--that is the most advantageous advantage that causes every system and every theory to crumble into dust on contact."[6] The independent will refuses to be constrained by "precepts of justice and reason."[7] The truth is that:

> ... a man, always and everywhere, prefers to act in the way he feels like acting and not in the way his reason and interest tell him, for it is very possible for a man to feel like acting against his interests and, in some instances, I say that he positively wants to act that way.[8]

To see the value humans place on an independent will, we have only to look at their actions. A man will argue that a particular action must be done because it accords with precepts of justice and reason and then, "exactly fifteen minutes later, without any apparent external cause, but prompted by something inside him that is stronger than every consideration of interest, he pirouettes and starts saying exactly the opposite of what he was saying before; that is, he discredits the laws of logic and his own

advantage."[9] A man will go against "reason, honor, security and prosperity" for this advantage. Consequently, this advantage destroys all classifications and tables of advantage. "It does not fit into any scale or chart."[10]

In fact, continues Dostoyevsky's protagonist, if we hypothesize that man has no free will and that we have discovered all the natural laws including those determining human behavior and therefore can predict what would happen by means of "something like logarithm tables . . . Or, better still, catalogues . . . designed to help us in the way our dictionaries and encyclopedias do," then an individual will only have to consult these charts to know what there is reason to do. The problem is that this is not what humans want because "you can't guarantee . . . that it won't be deadly boring. . . . [And] one might do anything out of boredom." Cleopatra is reported to have stuck gold pins into her slaves out of boredom. "But that's nothing. What's really bad . . . is that the golden pins will be welcomed then."[11]

If everything was rational, people would rebel. They would not be able to stand it, Dostoyevsky's character claims. If someone showed up and said, "What do you say, folks, let's send all this reason to hell, just to get all these logarithm tables out from under our feet and go back to our own stupid ways," the bad part is that "this gentleman would be sure to find followers. That's the way man is

made."[12]

Mill's famous argument that we ought to allow people liberty, freedom to be irrational and to ignore their own interests if they so choose, was grounded in the claim that happiness will thereby be maximized overall. People might make errors but it is better in the long run to let them do so. Dostoyevsky's character is not arguing that people might mistakenly do what is not good for them or that which will not further their projects but that they sometimes want to do things that they know are not in their interests, things that go against reason. This simply is the way people are. They do not want constraints on their wills, even the constraints of reason.

This portrayal of human nature has a ring of truth to it. Is not the freedom that cigarette smokers demand the freedom to ignore reason and their own good and be irrational if they so choose? Perhaps their wills are not necessarily weak, they're independent. They're not bound by reason. Humans do have a tendency to be contrary or perverse. Maybe we want the freedom to legislate for ourselves in ways that oppose the dictates of Reason; the sort of autonomy Kant described is too restricted for us. Don't people often seem impatient with considerations of reason, wanting to make their decisions on some other basis (whim or emotion perhaps)? Do we not find it boring or at least

irritating and confining to always act in a rational manner? Sometimes, someone will say, "I want to do something crazy! I'm tired of being rational and responsible!" Going against reason can feel liberating and exhilarating. Many of us may therefore be part-time irrationalists. We are not arational any more than we are amoral.

The good of periodic irrationality cannot, as Dostoyevsky points out, be brought into some rational chart of advantages; we cannot avoid the conclusions here by giving reasons for acting against reason. The goal of acting without reason is not to be gained by adhering to the reason statement, "Given your feelings, you have reason to act irrationally." If we claim that the individual has reason to act irrationally or to ignore reason, the desire to be rationally contrary or perverse is stymied. The desire to escape or flout reason will then be a reason that cannot be fulfilled. In that case, there would be no way to flout reason except through the literal insanity of total arationality.

So, at times people may "fail" to act according to reason and this need not be because of some failure of their will or of their ability to figure out what is best to do, it may be that they simply do not want to follow reason.

If people are perverse or froward to a degree (as there seems to be ample evidence in everyday life to suggest), then the existence of external reasons is possible since

someone could admit to having reason to act and yet be unmoved by the reason. Knowing that Alice has a reason for action will not allow us to assume any motivation on her part for acting in accordance with it. In fact, knowledge of this reason may be part of the explanation of her acting otherwise. This means that the idea underlying external reasons, the idea that an agent can have a reason for acting that does not connect to her subjective motivational set, is not a strange or startling idea.

Section 2

Recent brain research supports such a view of human nature by portraying the action-directing part(s) of the brain as more concerned with emotion and various automatic systems than with reason. Orenstein and Sobel write in The Healing Brain:

> [T]he commanding, controlling mental operating system ... is much more closely linked with emotions and the system of automatic bodyguards than with conscious thought and reason. The primary job of the brain is to insure survival, not by calculating, plotting, planning, and carefully weighing the alternatives, but by mobilizing the organism to respond quickly to changes, discontinuities, and upsets in the environment, events which might represent threats.
>
> The central readout within ourselves is, therefore, usually an emotional appraisal of a change in the outside environment ... To insure rapid response to these appraisals, the self is linked with certain automatic response patterns, emotions, which prepare us for action.[13]

Given this description and Dostoyevsky's claims, rationality seems to fit Williams' description of the place of morality in our lives. He writes that it provides "considerations [that] play an important, formative, but often insecure role."[14] This makes sense when we realize that paying attention to reasons for acting is a way of orienting one's life, behavior, and decisions, and that a basic orientation can be rejected at times.

Consider the case of John. John is in a mood in which he does not care what he has reason to do. John likes to lie around in bed until at least two in the afternoon reading newspapers and novels, but he also needs to earn money to support himself. He is offered a nighttime proofreading job. He has no specific objection to the position and is not burning with desire to do something else. The job will enable him to keep the schedule he prefers and will provide money that he needs. Given this scenario, John has a good reason to accept the job. However, John is sometimes contrary and this is one of those times. He is not willing to act as reason demands. It is not that he has other conflicting projects or desires that overcome his will as the desire for nicotine may overcome the smoker's project of quitting the habit. John simply does not care right now about what he has reason to do. John might say, "I see

that I have reason to take the job, but so what?" Although sometimes we fail to act as reason demands because we succumb to competing desires, at other times it feels from the inside as if the behavior is due to a kind of perversity or even to an indifference to reason.

The internal reasons theorist might attempt to describe this situation as one in which John does not have a reason to take the job (at this time anyway) since the needed connections to his subjective motivational set are lacking. But the fact that John does not care what he has reason to do now does not imply that he has rejected all his projects and therefore has no reason to act. John here is indifferent (or perhaps even antagonistic) to reason. We can certainly say that he is being irrational but we cannot say that he has no reason to act.

Some individuals might choose to explain John's behavior by saying that if, under these circumstances, he is not willing to act to maintain his preferred lifestyle, he does not actually favor it much. It is not that he does not care about reasons he has for acting, they will claim; rather, his behavior shows he does not care much about the ends in question. The assumption here is that an agent who does not act for the sake of some end (when no countervailing desires are present) does not actually care much for that end (i.e., actual

behavior is the standard by which we measure how much someone cares about ends). "Actions speak louder than words," we say.

There is some truth to this. If John regularly passed up any opportunity to maintain his desired life-style, we would certainly have cause to question his claimed preferences. But here we are not talking about a persistent pattern, we are dealing with a case of failing to act on very good reasons for acting <u>once</u>. If we assume that by failing to act John has shown he does not really care about maintaining the lifestyle that it appeared he preferred, we are implicitly assuming that people are primarily rational, an assumption we do well to question. As Dostoyevsky has so graphically pointed out, most (if not all) of us make our decisions at times in other ways than according to the reasons presented to us. But surely while in those moods we are not so changed that we cannot be considered as having the same projects at all that we do at other times.

The conclusion that reasons can be interpreted externally (i.e., as not logically requiring some motivation on the agent's part) is at least partially supported by this idea that agents can be unconcerned about reasons. John has reason for acting because there are connections to projects or goals of his. However, in the

mood he is in, he is not motivated at all by the knowledge of the reasons that he has and so those reasons seem more like external reasons than the internalist may find comfortable.

Section 3

On the analysis being offered, the statement that an individual is unconcerned about reasons is not as peculiar as it might sound at first. Residual appearances of peculiarity may be due to our tendency to assume that people do care about reasons much as we assume that they care about their own futures. Perhaps internalism's appeal springs in part from these assumptions. This would provide a partial explanation of the claim that in ordinary discourse reasons appear always to be linked with motivational factors. The link is not required by the mere concept of having a reason but is based on sensitivities that most individuals share. The physiological evidence as to how the brain works lends some support to this hypothesis since it seems to show that our primary motivations do not rely on what reasons we perceive but on emotional responses to our environment and "certain automatic response patterns," many of which we are born with.[15] In fact, the response patterns can be interpreted as indicating that moral concerns are not more alien to human nature than rational concerns.

Various phenomena of ordinary experience can be drawn upon to support this account of what we might call "natural human reactions."[16] Upon seeing evidence of some atrocity, most people do not simply judge what was done to be bad or make some other purely cognitive judgment about the situation. There is usually an affective response of some sort -- a feeling of physical revulsion. Some things are of a nature such that most individuals cannot perceive them and simply form a pure cognitive belief about them. "I'm going to kill you" said in a convincing way may be the simplest example of such, but even television footage of strangers caught in some disaster can be quite affecting. As McDowell wrote, "[T]he idea of the world as motivationally inert is not an independent hard datum."[17]

These physical reactions might be taken as evidence that we are naturally empathetic -- that rather than needing an explanation for why a particular individual reacts to the suffering or interests of others, we need an explanation for the individual who does not do so. Hence, we can and do refer to the sociopath as defective, as lacking in something rather than as simply having different concerns than the rest of us. He's not "programmed" correctly. Non-philosophers at least have no trouble accepting that people have some natural tendency

to "feel" for others. People have reactions to seeing others brutalized, shot, cut up, and such (although with enough exposure, the reactions may be lessened or even eliminated altogether).[18]

These facts may be used to support the claim that moral concerns (concerns about the good or well-being of others and specifically how our actions might affect such good) may be basic to human nature. It is not the case that we can simply assume agents are concerned with reasons because they have projects and desires but that how or why people become concerned with morality requires explanation. Insofar as views like the internalist one portray humans as beings for whom moral concerns are somehow contingent and not a basic part of us, they are wrong or at least misleading.

In addition, any natural responses we have to certain kinds of situations may be used by the external reasons theorist to explain our general expectation that believing reason statements is connected in some way with having at least a weak disposition to act. Williams might be correct in claiming that true external reason statements are hard to find in our discourse but that is because individuals who have not been warped or affected negatively in some way would tend to have at least a weak kind of response and not because external reason statements are nonsense. In other words, the paucity of ERS's

can be explained in terms of human nature and psychology; one need not resort to a theory that links motivation and reason statements logically.

And, despite the temptation to object that if we base our theory on actual brain function then reasons should all be egoistically oriented (since the brain is clearly designed to promote the survival and health of the organism), it is simply not true that our emotional systems react only to stimuli related to those ends. (However, it may explain why natural egoistic reactions are often stronger than others, especially without adequate socialization.)

As for Williams' and Foot's complaint that we do not call the immoral agent irrational, these considerations show another way for the externalist to avoid that pitfall. An agent who ignores moral reasons is defective in that he does not have the empathetic reactions that most individuals have; he need not be irrational.

Section 4

This last section briefly addresses the challenge presented by Williams' claim that it is very difficult to isolate external reasons statements in "people's speech. . . . Those who use the words often seem, rather, to be entertaining an optimistic internal reason

claim. . . . Sometimes it is little more than that things would be better if the agent so acted."[19] We can accept this without giving up the idea of external reason statements altogether.

If, in ordinary discourse, such statements are often a kind of optimistic internal reason claim, the considerations of the previous section support the idea that there may often be a basis for such optimism. Alternatively, the difficulty in finding external reason statements in ordinary discourse might be explained in terms of contexts of discussion rather than the logic of reason statements. It may well be that in ordinary speech we would rarely, if ever, say that someone had come to believe a reason statement or that someone had a reason for acting unless he acquired or was thought to possess some relevant motivation. And if we only rarely encounter situations in which this is not the case, we may mistakenly be led to believe that all reasons have an internalist form or are susceptible of internalist interpretation. Failing to take into consideration context of utterance and how that might affect the balance of internal and external reason statements that we encounter can cause our conclusions to go seriously astray. The process of talking about reasons or considering reasons takes place in an atmosphere of concern and that fact probably accounts for part of the correlation between motives or

dispositions and reason statements.

The individual who does not particularly care about considering his reasons for acting and merely prefers to go on as he has always done (not thinking about what he is doing or why he is doing it) will not be found talking about reasons, debating whether there is reason to do ø or not. Hence, he will not be found saying, "I see that I have reason to do ø, what of it?"

On the other hand, when someone who cares enough to look around carefully for reasons for acting sees that there is a reason to do ø, she will feel <u>some</u> motivation to act accordingly. Such an individual is more likely to admit that there is reason to do ø. Reasons seem to be like obligations in this. For example, after a nasty divorce and child-custody battle, a man may feel absolutely no inclination to pay child-support. If the man feels this way he is unlikely to admit that he has an obligation to do so (and he may actually convince himself that he has no such obligation). Unless he has some disposition to be concerned about such things it is unlikely that we will find him seriously discussing reasons for and against paying child support.

These ideas support the claim that we can go astray in our ordinary language analysis of reasons by failing to take context of utterance seriously. The process of

talking about reasons or considering reasons takes place in an atmosphere of concern and that fact accounts at least in part for any correlation between motives or dispositions and reason statements. The individual who cares nothing about reasons for acting and merely prefers to go on as he has always done, not thinking about what he is doing or why he is doing it will not be found talking about reasons, debating whether there is reason to do ø or not.

Therefore it might be the case that we are confusing factors that arise due to contexts of utterance or of assent to reason statements with logical properties of the reasons themselves. Because people do not assent to such statements or even consider whether they have reason to do ø or not unless they care about such things in at least some general way, we do not naturally run into individuals who assent to having reason to act without feeling some motivation to do so. This suggests that Williams's claim is true and external reason statements are hard to find in our discourse, but it also suggests that the phenomenon can be explained without impugning the sense of external reason statements or their logical possibility.

Adding this to the previous conclusions, a fairly favorable climate for talk of external reasons has been established.

Concluding Remarks

The arguments included here are intended to show that, contrary to Williams' claim, external reason statements need not be "false, or incoherent, or really something else misleadingly expressed."[1] Williams raises some important and difficult questions, but his argument for internalism does not prove as much as he thinks. Reason statements are more heterogeneous than internalism allows for; internalism simply does not do justice to the phenomenon of reasons for acting.

Arguing for the acceptance of a more heterogeneous view of reasons, I have employed a heterogeneous group of arguments. Although Chapter One straightforwardly examined Williams' argument, noting possibilities as well as difficulties, the next three chapters offered considerations which allow reasons to be attributed to an agent without first examining her subjective motivational set. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven addressed the questions why we tend to find internalism such an appealing theory, what led us to feel reasons needed to be tied to the agent's S, and what alternatives are available.

Since internalism requires the presence of a connection to the agent's subjective motivational set before

one is allowed to say that the agent has a reason for acting, the apparent reasonableness of attributing reasons to agents in some cases without first ascertaining the presence of such connections is problematic for the internalist. It severs the very close connection between reasons and motives that the internalist wishes to maintain. Chapters Two through Four argued that there are several ways in which this claim can be made. Chapter Two maintained that there are certain ways of undertaking obligations which give rise to reasons for acting. Specifically, due to considerations of consistency over time an agent has reasons to fulfill a promise made in good faith and it is not always necessary to examine the agent's S in order to make such a judgment. Chapter Three used Nagel's arguments regarding prudence as a wedge to pry motives and reasons apart. On Nagel's view, given the metaphysical conception of the agent as someone existing through time and as equally real at all times, it is possible to judge that she has reasons for acting without examining her S. She has reasons to act for her future good (or future projects and desires) and we need not check to see if she currently desires her future good in order to know that she has such reasons for acting. Chapter Four continued in this vein using McDowell's perceptual account of reasons. Sometimes an agent can

see that there is a reason for acting and the desire to act or the adoption of the end in question comes about as a result of such perception. The reason exists before the motivational connection, thereby permitting an external interpretation of such reasons.

Taking up the question of why internalism seems such an appealing theory, the last three chapters began with the argument that internalism's attraction is linked to the allure of the Self-interest theory of rationality, a theory which Parfit has so ably criticized. The natural reasonableness of SI has led to a <u>self</u>-justifying view of the value of actions, a view that the rationality of any action depends on a quite specific relation of that action to the agent and her projects. However, in deciding whether a woman has reason to save her children's lives, focussing only on how her projects and desires will be affected by doing so is surely inappropriate. Internalism correctly emphasizes that reasons depend on what agents care about, but wrongly relativizes this to the individual agent in every case. Our shared form of life and our metaphysical conception of the agent appear to be important to reason judgments, as McDowell and Nagel respectively maintained. We can (and perhaps must) make reason judgments based on our shared form of life. They may not even be understandable except against such a background. Furthermore, a metaphysical view of agents

that takes into account agents' interdependence and interrelatedness will not favor internalism. An agent's position or relation to others may give reasons for acting without taking into consideration the agent's S.

Taking a different tack, the final chapter proposed that internalism has been based on an inadequate view of human psychology. As Dostoyevsky made clear in Notes from Underground, reasons are not necessarily motivating -- agents can be perverse or froward. Just as ordinary individuals can at times be indifferent to the demands of morality or can even be stimulated to contrary acts by such demands, agents can also be indifferent to (or stimulated to contrariness by) the demands of reason. The odd sound of someone saying, "I see that I have reason to ø, but I simply don't care," may arise from the fact that people generally do care (which is an empirical fact and not logically part of the concept of having reasons for acting as internalism requires). Alternatively, the odd sound of such statements may be due to the fact that individuals who do not care about reasons for acting are unlikely to be heard discussing them or admitting that they have such reasons.

I have not tried here to recapitulate all the arguments, only to show briefly how the main ones relate to each other and the overall project. The arguments have

been varied, some claiming that there are ways to understand reasons for acting other than the internalists offer, some concluding that internalism is based on misconceptions or limited understandings of human life and its possibilities. The weight of the arguments taken together has, I hope, made clear why internalism is inadequate as an theory of reasons for acting. Therefore, some form of externalism must be appropriate.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that in applying the results of this project to the question whether all agents have reason to act morally, external reason theorists may be slightly disappointed; the conclusions are less strong than some theorists would desire. It is not possible (based on these arguments) to maintain that <u>every</u> agent, no matter what, has reason to act morally. Since many of the arguments stressed the importance of a shared form of life, individuals with certain kinds of "personality disorders" may not share enough of our form of life for us to be able to make judgments about what they have reason to do. Sociopaths, for example, are apparently unmoved by any of the "normal" projects and concerns of everyday life, even self-interest. This leaves us uncertain whether or when such individuals have reason to act.

However, sociopaths constitute an extreme case. For most agents, we can make at least some judgments about

reasons for acting without examining the agent's subjective motivational set first. Furthermore, there are times when the agent's conception may give him reason for acting. Therefore, there can be external reasons. However, since they do not provide reasons for everyone, they may be less important than they seemed when it appeared that they could do so.

Notes

Introduction

1. Bernard Williams, "Internal and External Reasons," in Moral Luck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 110.
2. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Notes from Underground, trans. Andrew R. MacAndrew (New York: New American Library, 1961), pp. 106-7.

Chapter One

1. Williams, "Internal", pp. 101 and 111.
2. Ibid., p. 101.
3. Ibid., p. 102.
4. Ibid., p. 102.
5. Ibid., p. 107.
6. Ibid., p. 106.
7. Ibid., p. 107.
8. Ibid., p. 107.
9. Ibid., p. 107.
10. Ibid., p. 107.
11. Ibid., p. 108.
12. Ibid., p. 108.
13. Ibid., p. 108.
14. Ibid., pp. 108-9.
15. Ibid., p. 109.
16. Ibid., p. 109.
17. Ibid., p. 109.
18. Ibid., p. 110.
19. Ibid., p. 106.
20. Ibid., p. 111.
21. Ibid., p. 111.
22. Ibid., p. 102.
23. Ibid., p. 103.
24. Ibid., p. 102.
25. Ibid., p. 110.
26. Ibid., p. 107.
27. Frankena, "Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy," in Readings in Ethical Theory, ed. Sellars and Hospers (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970), p. 719.
28. This idea is pursued in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

29. Williams, "Internal", pp. 108-9.
30. Thomas Nagel, The Possibility of Altruism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 30.
31. E. J. Bond, Reason and Value (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 29.
32. Ibid., p. 30.
33. Ibid., p. 30.
34. Ibid., p. 30.
35. Michael Slote, Beyond Optimizing (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 4.
36. Ibid., p. 119.
37. Bond, p. 30.
38. Williams, "Internal", p. 111.
39. Ibid., p. 106.
40. Bond, p. 30.
41. Frankena, "Obligation," p. 729.

Chapter Two

1. This is one reason we respect someone who consistently fulfills his duties or obligations -- it is not easy to carry out duties one would rather ignore and it is unlikely that any agent always feels like fulfilling his obligations. Of course we also admire the individual who has achieved a state of virtue in which his duties have become a habit so he is not even tempted to do otherwise. However, our admiration for the individual who has overcome temptation so often that he is no longer tempted does not require that we not respect the individual who struggles and overcomes temptation now.
2. Frankena, "Obligation," p. 719.
3. Ibid., p. 710.
4. If I do have a reason to give Sam a ride, it might be because of considerations of consistency of portrayed intentions but I do not want to try to support this here. Failing to act would be inconsistent with the intentions that I consciously portrayed. I never intended to help, but knowingly acted as if I did. Therefore, if consistency of public performances provides reasons for action, I have a reason for acting.
5. Bernard Williams, "Ought and Obligation," in Moral Luck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 122.
6. G. E. M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," Philosophy XXXIII, (1958): 14.
7. See Rawls' A Theory of Justice, Baier's The Moral Point of View, and Darwall's Impartial Reason.

Chapter Three

1. Williams, "Internal," p. 101.
2. Nagel, Altruism, p. 31.
3. Ibid., p. 27.
4. Ibid., p. 29.
5. Ibid., p. 30.
6. Ibid., p. 30.
7. Williams, "Internal," p. 111.
8. Nagel, Altruism, p. 33.
9. Ibid., pp. 33-4.
10. Ibid., p. 34.
11. I am not sure who called this a ghostly kind of desire -- perhaps Sturgeon.
12. Ibid., p. 30.
13. Ibid., p. 35.
14. Ibid., p. 36.
15. Ibid., pp. 37-8.
16. Ibid., p. 38.
17. Ibid., p. 38.
18. Ibid., p. 38.
19. Williams, "Internal," pp. 105-6.
20. Nagel, Altruism, pp. 37-8.
21. Ibid., p. 42.
22. Ibid., p. 38.
23. Ibid., p. 42.
24. Ibid., p. 46.
25. Ibid., p. 35.
26. Ibid., p. 58.
27. Ibid., p. 46.
28. Ibid., p. 45.
29. Ibid., p. 47.
30. Ibid., p. 48.
31. Ibid., p. 67.
32. Frankena, "Obligation," p. 710.
33. Ibid., p. 710.
34. Nagel says practical judgments must have motivational content -- all judgments do. He writes, "A judgment that a certain action or desire is justified has motivational content. To accept a reason for doing something is to accept a reason for doing it, not merely for believing that one should do it." (p. 64) Exactly what Nagel means by this distinction between reasons for believing that one should do something versus reasons for doing it is not clear. He may be referring to the difference between actually accepting a reason for doing ø in the sense of feeling some motivation to do so and simply admitting that, for example, I ought to do ø because I have a moral obligation to do so (i.e., I believe that morality requires it). The former has motivational content that is lacking in the latter. If this is what

Nagel has in mind, then it is the difference between acknowledging that morality or prudence or whatever makes certain demands and feeling some interest in meeting those demands. Knowing or believing that one ought to do ø then is not the same as actually accepting a reason for doing it. This is a distinction that Williams certainly accepts.

35. Ibid., p. 61.
36. Ibid., p. 68.
37. Ibid., p. 69.
38. Ibid., p. 70.
39. Ibid., pp. 70-1.
40. Ibid., pp. 66-7.
41. Ibid., p. 67.
42. We are here assuming of course that it is not a matter of principle with Stan or else he would not have to go through these calculations.
43. Nagel, Altruism, p. 69.
44. Ibid., p. 69.
45. Philippa Foot, "Moral Arguments," in Virtues and Vices (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 102.
46. Ibid., p. 102.
47. Ibid., p. 103.
48. Nagel, Altruism, p. 71.
49. Ibid., p. 71.
50. Ibid., p. 70-71.
51. Ibid., p. 71.
52. Ibid., p. 69.

Chapter Four

1. John McDowell, "Are Moral Requirements Hypothetical Imperatives?" Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume LII, (1978): 14-15.
2. Ibid., p. 15.
3. Ibid., p. 18.
4. Ibid., p. 19.
5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, Third Edition (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1958).
6. Ibid., p. 223.
7. McDowell, "Moral Requirements?", p. 21.
8. Philippa Foot, "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives," in Virtues and Vices (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 160.
9. Ibid., p. 162.
10. Ibid., p. 168.
11. Foot, Virtues, p. xiv.
12. John McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," Monist 62

(1979): 346.
13. Williams, "Internal," pp. 105-106.

Chapter Five

1. Derek Parfit, Reasons and Persons (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 130.
2. Parfit uses "S" to refer to the Self-interest theory but I have changed this to "SI" so it will not be confused with Williams' "S" which refers to the agent's subjective motivational set.
3. Ibid., p. 3.
4. Ibid., p. 119.
5. Although some philosophers (Jesse Kalin in "In Defense of Egoism" and Peter Railton in "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality," for example) argue that it is one's self-interest to become attached to certain causes, one might well wonder whether it is rational, even for the sake of self-interest, to become that attached to a cause. The problem that plagues rule utilitarians seems to have an analogue here. In the particular situation in which one realizes that the attachment works against one's good (or, in the rule utilitarian case, against the overall good), why should one be considered as having reason to stick with the cause (or rule)?
6. Williams, "Internalism," p. 101.
7. Ibid., p. 102.
8. As argued in Chapter Four, that the exact process of how this might actually take place is not clearly understood is a difficulty but should not cause us to reject the view altogether since the alternative position suffers from the problem of not being able to account for the adoption of significantly new values and projects at all.
9. Of course Williams is not bothered by the conclusion that consistent internalism will be inconsistent with ordinary consciousness. He does not wish to match his theory to that consciousness.
10. Parfit, p. 132.
11. Bernard Williams, "persons, Character and Morality," in Moral Luck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 18.
12. Parfit, p. 192.
13. Williams, "Persons," p. 13.
14. Parfit, pp. 123-4.
15. Ibid., p. 124.
16. Harry Frankfurt, "On the Importance of What We Care About," Synthese 53 (1982): 260.
17. Ibid., p. 262.

18. Ibid., p. 260.
19. Ibid., p. 269.
20. Ibid., p. 271.
21. This is why the internalist cannot adopt SI or SI+A as the theory of rationality in actions without accepting the externalist view that agents may have reason to act in ways unconnected to their aims and projects. SI and SI+A both maintain that acting in self-interested ways is rational and they do not require that we examine the agent's subjective motivational set to make that judgment.

Chapter Six

1. Bernard Williams, Morality: An Introduction to Ethics (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), pp. 35 and 37.
2. David Wiggins, "Truth, Invention, and the Meaning of Life," Proceedings of the British Academy LXII (1976): 335-6.
3. Ibid., p. 340.
4. Ibid., pp. 341-2.
5. Ibid., p. 346.
6. Ibid., p. 347.
7. Ibid., p. 347.
8. Thomas Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," in Mortal Questions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 196.
9. William James, "The Will to Believe," reprinted in Reason and Responsibility, ed. Joel Feinberg, 7th ed. (California: Wadsworth, 1989).
10. Wiggins, p. 342.
11. Ibid., p. 345.
12. Ibid., pp. 340-1.
13. Ibid., p. 351.
14. Ibid., p. 360.
15. Ibid., pp. 361-3.
16. Ibid., p. 364.
17. Ibid., p. 378.
18. Ibid., p. 377.
19. Ibid., p. 348.
20. Ibid., p. 374.
21. This suggestion comes from Michael Slote.
22. Frankfurt, p. 259.
23. Nagel, Altruism, p. 38.
24. Of course this works the other way as well. The agent's feelings toward others are likely to affect how she sees herself in relation to them and hence affect her metaphysical view of herself. There is a kind of equilibrium here.
25. Ibid., p. 18.

26. Carol Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development," in Women and Moral Theory, ed. Eva Feder Kittay and Diana T. Meyers (Rowman and Littlefield, 1987), p. 25.
27. Ibid., p. 30.
28. Ibid., p. 30.
29. Ibid., p. 24.
30. Ibid., pp. 30-1.
31. Ibid., p. 24.
32. Ibid., p. 22.
33. Ibid., p. 23.
34. Ibid., p. 23.
35. Ibid., p. 24.
36. Ibid., p. 26.

Chapter Seven

1. Williams, "Internal," p. 111.
2. Ibid., p. 111.
3. See his "Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy."
4. Williams, Morality, pp. 3-4.
5. Dostoyevsky, p. 110.
6. Ibid., p. 110.
7. Ibid., pp. 106-7.
8. Ibid., p. 110.
9. Ibid., p. 107.
10. Ibid., p. 106.
11. Ibid., p. 109.
12. Ibid., pp. 109-110.
13. Robert Orenstein and David Sobel, The Healing Brain (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), p. 58.
14. Williams, Morality, p. 8.
15. Orenstein, p. 58.
16. Taking this position does not require that one deny the importance of cultural factors in such reactions as well. Obviously upbringing and environmental factors can warp, repress, and perhaps even eliminate various reactions as well as increasing our sensitivity to others.
17. McDowell, "Hypothetical Imperatives?", p. 19.
18. Interestingly, those who become too good at ignoring the pain of others are viewed as having become signficantly less human. An individual such as a homicide detective or paramedic on an ambulance may need to develop a degree of detachment simply to be able to do his job, but an individual who takes such detachment too far is often regarded with a kind of horror.
19. Williams, "Internalism," p. 111.

Concluding Remarks

1. Williams, "Internal," p. 111.

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