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Weakness of will and motivational internalism

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ABSTRACT

The unconditional version of motivational internalism says that if an agent sincerely judges that to ϕ in circumstances C is the best option available to her, then, as a matter of conceptual necessity, she will be motivated to ϕ in C. This position faces a powerful counterargument according to which it is possible for various cases of practical irrationality to completely defeat an agent's moral motivation while, at the same time, leaving her appreciation of her moral reasons intact. In this paper, I will argue that weakness of will, as the paradigmatic case of practical irrationality, and all other cases of practical irrationality that feature in standard formulations of this argument do not represent genuine counterexamples to this version of motivational internalism. In this sense, the main aim of this paper is to show that proponents of this internalist position are well justified in their denial of the claim that there are people who are completely unmotivated by their judgments about what is the best option available to them.

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Motivational internalism (MI) is a view about the nature of moral motivation according to which there is an internal and conceptual connection between the sincere making of moral judgments and the motivation to act as these judgments dictate. To make this view as clear as possible, several important explanations are in order. First, note that the connection between moral judgments and motivation is *internal* in the sense that motivation to act in accordance with our moral judgments follows directly from the content of those judgments (see Roskies, 2003, p. 52). Also, to say that that this connection is *conceptual* means that the possession of a suitable motivational state is a conceptual or a priori truth about the conditions under which it is appropriate to use moral concepts (Smith, 1994, p. 22). In other words, there is a conceptual constraint on an agent forming a moral judgment, namely that she is, at least to some minimal extent, motivated to act accordingly.

It should also be clear that MI can be understood as a modal claim: it says not merely that it happens to be the case that motivation accompanies moral judgments, but rather that it *must* be so. The sort of necessity involved here is logical or conceptual – someone who self-consciously makes a moral judgment without being at least to some extent motivated to act accordingly would be displaying a lack of competence when it comes to moral concepts. That is, she would betray some sort of conceptual confusion and could not be plausibly conceived of as a competent speaker with regard to moral concepts. The literature distinguishes between many different kinds of MI. However, in this paper I will deal with the most straightforward version of this view. Call this the *unconditional version of motivational internalism* (UMI), which is stated as follows:

UMI. If an agent sincerely judges that to ϕ in circumstances C is the best option available to her, then, as a matter of conceptual necessity, she will be motivated to ϕ in C. (Bjorklund, Bjornsson, Eriksson, Francen Olinder, & Strandberg, 2012, p. 125)

According to this view, motivation follows from the content of moral judgments *unconditionally*: there are no conditions that could frustrate the connection between moral judgments and motivation. This is arguably the strongest and clearest way of cashing out the internalist thesis. Yet, despite its being straightforward and clear, UMI faces a powerful counterargument. This argument assumes that it is possible for various cases of practical irrationality (such phenomena as weakness of will, apathy, depression, exhaustion, and emotional disturbance.) to completely defeat an agent's moral motivation while, at the same time, leaving her appreciation of her moral reasons intact (see, e.g. Brink, 1989; Mele, 1996; Miller, 2008; Roskies, 2003; Shafer-Landau, 1998, 2000; Smith, 1994; Stocker, 1979).¹ If this assumption turns out to be justified, then, in contrast to UMI, it would be possible for a person to think that to ϕ in circumstances C is the best option available to her without being motivated accordingly.

The outlined argument is considered to be the main reason for thinking that UMI is too strong and, thus, manifestly implausible (see Smith, 1994, p. 61). Accordingly, the standard reaction to this argument among philosophers is either to remain within the internalist point of view and accept some other, weakened version of MI (e.g. a conditional version according to which there are some conditions under which the connection between moral judgments and motivation can come apart), or to entirely abandon the claim that the connection between moral judgments and the relevant motivation is internal and conceptual and instead accept some form of motivational externalism.^{2,3} Since the debate between internalism and externalism takes central stage in this paper, I will take the latter, externalist, option to be the principal reaction to the outlined argument, thus referring to it in what follows as the “central externalist argument against UMI.” I will argue that the only way for externalists to defend this argument consists in showing that there is at least one clear-cut example of the dissociation between moral judgments and motivation. That is to say, they have to demonstrate the existence of at least one genuine case of an agent who sincerely judges that a course of action is the best option available to her, but who is completely unmotivated to act accordingly. I intend to show, however, that current clinical literature provides no evidence whatsoever of such a dissociation. I will thus claim that externalists do not present us with any plausible counterexample to UMI and that proponents of this internalist position are well justified in their denial of the claim that there are people who are completely unmotivated by their judgments about what is the best option available to them.

But before going into more detailed analysis of the central externalist argument, I would like to consider an important question about whether this argument poses a relevant challenge to UMI. Recall that the externalist argument essentially relies on a purely empirical fact about human psychology and the distorting effects of various instances of practical irrationality on our moral motivation. Put another way, it relies on a fact that acquires its justification a posteriori. On the other hand, the principal reasons in favor of UMI are thought to be a priori – that is, this view is not justified inductively by enumerating observable instances in which agents making sincere moral judgments *are* motivated to act as these judgments dictate, but by pure considerations about the nature of moral judgment itself (Cholbi, 2011, p. 33). It is often suggested that the fact that UMI acquires its justification a priori enables internalists to argue that their position is not open to empirical falsification. This suggestion certainly yields an effective defense of the internalist position from the externalist argument, for it makes all empirical counterexamples to UMI completely irrelevant. Yet, in my opinion, there is an equally effective line of reasoning that externalists could use in order to maintain that empirical findings can be relevant to the truth of this internalist position.

According to this line of reasoning, externalists can argue that although UMI purportedly expresses a conceptual or a priori claim about the conditions under which it is appropriate to use moral concepts, this claim, in spite of the internalists' intentions and aspirations, is completely false, for there are evident empirical examples showing that the connection between the sincere making of moral judgments and the possession of the relevant motivation is external and, thus, dissociable. The direct way for externalists to disconfirm UMI would thus consist in identifying actual examples wherein

agents sincerely make moral judgments that nevertheless *fail* to motivate them to act as these judgments dictate (Roskies, 2003). In support of this externalist strategy, note that there are examples of philosophical views, typically viewed as expressing a conceptual or a priori truth about some particular phenomenon, that were eventually disconfirmed by empirical counterexamples. One such example is the claim that pain is necessarily connected to unpleasantness. On this view, pain is not merely the response to noxious stimuli or disease but is, *by definition*, an unpleasant experience (see, e.g. Baier, 1958, p. 26; IASP, 1986, p. 260). And, although this view was purportedly justified by pure considerations about the nature of pain, and was therefore claimed to express a conceptual or a priori truth about pain, it was empirically disconfirmed by the discovery of pain asymbolia – a rare neurological condition caused by lesions to the posterior insula that produces complete, thoroughgoing indifference to pain (see Grahek, 2007; Klein, 2015).⁴ By focusing on empirical counterexamples to UMI, externalists ultimately attempt to show that the same thing that happened to the now completely rejected understanding of pain as necessarily unpleasant will also happen to the internalist understanding of the connection between moral judgments and motivation – namely, that future empirical (mostly psychological and neurological) investigation will prove it false. I concede that internalists have to take this externalist strategy into serious consideration. In the remainder of this paper, however, I will argue that all empirical counterexamples to UMI that figure in standard formulations of the central externalist argument fail to present this internalist position with a genuine threat.

Now, since the plausibility of the central externalist argument relies on an assumption about the distorting effects of various instances of practical irrationality on our moral motivation, I will first focus on the paradigmatic case of practical irrationality – weakness of will (Stroud & Tappolet, 2003) – and argue that externalists do not provide us with good reasons to think that this represents a genuine counterexample to UMI. So, let us get a little clearer on what kind of phenomenon weakness of will is. It is generally assumed that weakness of will essentially involves a conflict between practical thought and action, such as when we decide to undertake a particular action even though we judge that it would be better to refrain from it (see Wiggins, 1978, p. 251).⁵ This is weakness of will with respect to *action*:

An agent sincerely judges that to ϕ in circumstances C is the best option available to her and yet she fails to ϕ in circumstances C.

Many philosophers strongly argue against the possibility of such weakness of will. For instance, Plato's Socrates famously denied its possibility. "No one, who either knows or believes that there is another possible course of action, better than the one he is following, will ever continue on his present course" (Plato, 1961, p. 349). In a similar fashion, R.M. Hare says that:

It is a tautology to say that we cannot sincerely assent to a ... command addressed to ourselves, and at the same time not perform it, if now is the occasion for performing it and it is in our (physical and psychological) power to do so. (Hare, 1952, p. 20)

Discussion of whether the kind of weakness of will in question is possible would, unfortunately, take us beyond the scope of this paper. But extensive discussion is not necessary for the purpose of defending UMI. Note that this particular kind of weakness of will is completely irrelevant to whether any version of MI is true. Motivational internalists could agree that weakness of will with respect to action represents a genuine phenomenon without damaging their position. This is because MI does not entail the existence of a necessary connection between an agent's judgments and her *actions*; it is essentially a modal claim concerning the relation between moral judgments and *motivation*, from which it follows that an agent has not made a genuine moral judgment unless she has the relevant motivation (Svavarsdottir, 1999). To say that an agent is motivated to pursue some course of action is to say that she has at least some tendency or temptation to pursue that course of action. But it should be observed that this tendency or temptation does not have to be overriding: someone can be motivated to ϕ but never get around to doing anything about it. In this sense, an agent can willfully ϕ in C while still having *some* motivation to perform some other action, and the fact that she does not ϕ when circumstances C occur does not tell us anything about whether she was or was not motivated to ϕ in C. Therefore, since UMI is a philosophical view about the nature of moral *motivation*, I think

that the relevant kind of phenomenon constituting the main problem for this position is best described as follows. Call this *weakness of will with respect to motivation* (WWM)⁶:

WWM. An agent sincerely judges that to φ in circumstances C is the best option available to her, and yet she completely fails to be *motivated* by her own judgment.

To be sure, proponents of UMI must deny that this kind of weakness of the will is a genuine phenomenon. At first glance, this does not seem to be particularly difficult. Admittedly, it is very difficult to imagine a clear-headed and psychologically healthy person who sufficiently understands the function and meaning of moral concepts and who sincerely judges that the best course of action to take is to φ in circumstances C, and yet remains entirely unmotivated to φ when these circumstances occur. Based on this difficulty, there is certainly a *prima facie* justification of the internalist thesis. But it is important to bear in mind that this line of reasoning has serious limitations. That is, externalists can wholeheartedly agree that it is very difficult to imagine people who fail to be motivated by their acceptance of judgments about the best option available to them, while adding that it is no more difficult to imagine such people than to imagine, say, people who feel pain and are at the same time completely unmotivated to diminish it. And, just as the difficulty of imagining people who feel pain without being motivated to diminish it should not lead us to deny the existence of pain asymbolics, the difficulty of imagining people who judge that to φ in circumstances C is the best option available to them but who completely fail to have the relevant motivation should not lead us to deny that WWM could represent a genuine phenomenon.

But it would be unjustified to conclude from this that the debate about the central externalist argument against UMI is resolved in favor of externalism. In fact, externalists face the very serious charge that WWM is nothing more than a statement of externalism: to say that an agent could judge that to φ in circumstances C is the best option available to her and yet fail to be motivated by this judgment is the same as saying that moral judgments have no necessary or conceptual connection with motivation – which is the main externalist claim. So if externalists merely maintain that WWM is a genuine phenomenon, they thereby beg the question against the internalist. The only non-question-begging way for externalists to show that WWM represents a genuine phenomenon consists in showing that there is at least one clear-cut example of a dissociation between the sincere making of moral judgments and motivation. What this comes to is that they have to demonstrate the existence of at least one unambiguous case of a person who simultaneously satisfies the following three conditions:

- (a) She is a competent speaker with regard to moral concepts.
- (b) She sincerely makes her moral judgments.
- (c) She completely lacks the motivation to act in accordance with her moral judgments.

Yet, to show that any person simultaneously satisfies these conditions is a formidable task. The most serious practical problem for externalists, in my opinion, has to do with the immense difficulty of establishing the complete absence of an agent's motivation to perform a certain action. We have seen that an agent can willfully perform an action while still having *some* (not overriding) motivation to perform another action. This means that her not performing a certain action cannot be taken as a conclusive proof that an agent is completely unmotivated to perform this action – the fact that she does not φ when circumstances C occur does not tell us anything about whether she was or was not motivated to φ in C. Now, recall that UMI says that if an agent sincerely judges that to φ in circumstances C is the best option available to her, then, as a matter of conceptual necessity, she will be, at least to some minimal extent, motivated to φ in C. That is, proponents of this internalist view do not claim that this motivation has to be *overriding* – they merely claim that it will follow *directly* from the content of an agent's judgment. But then, if an agent not performing an action cannot help us determine whether she is or is not completely unmotivated to perform it, then externalists face a very serious problem indeed: they seem to be deprived of the reliable empirical procedure for determining conclusively whether an agent completely lacks the relevant moral motivation.⁷ And, without such a procedure it is entirely unclear how externalists can come up with a non-question-begging way to show

that any case of weakness of will with respect to motivation is a genuine phenomenon that represents a plausible counterexample to UMI.

Of course, the fact that at present there is no reliable empirical procedure for determining conclusively whether an agent completely lacks moral motivation does not mean that it is *impossible* to come up with such a procedure in the future. In fact, it is reasonable to suppose that once we acquire a better understanding of the neural mechanisms that underlie both our making of moral judgments and our moral motivations, we will be in a much better position to fully evaluate the question of whether moral judgments are indeed necessarily linked to corresponding motivations. But observe that even if future advances in neuroscience eventually enable us to develop a reliable empirical procedure for precisely assessing agents' absence or presence of motivation to act in accordance with their moral judgments, this would only solve one part of the problem for the externalist case against UMI. Recall that in order to successfully disconfirm this internalist view, externalists have to show that an agent's complete lack of moral motivation can be coupled with two other crucial conditions in order to constitute a genuine counterexample to this internalist position – that is, they have to show that it can be coupled both with an agent being a *competent* speaker with regard to moral concepts and with her *sincere* making of moral judgments. The available clinical evidence, however, consistently supports the internalist claim that the above three conditions are never simultaneously satisfied. In order to see this more clearly, let us first consider the case of psychopathy.

Psychopaths' notorious lack of motivation to act in accordance with their moral judgments is generally taken as an evident counterexample to UMI. However, numerous studies suggest that psychopathic individuals should not be considered competent speakers with regard to moral concepts. So, for instance, studies have shown that psychopathic individuals show a diminished capacity to distinguish between moral and conventional violations (Blair, 1995, 1997, 2008). Furthermore, the highly inconsistent and contradictory nature of their pronouncements indicates that they do not possess an adequate understanding of moral concepts – they do not seem to understand what is implied by the use of evaluative terms and manifest difficulty in grasping the positive and negative polarity of metaphors:

For example, they recognized that “A man running from a monster” and “A man surfing on a large wave” each had emotional connotations (one fear, the other exhilaration or excitement), but they rated them as being similar (positive) in polarity. Presumably, most people would consider one to have negative (bad) and the other to have positive (good) connotations, respectively. (Hervé, Justus Hayes, & Hare, 2003, p. 1498)

All of these findings seem to suggest that the moral judgments of psychopaths are “rightly understood only in the inverted commas sense” (Kennett & Fine, 2008, p. 178). This means that the sentence “ ϕ -ing is right” as used by a psychopathic individual does not literally mean “ ϕ -ing is right” but rather “ ϕ -ing is in accordance with what other people judge to be right” (Hare, 1952, pp. 124–126, 163–165). As such, the fact that a psychopath may judge that to ϕ in circumstances C is the best option available to her without being motivated to ϕ when these circumstances occur should not be taken to represent a counterexample to UMI.

But perhaps referring to a “consensus” on the psychopaths' incompetence with moral concepts is misleading, for this is still very much a lively area of debate. For instance, Cima, Tonnaer, and Hauser (2010) argue that psychopaths *know* what is right or wrong, but simply do not *care*. Cima and colleagues observe that the inconsistent and contradictory nature of psychopaths' pronouncements may result from their diminished emotional processing, but it does not indicate that they do not possess *adequate understanding* of moral concepts – in fact, “psychopaths understand the distinction between right and wrong, but do not care about such knowledge” (p. 59). The fact that they judge impersonal moral actions as more permissible than personal moral actions, just like healthy subjects and non-psychopathic delinquents, represents the most reliable indicator that they *can* carry out the relevant computation required to evaluate these particular moral scenarios (p. 64). The direct implication of this study seems to be that, in contrast to my previous conclusion, psychopaths are to be considered competent speakers with regard to moral concepts: they are able to understand what is implied by moral concepts and, as a result, are able to make their moral judgments *knowingly*, although not *caringly*.

I do not think, however, that this study provides us with persuasive evidence that psychopaths can pose a threat to the credibility of UMI. We have seen that the genuine counterexample to this internalist view would have to be a case of a person who is (a) a competent speaker with regard to moral concepts, (b) who *sincerely* makes a certain moral judgment, and (c) who is not, even to a minimal extent, motivated to act in accordance with this judgment. I have already expressed my concerns about the prospects of coming up with a reliable empirical procedure that could conclusively determine whether an agent indeed completely lacks motivation and, thus, fully satisfies condition (c). I suggested that future study of the neural mechanisms that underlie our moral motivation may provide plausible answers to *some* of these concerns. But what concerns me here is that even if we accept the conclusions of the study conducted by Cima and colleagues, namely that psychopaths are to be considered competent speakers with regard to moral concepts, this conclusion does not tell us anything about whether psychopaths also satisfy condition (b) – that is, it does not tell us that they make *sincere* moral judgments. In fact, it seems to me that to say that psychopaths make their moral judgments knowingly but *uncaringly* comes dangerously close to saying that they make them *insincerely*. Namely, in their making of moral judgments knowingly but uncaringly, psychopaths seem to simply pay lip service to moral standards which they themselves do not *really* accept – they seem to see the entire institution of morality from outside, as something whose claims on them they *reject* (Dancy, 1993, p. 5). As such, their moral judgments are but strings of words, which, according to Cima and colleagues (2010, p. 59), they can understand, but to which they feel no obligation or commitment whatsoever. But if this is so, then although psychopaths are similar to non-psychopaths in that they are capable of judging impersonal moral actions as more permissible than personal moral actions, the fact that they make moral judgments knowingly but uncaringly can only mean that they make their moral judgments *insincerely* and that, in turn, means that they should not be regarded as a credible counterexample to UMI after all.

However, it has recently been argued that, unlike psychopaths, *patients with a damaged ventromedial prefrontal cortex* (VM patients) display the relevant sort of dissociation between moral judgments and motivation that could be used as a plausible counterexample to this internalist view. According to Roskies, these patients possess unimpaired moral reasoning abilities and yet are completely unmotivated by their moral judgments (2003, p. 59). If this is right, the existence of these patients would pose a serious challenge to the internalist thesis. Still, there is significant evidence that calls the assertion that VM patients make moral judgments in the relevant sense and that they lack moral motivation into question. For instance, moral judgment tests carried out on VM patients invited them to engage only in third-personal hypothetical reasoning. But, as Kennett and Fine observe, based on the fact that people typically demonstrate much more mature moral reasoning in the case of third-personal hypothetical moral dilemmas than in the case of first-personal moral dilemmas, it is highly questionable whether such tests pose a relevant threat to the internalist thesis (Kennett & Fine, 2008, p. 183). With regard to the hypothesis that VM patients are impaired in moral motivation, the currently accepted interpretation in the neuropsychological literature is that the impairment that follows VM damage is one of general decision-making rather than a specific dysfunction in moral motivation (see Damasio, Grabowski, Frank, Galaburda, & Damasio, 1994). For this reason, it seems that VM patients, like psychopaths, cannot represent a genuine case of empirical disconfirmation of UMI.

Cases of depression are often regarded as another obvious counterexample to UMI. Yet, although depression is typically presented as one of the paradigmatic instances of practical irrationality that can successfully undermine UMI, once we take a closer look at studies of actual cases of depressed individuals, it becomes obvious that this is not so. First of all, it is quite doubtful that depression should be considered a species of practical irrationality, for depressed people are not “prototypically delusional or cognitively disordered” (Cholbi, 2011, p. 42). Likewise, there is substantive evidence that depressed individuals may be more accurate in their perceptions of various situations than are non-depressed individuals, and that they tend to form beliefs *more rationally* than others (Dobson & Franche, 1989, p. 420). Neither does clinical evidence provide any reason to think that depressed individuals are not competent speakers with regard to moral concepts or that they fail to make their

moral judgments sincerely. Finally, and most importantly, there is no indication whatsoever that depressed individuals display a complete lack of moral motivation, which is typically assumed when they feature in externalists' arguments against UMI. Undoubtedly, depressive states do include some sort of motivational lethargy or motivational indifference (see Mele, 1996, p. 733). That is, depressed people certainly appear to lack motivation to do what they think they have a rational justification for doing. But such motivational lethargy with regard to their moral judgments should not be taken as evidence that they are, in fact, *completely* unmotivated to act accordingly. As Cholbi puts it:

Motivational indifference may be manifest in various ways, not only in depressed persons' behavior. It might after all be the case that depressed agents *are motivated* by their moral judgments *but fail to act* upon them because some other mental state (e.g. their belief in the inefficacy of their actions) holds *greater sway* in their motivational economy. (Cholbi, 2011, p. 35, emphasis added)

This point presents externalists with a serious worry. The fact that depressed individuals appear to suffer from severe motivational indifference does not preclude them from having at least *some* – not overriding – moral motivation. But then externalists provide us with no grounds for thinking that depressed individuals satisfy one of the crucial conditions that would allow them to represent a genuine threat to UMI, namely, condition (c).

Note that other cases of practical irrationality that figure in standard formulations of the central externalist argument (e.g. rage, distraction, grief, apathy, exhaustion, emotional disturbance) face the same problems as cases of depression. In order to use such cases of practical irrationality to make a successful argument against UMI, externalists would have to demonstrate that a person who is, say, bristling with rage (or who is completely distracted by emotional disturbance or overwhelmed by grief) indeed fully understands all the reasons which she herself takes into account in her coming to a moral decision, sincerely commits herself to some definitive moral stance, and is not even to a minimal extent motivated to act in accordance with this stance. This is no small task. But even if externalists do succeed in showing that such a person has unimpaired moral reasoning and that, at the same time, she sincerely commits herself to the content of her moral judgments, internalists can easily explain away her motivational indifference by maintaining that she *is* motivated by her moral judgments but *fails to act* upon them because some other mental state has greater motivational strength. Given these considerations, we can conclude that, at least until we are presented with cases of people who unambiguously meet all three conditions for representing a genuine counterexample to UMI, the central externalist argument looks utterly unconvincing.

Let me conclude. The overall finding of this paper is that externalists do not succeed in providing us with anything close to persuasive reasons against accepting UMI. As we have seen, externalists fail to provide good reasons to think that WWM, as the paradigmatic case of practical irrationality, as well as all other cases of practical irrationality that feature in standard formulations of the central externalist argument, represent credible counterexamples to UMI. What this means is that the assumption that it is possible for various cases of practical irrationality to completely defeat an agent's moral motivation while, at the same time, leaving her appreciation of her moral reasons intact is, as it stands, unjustified.⁸ Admittedly, externalists could point out that, in spite of all difficulties in coming up with a plausible counterexample to UMI, this position might still turn out to be false; new empirical evidence could come along that would outweigh the prima facie justification of this internalist position. But to date there is no such empirical evidence. And, certainly, pointing out that a position *might* turn out to be false is never much of an argument against any position.

Notes

1. In this paper, I will rely on the characterization of practical irrationality according to which an agent S is practically irrational to the extent that S's practical *thought* and *action* are not guided by what S takes to be her reasons for action from the first-person perspective. On this characterization, practical irrationality is a subjective matter of improper *motivational* responsiveness to the practical reasons that an agent has available to her by her own lights (see Miller, 2008). In this sense, it seems that rage, passion, depression, distraction, grief, or physical

- or mental illness could cause us to act irrationally; that is to say, they could cause us to fail to be motivationally responsive to the rational considerations available to us (Korsgaard, 1986, p. 13).
2. These conditions are typically described in terms of *practical irrationality* (Korsgaard, 1986; Smith, 1994, p. 61; van Roojen, 2010; Wallace, 2006; Wedgwood, 2007, pp. 23–26), *psychological normality* (Blackburn, 1998, pp. 59–68; Eriksson, 2006, pp. 172–187; Gibbard, 2003, p. 154; Timmons, 1999, p. 140), or *moral perceptivity* (McDowell, 1978, 1979; McNaughton, 1988; Tolhurst, 1995; Wiggins, 1991).
 3. Motivational externalists tell us that moral judgments have *no* necessary or conceptual connection with motivation; rather, the connection is contingent and external. In that sense, a person who judges that a type of action is morally right but consistently claims that she sees no reason to perform actions of that type betrays no conceptual confusion. Suppose, for instance, that John is a good and strong-willed person and that he judges that it is right to refrain from eating meat. According to externalists, good and strong-willed people must have as their primary source of moral motivation a *desire* to do the right thing. So externalists would attribute to John the non-derivative desire to do what he believes to be right, and it is precisely from this non-derivative desire and the moral belief that it is right to refrain from eating meat that John acquires his motivation to refrain from eating meat. On the externalist view, an agent's motivation to act in accordance with her moral judgments is *derived* both from that agent's belief that something is morally right and her non-derivative desire to do what she believes to be right. An agent's moral motivation is thus essentially derivative; it does not follow directly from the content of her moral judgments, as internalists maintain.
 4. Pain asymbolia is often regarded as “the only clear-cut case in which severe pain is not experienced as unpleasant, and in which there are no traces of any other aversive attitude toward it” (Grahek, 2007, p. 3; see also Klein, 2015). This claim is supported by the fact that patients with this syndrome display striking behavioral reactions to pain stimulation. Pain asymbolics fail to respond with appropriate motor and emotional reactions to painful stimuli applied anywhere on their bodies. In addition, they typically show significantly greater values for pain tolerance and pain endurance (Berthier, Starkstein, & Leiguarda, 1988, p. 47). Finally, asymbolics not only fail to display normal reactions to painful stimuli, but actually behave in the exact opposite way: they typically smile or laugh during the pain testing procedure (Ramachandran, 1998, p. 1857).
 5. There has been some recent debate about whether this description captures the ordinary notion of weakness of will (see, e.g. Holton, 1999, 2009; Holton & May, 2012; Mele, 2010). This debate, however, is irrelevant to the thesis I intend to defend in this paper, for I will primarily focus on a specific kind of weakness of will – weakness of will with respect to *motivation*.
 6. WWM is essentially the same as the phenomenon that moral philosophers more popularly call “amoralism.” Amoralists are typically conceived of as agents who are competent speakers with regard to moral concepts and sincerely make moral judgments, but are completely unmoved to act in accordance with their own moral judgments (see, e.g. Brink, 1989, p. 27; Shafer-Landau, 2003, p. 146). Although in this paper I will refer to this phenomenon as WWM, in order to preserve its terminological connection to weakness of will with respect to *action*, it should be clear that everything that will be said about WWM also holds for amoralism.
 7. Note that it is particularly difficult to establish a complete absence of motivation to perform a certain action. It is possible to assess motivation by relying on people's self-reports, but such a procedure would be seriously limited by their inadequate conscious understanding of their own psychological states. In addition, such self-reports could be biased by the fact that the possession or absence of some moral motivations is socially undesirable – for example, the possession of motivation to torture or kill someone for the sake of pure pleasure, the possession of motivation to discriminate against someone on the basis of their race, gender, and so on. Thus, although it is tempting to think of self-reports as the most reliable method for assessing motivation, in the light of these two difficulties they come out as highly problematic. In order to avoid these and similar difficulties, researchers in experimental social psychology typically assess motivation in terms of the speed, strength, and perseverance with which people perform actions (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2011, 2014). Yet, since all of these methods essentially rely on an agent *committing* an action, it is improbable that they could be of any use in conclusively determining the complete absence of her motivation.
 8. It is worth noting that this result negatively affects not only the *externalist* case against unconditional MI. For the same reasons that make the externalist case against unconditional MI unsuccessful, the move from unconditional to conditional MI or, for that matter, to any other type of MI, becomes simply a maneuver to immunize the internalist point of view from counterexamples that do not even succeed in posing a legitimate threat to this position. The current proliferation of various versions of internalism thus seems to be completely uncalled for.

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