



IS WILLIAMS AN INTERNALIST?¹

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ABSTRACT. Practical reasoning is a domain of concerns that deal with our most intimate views on what should be done, every day, in facing the world. Unlike theoretical reasoning which forms only beliefs, practical reasoning forms intensions and sets ground for actions. It deals mostly with the notion of reason, broadly understood as a term that acquires both rationality and motivation for our actions. Bernard Williams in “Internal and external reasons” (1981) introduced a strong and influential distinction, the distinction between internal and external reasons. Williams explicitly argues in favour of internalism, excluding the existence of external reasons and placing the burden of proof on the externalists. In this paper I will reconsider his views drawing on John Skorupski’s insights on Williams in “Internal Reasons and the Scope of Blame” (2007) and Skorupski’s cognitive internalism. I will criticise both of their internalistic accounts and argue for an Aristotelian framing of their main arguments which I believe is a fairer deal in their contribution to the practical reasoning issues.

KEYWORDS. Practical reasoning, Bernard Williams, internal reasons, John Skorupski, cognitive internalism.

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1 Broad picture: motivating and normative reasons

The main concern of this paper is the relation between reasons and beliefs. Beliefs are intentional states, which means that they are about something in the world and therefore can be true or false, succeeding or failing to fit to it. Reasons, on the other hand, are a more complex notion. Three poles are usually introduced in the debate: Humean, Aristotelian and Kantian (Cullity and Gaut, 1997).

Humeans emphasize non-cognitive states such as wishes and desires as ones that lead our actions, drawing on Hume's "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them" (Hume, 1888, pp. 415–416). Bernard Williams' internalism is most commonly understood as such Humean account. Aristotelian pole is the virtue ethics' one – people have more or less virtues, but there is a set of characteristics one should aim to in order to live a full and happy life – a good life. The virtue consists in acquiring knowledge about the constituents of good life and ways of living it. Aristotle's theory of virtue integrates the rational with the emotional and emphasizes the exercise of rational faculties. The Aristotelian conception of moral virtue is part of the greater project of giving an account of the good life. Living according to virtue is the most important element of living such life.

A good man is a man who is well functioning, and the unique human function is reason – the ability to think rationally and acquire wisdom and knowledge. This is what distinguishes man from beast. [...] Virtue and practical wisdom go hand in hand, though they are not identical. (Driver, 2001, p. 2)

John McDowell is one of the most influential moral philosophers that defend Aristotelian position on reasons. In his words:

Occasion by occasion, one knows what to do, if one knows, not by applying universal principles but by being a certain kind of person: one who sees situations in a certain distinctive way. (McDowell, 1998b, p. 73)

The third, Kantian pole, places moral reasons in the centre of our actions. They guide us because responsiveness to them is a part of our cognition and ignoring them counts as failure of rationality. We are intrinsically moral beings and therefore inclined to always consider moral reasons in our constant struggle with passions. Kantian ethics is therefore called ethics of duty. It is also a cognitivist approach, because we form beliefs about what is morally right and wrong. Christine Korsgaard is one of the leading Kantian moral philosophers and this is how she explains the role of reflexivity and reasons:

[Reflexivity] sets us a problem no other animal has. It is the problem of the normative. For our capacity to turn our attention on to our own mental activities is also a capacity to distance ourselves from them, and to call them into question. I perceive, and I find myself with a powerful impulse to believe. [...] Shall I act? Is this desire really a *reason* to act? The reflective mind cannot settle for perception and desire, not just as such. It needs a *reason*. Otherwise, at least as long as it reflects, it cannot commit itself or go forward. (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 93)

Problems arise because we sometimes aren't motivated in a certain, say intelligible way, and on the other hand, some intelligible choices don't seem to be motivating at all. What reason do we have to act moral if we didn't sleep well, if we don't care enough, if there are

difficult choices to make? And how are we to explain motivation for a number of actions of no significance at all, like staring out the window, like deciding to get out and then deciding to turn back in, like lighting a cigarette, eating when not hungry and things like that. Even acting morally in a selective way – why give money to the violin player on the street or join a humanitarian campaign, and a few minutes after yell on benevolent close persons to shut up, or failing to stand up for something you care, yet simply not enough to be motivated? How come that some of our actions do well in our aims to acquire reasons for them whatsoever, and other seem simply to get done, having very few chances to get even a correct explanation, not to mention justification? How is then possible to offer a sound account of practical reasoning?²

Justification is a far more difficult notion than explanation. A smoker who has decided to quit smoking can still explain lighting a cigarette, in terms of strong desire, psychological state etc, but it will be harder to justify that action, if reasons for quitting are strong. Justified action is the right, desirable action to do. This issue is closely related to the distinction between motivating and normative reasons. Motivating reasons are the ones that motivate, that in fact are a trigger for an action, while normative reasons count as ones that must be taken in consideration while deciding what to do, no matter what, in the end, is actually done. Normative reasons carry normative requirement. They can be reasons of rationality, prudence, morality or any other category that for someone contains normative requirement (Smith, 1994, pp. 94–98). For example, I ought to open my umbrella because it's raining. I ought to call a friend I haven't heard from a while because I want to know how he's doing. I ought to prepare a birthday present because it's usual when you're invited to a birthday party. I ought to write this passage because it clarifies the topic. Each of these claims offers a justification of an action.

This opens further questions for the relation between reasons and motivation. When are people actually motivated to act out of reasons they believe they have? Can a reason for a specific action or a lack of action be completely unknown and unavailable to the agent, and therefore remote from his actual motivation? For example, the fact that an earthquake is going to happen is a good reason for evacuation but since no one knows that it's about to happen, there is no connection between normative reason, the forthcoming earthquake, and the motivation for leaving the place. Are we still right in calling the earthquake a *reason*? The inhabitants certainly also have normative reasons to stay in their homes – their life is there and they don't think about disasters. But the earthquake will happen even though they don't know it and since staying alive seems also to carry a normative requirement, we might think there is a stronger reason for them to leave. This leads us to internal and external reasons and internalism and externalism.

2 Internalism and externalism: Williams' account

Internalism is closely related to Humean approaches because it requires that reasons motivate the agent and therefore emphasizes the subjectivity of motivating reasons, allowing them to be agent-relative. If I'm introspectively aware of what I want then I can't be wrong because having a desire, I also have a motive, and having a motive acquires me also with

²In her "Scepticism about Practical Reason" (1986) Christine Korsgaard distinguishes between content scepticism and motivational scepticism. Content scepticism doubts about the bearing of rational considerations on the activities of deliberation and choice, while motivational scepticism doubts about the scope of reason as a motive. She claims that motivational scepticism is always based on content scepticism, and that it has no independent force. That is against the view that motivational considerations alone provide grounds for scepticism about practical reasoning.

having a reason. Externalists, on the other hand, think that a reason for an action can exist no matter what agent's wishes or desires are or whether the reason is available.

Moral reasons are common examples of external reasons. Why should we act out of duty, fulfil our obligations and take care of other people's feelings, when in certain situations that simply means nothing to us? What kind of reason is it, who prescribes it and why should it count as a reason for me? Externalist would claim that such kind of reason, psychologically remote from motivation, exists – whether as information I don't have (as with the earthquake example), whether as a moral reason (why would I help my brother with his homework when he can do it himself and I'm really not in the mood?), or as a prudential reason (if, for example, I refuse to take the medicine that would help me: do I have a reason to take it?).

In "Internal and external reasons" (1981) Bernard Williams claims that only internal reasons exist. He introduces "subjective motivational set" (*S*) (p. 102), from which the agent acquires reasons for actions and those reasons are agent-relative. It is necessary that, in doing that, he has no false beliefs and has all the relevant ones. Motives for me are not motives for someone else and what constitutes one's subjective motivational set has to do with his own perspective, personal history and preferences. He states four propositions about internal reasons:

- (i) An internal reason statement is falsified by the absence of some appropriate element from *S*.
- (ii) A member of *S*, *D*, will not give *A* a reason for ϕ -ing if either the existence of *D* is dependent on false belief, or *A*'s belief in the relevance of ϕ -ing to the satisfaction of *D* is false.
- (iii) (a) *A* may falsely believe an internal reason statement about himself.
(b) *A* may not know some true internal reason statement about himself.
- (iv) Internal reason statements can be discovered in deliberative reasoning.
(Williams, 1981, pp. 102–104)

Williams cares to treat his agent as a person who deliberates rationally and to whom we won't be inclined to impute justifications he didn't deserve, whether because he would deal with false beliefs, whether because he would act in a capricious or unreasonable ways, satisfying bizarre and non-standard wishes³.

But notice the important part – the relation between motive and reason. Not every reason is a motive and some motives are completely unreasonable. Where do we place normative reasons then? Why do we do anything? Why should we *ought* something? Is the solution to abandon the concept of reason and keep only the motive, if it's the only one to give an inclination to act? But where have we acquired the motive? It is getting complicated. Can it be that the motive is a part of *S* – for no reason? If motive has to do with desires, desires with values, values with reasoning and reasoning with rationality, then it has to be that normative reasons have their place in practical reasoning. The thing is exactly in the normative requirements – though their content depends on agent's individual psychology, as a form they

³The gin-tonic case (Williams, 1981, p. 102). Agent doesn't know that the glass contains petrol instead of gin. He wants to drink gin-tonic, meaning he wants to mix the content of the glass with tonic. He obviously has an internal reason to do that: he believes that it's the means for satisfying his end, drinking gin-tonic. But he also has an external reason not to do it – there's information he doesn't have, the one that would provide him with a reason not to take the action. False belief is the one about the content of the glass and a bizarre wish would be to claim that he has a motive to drink petrol, because he doesn't.

universally give justification for actions, they exist and are relevant. In short, normativity is a form, not the content.

What about deliberative reasoning?

A clear example of practical reasoning is that leading to the conclusion that one has reason to ϕ because ϕ -ing would be the most convenient, economical, pleasant etc. way of satisfying same element in S , if not necessary in a clear and determinate way. [...]

As a result of such processes an agent can come to see that he has reason to do something which he did not see he had reason to do at all. In this way, the deliberative process can add new actions for which there are internal reasons, just as it can also add new internal reasons for given actions. [...]

We should not, then, think of S as statically given. The processes of deliberation can have all sorts of effect on S , and this is a fact which a theory of internal reasons should be very happy to accommodate. So also it should be more liberal than some theorists have been about the possible elements in S . I have discussed S primarily in terms of desires, and this term can be used, formally, for all elements in S . But this terminology may make one forget that S can contain such things as dispositions of evaluation, patterns of emotional reaction, personal loyalties, and various projects, as they may be abstractly called, embodying commitments of the agent. Above all, there is of course no supposition that the desires or projects of an agent have to be egoistic; he will, one hopes, have non-egoistic projects of various kinds, and these equally can provide internal reasons for action. (Williams, 1981, pp. 104–105)

What is Williams saying? It's not that Humean insisting on passions that guide reason makes the agent an irrational creature led by dubious forces. Rather, the agent deliberates and forms beliefs. Though beliefs are not desires, they still can motivate.

The problem for Williams is that this can as well be understood as a quite Kantian account. We might say: of course, values and norms are biased in our reasoning and behaving, and desires themselves are derived from them. That is why the role of desires is not as significant as it may seem, because what counts more is a stronger claim of normativity in the heart of the issue, otherwise there would be no insisting on deliberative reasoning and, what is especially indicative, hoping that the agent won't be egoistic. One might want to read this as a Kantian picture dressed up in a likable sub-Humean subjective motivational set. Moreover, I argue for an Aristotelian reading – what Williams wants is virtue. According to Julie Driver (2001, p. 1), Aristotle's theory of virtue is attractive because Aristotle focused on the issue of what it was to be a good person, and many recent ethicists found this a welcome relief from theories that focus on the evaluation of action⁴.

The virtuous agent recognizes what is good, “sees things as they are,” and acts accordingly. (Driver, 2001, p. 1)

My next concern is the status of moral reasons and their role in internalism-externalism debate. Williams briefly comes across the relation between “there is a reason for A to...” and

⁴Driver (2001, p. 1) writes that the Aristotelian view has become very influential: Alasdair MacIntyre views the Aristotelian tradition as the one that will save ethics from aimless fragmentation, Rosalind Hursthouse presents a neo-Aristotelian account of virtue ethics and John McDowell appropriates the Aristotelian idea that virtue involves correct perception of morally relevant facts.

“A ought to . . .”. He says that Kant’s categorical imperative should be re-examined, better to say, the status of the claim that one ought to do something no matter of one’s own desires. He reminds that what usually counts as external reasons don’t just seem to be moral reasons, which we already saw with the gin-tonic case, and then he concludes that claims about reasons are sometimes understood as equivalent with claims about what ought to be done, meaning that they are defined as being normative. He doesn’t go further though and withdraws from the discussion about the claims which contain the expression *ought to*, turning back to the nature of external reasons. They appear to be able to be true regardless of the agent’s motivation:

But nothing can explain an agent’s (intentional) actions except something that motivates him so to act. So something else is needed besides the truth of the 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. (Williams, 1981, p. 107)

So, a supposed external reason becomes internal in the moment *A* finds it as a new belief in his *S* and therefore making it a possible source of motivation. That’s why, according to Williams, there can never be external reasons, because a reason for action is either internal reason or no reason at all⁵.

Next thing he does is placing the burden of proof on the externalists. He wants them to show how a belief about a reason is connected to motivation. They can’t do that with the manoeuvre with the new element in *S* that an agent would acquire by deliberative reasoning because, according to Williams, an externalist wants the external reason itself to be a reason for exhibiting an action, regardless of the deliberative thinking and pre-existing motivation. It wouldn’t be acquiring new motivation, but an independent existence of reason in a fact that has nothing to do with the psychology of the agent. Williams finds it unacceptable, emphasizing both the plausibility of Humean position and of the claim that all external reason statements are false. There’s only a distanced “reason” that would like to implicate acting without rational connection to the agent. What follows is especially interesting.

It is the external reasons theorist who faces a problem at this point. There are of course many things that a speaker may say to one who is not disposed to ϕ when the speaker thinks that he should be, as that he is inconsiderate, or cruel, or selfish, or imprudent; or that things, and that he would be a lot nicer if he were so motivated. Any of these can be sensible things to say. But one who makes a great deal out of putting the criticism in the form of an external reason statement seems concerned to say that what is particularly wrong with the agent is that he is *irrational*. It is this theorist who particularly needs to make this charge precise: in particular, because he wants any rational agent, as such, to acknowledge the requirement to do the thing in question. (Williams, 1981, p. 110)

Williams charges externalists with the assumption that they would be inclined to accuse the agent of irrationality if she doesn’t take external reasons in consideration. In the background

⁵John McDowell’s paper “Might There Be External Reasons?” (1995) presents a significant contribution to the debate over the existence of external reasons and explicitly argues against Williams’ account. McDowell holds that Williams wrongly thinks externalism is a form of “moralism” that aims to convict immoral people of some form of irrationality in their deliberation (I agree with McDowell), and questions Williams’ assumption that the agent’s coming to be motivated must be a result of rational deliberation, instead of being the result of a non-rational process like conversion.

is the question about normative reasons and what one ought to do. But what is at issue is that Williams himself has argued for his theory of internal reasons in the previous passage with the argument that the lack of existing motivation out of which a new one could arise by deliberative thinking is nothing but the lack of rational connection between a reason and the agent's psychology. That means that he also accuses of irrationality. In this case, irrationality out of arising of new motive where there hadn't been one before, and there was no deliberative thinking either. For a reason should have been internal or there was no reason at all. However, it's all about rationality no matter what side we're on.

What fails to convince me in Williams' argument is that he introduces the gin-tonic case as a paradigmatic example of what might want to count as an external reason, but continues to argue against his opponents presuming they have something to say about moral reasons, of which Williams himself doesn't say much. He rather offers a theory that abolishes normativity as a significant property of a reason, except if it is being understood as equivalent with motivation. At the same time he hopes that the agent won't be egoistic (because it's not convenient?) and that he will acquire new motivations out of subjective motivational set through the process of deliberative reasoning. I conclude that Williams hopes, as well as his supposed opponents, that the agent won't be irrational.

3 Cognitive internalism

John Skorupski offers a discussion of Williams' concept of internal reasons, providing them a Kantian framing – *cognitive internalism* (2007). His aim is to distance internal reasons from the Humean picture in whose light they are most commonly presented and understood, and give special place to autonomy, spontaneity, auto-reflection and self-governance in accounts of moral reasons and grading individual capacity for responding to them.

According to Kant, every rational agent acts *autonomously*, he is his own legislator and he can't be wrong about it because moral law imposes on him as a truth of reason. Moral reasons are universal because they are expected to be a part of cognitive package of every rational deliberator and agent. Moral reasons have motivating force because reason itself establishes them as a principle of functioning. Kantians have the task to see how this is possible – in what way can one acquire appropriate motivation for acting out of demands of morality, and what makes them binding?

Another important element of Kant's moral philosophy is *spontaneity*. It emphasizes the self-regularity of process of comprehending that the moral reason is a reason *for me*, introspectively, without external help and suggestion. It is important to notice the following – when I am justified in believing that such reason is present, I am obliged to act out of it. But what justifies us in recognizing something as being a reason? Precisely our rationality that imposes demands of morality as the ones that count for deliberating beings like us. The most important feature is the cognitive ability to establish something as a reason and thus being justified in believing that it is a reason for oneself, and not the independent existence of that reason. In that way reasons are being established and not merely recognized.

In another paper (1999) Skorupski emphasizes exactly this difference between spontaneity and receptivity. With *receptivity*, it would be a matter of recognizing, because receptivity presupposes realistic picture of reasons, where they exist independently of our mind and cognitive capacities. That is what makes the difference between Kantians and intuitionists. Intuitions grasp moral reasons that exist realistically in the external world, outside of the

cognitive make-up. On the other hand, moral reasons for Kant are the truths of reason, true precisely on the grounds of being brought by reason and not being recognized somewhere “outside”⁶. If everyone had the disposition to be an ideal deliberator, everyone would be able to establish them, but there is no such convergence, we are not ideal deliberators and that is the main problem for Kantian positions. What motivates, or doesn’t motivate us in acting out of demands of morality?

Skorupski underlines the prospects of Williams’ internal requirement as a good starting point for a general critique of common presuppositions of morality. He reads Williams “leaving out the unsound elements that derive from Hume” (2007). Through four formulations of the internalism requirement he analyses Williams’ account and formulates Kantian cognitive internalism. He thinks that internalism is a great contribution to a more realistic understanding of people, their reasons for actions and the practice of blaming. It is not that moral reasons can’t motivate, but that people differ in the level of ability to adopt them as reasons for their actions. If, at the same time, we are ready to accept that acting out of moral reasons is autonomous, characterized by spontaneity, self-legislation and availability of *our* reasons to *our* understanding, position that arises is cognitive internalism. Therefore he offers four formulations of internalism requirement:

- (I) There is reason for *A* to ϕ if and only if ϕ -ing would serve a motive in *A*-s *S*.
 - (II) There is reason for *A* to ϕ if and only if *A* has some desire the satisfaction of which will be served by ϕ -ing.
 - (III) *X* is a reason for *A* to ϕ only if *A* has the ability to recognise that were *X* to obtain, that would be a reason for *A* to ϕ .
 - (IV) If *A* has a moral obligation to ϕ then *A* has reason to ϕ .
- (Skorupski, 2007, pp. 77–102)

The first formulation allows that beliefs, not only desires, can be motivating. The second formulation presents the problem in a narrower Humean way, though it is unclear if Hume would be likely to argue for any kind of practical reasoning at all – for Hume, beliefs are a matter of theoretical reasoning, while only desires can motivate to act. Skorupski gives an example which illustrates the difference between the first and the second formulation (2007, 85–90). If we had the belief that the fact that we’ve stepped on someone’s toe is a reason to apologize, regardless of the fact that we don’t have a special desire to do so, according to first model we would have the reason to apologize because believing in what is appropriate can be a part of our subjective motivational set, while according to second formulation, we wouldn’t have a reason because we are not acting out of “pure” desire, understood at an emotional, affective, psychological level.

The third formulation presents significant Skorupski’s turn and this is where his position is articulated. He says that there has to be a relationship between explanatory and normative reasons: if it is true that *A* has a reason to ϕ , than it has to be possible that he should ϕ for that reason. The stress is on the particularization – it is about *that* specific agent with *that* specific reason for *that* specific action. We recognize that in that case the reason itself carries the strength that guides to action, while certain ability is demanded on the side of the agent. It looks like a turn towards external reasons that Williams rejects. But the point is in our ability to form a belief about the existence of a certain reason. Moreover, this ability *justifies*

⁶See Skorupski, 1999, 2007.

the belief about the existence of that reason, and not the independent existence of the reason itself – that is why it still maintains an internal reason.

Skorupski (1999) argues for an unrealistic account of reasons, but the ontology of reasons is not of our main interest here. What remains as a problem is that abilities are distributed unequally and we are still eager to assure enough of those abilities when it comes to moral issues. So, Williams hopes that the agent won't be egoistic, and Skorupski would like agents to be more "able" in general. This is why I put both of them closer to Aristotle – what they want is virtue.

For Aristotle, the right sort of knowledge or wisdom is a condition for virtue:
 "... it is impossible to be good in the full sense of the word without practical wisdom or to be a man of practical wisdom without moral excellence or virtue. (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1144b27–30)" (Driver, 2001, p. 2)

Knowledge is not identified with virtue, nor is virtue identified with practical wisdom, but they are closely interrelated. Virtues are dispositions for choice, and in order for the agent to act from virtue, he must know that what he is doing is the morally correct action. John McDowell writes that Aristotle supposes that a properly focused application to a situation of a correct conception of doing well must issue in action (1998a, p. 48).

In full-fledged practical wisdom the correct conception of doing well, with the understanding that the worthwhileness that it embraces is pre-eminent, is so ingrained into one's motivational make-up that when an action is singled out as doing well, any attractions that alternatives might have are seen as having no bearing on the question what to do. (McDowell, 1998a, p. 48)

Skorupski's position of cognitive internalism is formulated in (III), but carefully leading to (IV). He wonders whether something can be a reason for the agent if he lacks cognitive ability to recognize it as such, and the importance which the answer to that question has for the "scope of blame". He finds Williams' internalism realistic in its view of people, varieties of human practices and reasons for their actions but still remains critical about the Humean account. What he offers is a form of cognitivism – morality is a universal duty but only for those who recognize moral reasons as reasons of rationality, and also as reasons for themselves, individual agents, to act out of them, arising motivation. This way internalism is maintained – on one side, reasons have to be a part of subjective motivational set, and on the other, the device is not based on wants and desires but beliefs, and not just any beliefs, but on beliefs about what is morally right and morally wrong, and thus motivating if internally, cognitively and rationally available.

A special point is being made in examining the "scope of blame". Skorupski enthusiastically tries to re-evaluate common moral presumptions about the nature of morality, moral acts and ascribing blame to those who fail to respond to them. When are we justified in blaming someone, especially after we've accepted to talk about the *ability* of establishing something as a reason for action, an ability which is not equally distributed – nor to everyone, nor at any time? Can one blame someone for not having certain ability or having it developed in a lesser degree? Can we blame someone for not being able to run faster than he runs? We are aware of the fact that it is partly a matter of genetics and partly a matter of training and lifestyle, still, can we blame someone because in a particular time *t* he scores certain *v*, not more or less?

Imagine someone who doesn't have a feeling of gratitude⁷. Does he have a reason to thank someone for a favour? Are we inclined to say that he *has* it or that he would have it *if only* he could see it? Would we be inclined to say in the same way that cat has a reason not to chase the mouse, if only it could see it? Skorupski reminds us that we don't ascribe reasons to cats and mice. So what can be said in favour of ascribing reasons to agents that don't understand them, to whom they can't get through? We need a Kantian term – *universality* of those reasons. Everyone has a reason to be grateful for a favour. Cats and mice are excluded because they are not agents capable of considering and evaluating circumstances or comprehending gratitude and similar feelings as something reason-giving. People, on the other hand, are such creatures. Failures of that sort are being sanctioned and one deliberates whether something could have been done otherwise.

According to Skorupski, if someone is really incapable of understanding and feeling gratitude, then *he* doesn't have a reason to be grateful, considering the third formulation of the internalistic requirement. But precisely because the reason of gratitude is a universal reason, we won't say that it is not a reason at all. Just that it is not a reason for that certain agent because of the contingent facts of his psychology. In short, reasons are universal, but there are all sorts of people, and modern morality doesn't handle that well enough. So, being without a clue of a way out of the puzzle, two things are usually done: one arbitrary concept of morality is being prescribed, one that is also a product of a contingent psychology⁸, or the notion of universality of reasons is being abandoned. Refusing to do either of that is precisely the dimension of his cognitive internalism that is to be appreciated the most. At the same time he refuses to let go the demand of morality, and still wants to take good care of different human practices. He ends up combining Williams' internalism and Kantian ethics.

4 Conclusion

Problems arise. Though we can accept a more subtle, refined concept of morality, what does that really mean? How do we distinguish someone who actually has a feeling of gratitude, an ability to recognize and respond gratefully in a situation that requires gratefulness, from someone who doesn't? If one doesn't have it, is he to be less blamed if he's simulating it very well, making us think he actually has it? Or is it much worse if he is acting really ungratefully, in the worst sense? Notice the following – we are talking about the *feeling* of gratitude. How did we turn to feelings from a cognitivist picture? I believe they are inevitably connected in a way that doesn't make it satisfactory to stay within the frames of Humeanism or Kantianism.

What if the agent does have a feeling of gratitude, but still acts ungratefully, or he sometimes acts ungratefully, or he often, always, or never acts ungratefully? Now we are within the terminology of psychological research and it might mean we are losing hope to say much about normativity. And finally, a happy end: what if the agent has a feeling of gratitude and does act gratefully? Nothing more but that in that particular case Williams' hopes about a non-egoistic agent have been met and both Skorupski can recognize his individual with a high moral capacity.

What I see here is scenery of the third option: the Aristotelian one. It seems to me that both Williams and Skorupski eagerly introduce forms of internalism, embracing it as a re-

⁷See Skorupski, 2007, pp. 96–101.

⁸Skorupski explicitly draws on Nietzsche (Skorupski, 2007, pp. 73, 102–103).

alistic account, benevolent towards actual human behaviour, though they would most likely want to be Aristotelians and break free in want for virtuous and intelligent individuals with high moral capacity. Aristotle's virtuous person is already motivated to pursue flourishing. I see no better room for conceiving morality. Humean and Kantian paths seem to get into trouble.

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