

Moral motivation from fetishism?

*A metaethical discussion of Michael Smith's
fetishist argument*

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Abstract

Michael Smith argues that “a change in moral motivation follows reliably in a change in moral judgements, at least in the good and strong-willed person” (1994:71). He illustrates this change with two people engaged in an argument about a fundamental moral question, and a short summary of this discussion is that B manages to talk A into voting for another political party than he intended to do before he engaged in the conversation with B, with the result of A changing his most *fundamental values* (1994:71). According to Smith, if A is a good and strong-willed person, “a new motivation will follow in the wake of his new judgment” (1994:72). The connection between changes in moral judgments and motivation is either explained *internally*, the moral judgment itself, or *externally*, “from the content of the motivational dispositions possessed by the good and strong-willed person” (1994:71). Smith argues against the externalist account, stating that “the strong externalist’s explanation commits us to false views of the content of a good person’s motivation; it elevates a *moral fetish* into the one and only moral virtue” (1994:76). My aim with this thesis is to give an interpretation and clarification of Smith’s fetishist argument against externalism which consists of three closely connected themes: desire *de dicto*/desire *de re*, the reliable connection, and the good and strong-willed person. The chapters are therefore presented in the thematic order of the themes which the argument consists of: chapter 3 presents Smith’s argument, chapter 4 gives a thematic discussion of the criticism against the argument, and chapter 5 presents the defence of the argument against the criticism. The final chapter follows the same thematic structure and gives an evaluation of Smith’s fetishist argument. If Smith’s argument should be considered successful, what he argues about all the three themes must be true. I argue that this is not the case, and my aim is to explain why Smith’s *reductio* of externalism fails due to the combination of the three themes his fetishist argument consists of.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Michael Smith's fetishist argument (a short description)

Michael Smith argues that “a change in moral motivation follows reliably in a change in moral judgements, at least in the good and strong-willed person” (1994:71). He illustrates this change with two people engaged in an argument about a fundamental moral question, and a short summary of this discussion is that B manages to talk A into voting for another political party than he intended to do before he engaged in the conversation with B, with the result of A changing his most *fundamental values* (1994:71). According to Smith, if A is a good and strong-willed person, “a new motivation will follow in the wake of his new judgment” (1994:72). The connection between changes in moral judgments and motivation is either explained *internally*, the moral judgment itself, or *externally*, “from the content of the motivational dispositions possessed by the good and strong-willed person” (1994:71). Smith argues against the externalist account, stating that “the strong externalist’s explanation commits us to false views of the content of a good person’s motivation; it elevates a *moral fetish* into the one and only moral virtue” (1994:76).

1.2 Outline

My aim with this thesis is to give an interpretation and clarification of Smith’s fetishist argument against externalism which consists of three closely connected themes: desire *de dicto*/desire *de re*, the reliable connection, and the good and strong-willed person. The chapters are therefore presented in the thematic order of the themes which the argument consists of: chapter 3 presents Smith’s argument, chapter 4 gives a thematic discussion of the criticism against the argument, and chapter 5 presents the defence of the argument against the criticism. The final chapter follows the same thematic structure and gives an evaluation of Smith’s fetishist argument. If Smith’s argument should be considered successful, what he argues about all the three themes must be true. I argue that this is not the case, and my aim is to explain why Smith’s *reductio* of externalism fails due to the combination of the three themes his fetishist argument consists of.

2 Metaethical terminology

2.1 Chapter introduction

This thesis discusses Smith's fetishist charge against externalism. Metaethics, unlike normative ethics, deals with the second-order questions, the nature of morality and describes the moral phenomenon. Some of the most central debates in metaethics concern the agent's psychology, and among them is the debate between internalism and externalism. Central in the debates is the role of moral judgement and the connection between moral judgement and motivation. Do moral judgements motivate necessarily or do they motivate only contingently? Can moral judgements motivate on their own, or can they motivate only by the intermediation of a desire or other conative state? (Rosati 2016:5). Smith's fetishist argument consists of three themes, desire *de dicto*/desire *de re*, the reliable connection and the good and strong-willed person. Closely related to the reliable connection is Smith's practicality requirement, which is a version of conditional internalism. This chapter is thought as a helpful introduction of the themes and terminology of this metaethical debate.

2.2 Internalism and externalism

There is broad agreement that there is a close connection between moral judgements and moral motivation. Internalism has typically been understood as an a priori claim, and holds the claim that there is an *internal* and necessary connection between sincerely making a moral judgement and being motivated to act in the manner prescribed by that judgement. Externalism, on the other hand, is the denial of internalism and holds that the connection between moral judgement and motivation is only *external* and contingent. Let us start where the two theories agree and consider three cases illustrating the relationship between moral judgement and motivation. The first case considers agent A, who judges it right not to eat meat. Because he judges it morally wrong how animals are treated in the meat industry, he will refuse to eat something containing meat when invited to dinner. The second agent, agent B, is a pacifist. Believing that military training and becoming a soldier is morally wrong, she

will not enlist into military service. The third and last example includes an agent morally motivated by something he judges as morally right. Agent C is a volunteer; a person working in a soup kitchen motivated by the judgement that it is right to help people less fortunate than himself. In the cases of the vegetarian, the pacifist and the volunteer, we see the necessary connection between moral judgements and moral motivations; the agents are motivated to act in accordance with what they judge as morally right or wrong. These cases would be described differently by internalists and externalists. The internalist would argue that the connection between moral judgements and motivation is internal and necessary. The externalism would agree to the examples but explain the agents being motivated by a standing desire to do the right thing, where this is read *de dicto*.

Internalism

A loose formulation of internalism can be formulated like this:

There is a necessary non-trivial connection between moral judgements and motivation.

According to internalism, it is sufficient for a person to want to perform x if she believes that x is right. The agent holds the moral judgement that x is right. “Internalism is one of the most debated theses in contemporary metaethics, largely due to its role in an argument against moral cognitivism originating in Hume’s writing” (Björklund et al. 2012:125). “On the Humean theory of motivation, beliefs are inert, i.e. they do not influence our actions except in conjunction with desires” (Björklund et al. 2012:125). Internalism holds that it would be very strange if a person would say (or think) that an action is, say, right and it then would turn out that she has no motivation at all to carry it out. If Bjarte thinks it is right to go and visit his friend in the hospital, then it would be strange that he has no motivation to go and visit his friend.

An entirely different type of debate – and only included here as a contrast to the internalism debate about moral judgements, which is the debate analysed in this thesis – is internalism about *normative reasons*. An argument for internalism about normative reasons holds that it can explain how many of our normative judgements in our daily lives will vary with our desires. Take for instance two children on their way back home from school. Per wants (desires) to buy a chocolate. The other child, Ole, does not want (does not desire) to have a chocolate. In this case Per has a reason to buy a chocolate, but Ole doesn’t. According to internalism about normative reasons, normative judgements are ontologically and

epistemologically unproblematic, and internalists can hold that normative judgements consist of facts of what humans would want if they had to go through a process of rational consideration. Such facts are normally natural facts. The main argument *against* internalism about normative reasons is that internalism is incompatible with the existence of categorical moral reasons. If it is morally right for a person to perform an action, then he has a moral reason to perform the action. According to moral rationalism, moral reasons consist of normative judgements; moral judgements consist of the “right” normative reasons, not conventional ones. Moral judgements are categorical: if a person judges it right to perform an action, then she has this judgement whether she desires to perform the action or not. The conclusion is that if it is morally right for a person to perform an action, then she has a (morally) normative reason to perform the action, whether she wants to perform the action or not.

Externalism

The topic of this thesis is internalism and externalism about moral judgements, and according to externalism about moral judgements, it is not sufficient to be motivated to perform x only if the agent believes that x is right. The externalist will argue that two things are necessary: firstly, that the agent holds that the moral judgement, x , is right; secondly, a motivating condition external to the moral judgement, a desire to do the right thing.

There are two alternatives explaining what this desire consists of¹:

1. A desire *de dicto* to perform the right action
2. A combination of the following mental states:
 - (i) A desire *de re* to perform actions with a certain natural quality, G
 - (ii) The judgement that actions with the quality G is right
 - (iii) The judgement that x has the quality G

The externalist holds that “some conative state must be at work in the movement from judging it right to ϕ to wanting or being moved to ϕ ” (Rosati 2016:11). Although, on the externalist account, this movement does not occur in all agents; the amoralist will judge it

¹ Formulation from a handout by Strandberg 2016.

right to ϕ without being motivated to ϕ . The debates between internalists and externalists often involve the amoralist and the possibility of such an agent. Internalist rejects the possibility of the amoralist, while externalists think that the amoralist is conceivable due to the differences in human psychology.²

2.3 The Humean theory of motivation

Smith holds the Humean theory of motivation, a central issue in moral psychology and probably the most widely held account of motivation among metaethicists. “This is because its main claims are simple, unifying and seem so obviously correct” (Fisher 2011:134); the Humean account fits well with how people think and talk. Very briefly it can be presented like this:

Belief + desires = motivation

As the short presentation illustrates, a belief alone is not sufficient for motivation; a desire has to be presented together with the belief. Moral motivation cannot arise from moral belief alone but must rely on a pre-existing desire or other intrinsically motivating states. On this view, beliefs and desires are two separate types of mental states with different functions or roles. Fisher uses the example of believing that his bike has two inflated tires, but realizing that one of the tires is flat changes his belief; “there is nothing in having the belief itself that means I will try to change the world so that I have two inflated tires” (Fisher 2011:134). A belief on its own is not going to move us; a desire is needed in order to activate the motivation, such as desiring to go cycling. If the desire to use the bike is present, Fisher should be motivated to inflate the punctured tire.

Beliefs and desires differ in what has been called their “direction of fit” (Anscombe 1963): “whereas beliefs have a ‘mind-to-world’ direction of fit, its desires have a ‘world-to-mind’ direction of fit” (Rosati 2016:7). Both beliefs and desires are necessary to motivate the agent; in order to get an acceptable grade on an exam you must have the belief that reading the syllabus is necessary. Without this belief the student will not be motivated to read. Someone is motivated if and only if they have a desire and an appropriately related belief. Beliefs and

² Section 2.5 discusses the problem with the amoralist.

desires are two separate types of mental states with different functions or role. “We should make note of the fact that Humeanism does not itself commit one to any particular view as to the sorts of desires responsible for moral motivation” (Rosati 2016:6).

Although the Humean account may seem plausible, the question remains whether it can be universally true. Does really any case of motivation consist of both a belief and a desire? As there are philosophers rejecting internalism / externalism, there are those who reject the Humean theory. Those rejecting the Humean account, known as anti-Humeans, argue that moral motivation does not depend on the existence of desire and that moral belief alone can give rise to motivation. Those who reject the Humean theory of motivation holds that “moral *beliefs* sometimes is sufficient for motivation, and that consequently in these desires there need be no desires at all” (Fisher 2011:137). One argument from the anti-Humeans could be that moral beliefs *necessitate* desires, or that when motivated there is always a desire present, but that this desire in some cases plays a more modest role in the motivation.

2.4 An argument against cognitivism and for non-cognitivism

The main importance of the internalism / externalism debate is often taken to concern cognitivism / non-cognitivism, and this subsection is therefore included here in order to connect cognitivism and non-cognitivism to internalism / externalism.

Cognitivism is the view that moral judgements express beliefs, and cognitivists think that moral judgements are constituted by beliefs. So, for example, donating blood expresses the belief that helping others is right. An argument *for* cognitivism (expressivism) is that moral judgements can be true or false: you can believe that it is right to donate money to the Red Cross, or you can believe that the right thing to do is to donate money to an organization which prevents girls from education.

Some cognitivists deny that beliefs are inert and argue that evaluative beliefs either motivate in their own right or generate motivational states. Others argue that cognitivism and internalism are consistent despite beliefs being inert, but the most common view amongst cognitivists is to defend the *externalist view* that motivation is neither internal to nor necessitated by the presence of moral judgements (Björklund et al. 2012:126). The externalist thesis holds an independent explanation of moral motivation, external to the moral judgement.

Externalists are committed to the claim that moral judgement is not sufficient for moral motivation; moral motivation occurs when a *desire* is combined with moral judgement.

According to cognitivism, moral judgements consist of beliefs, and cognitivism therefore has a problem explaining motivation, due to the lack of desire. Non-cognitivism is the denial of cognitivism, and Shafer-Landau (2003) offers an argument against cognitivism (and for non-cognitivism) which he calls the Non-cognitivist Argument. The argument presents the development of how metaethical theories have been shaped by theses about moral motivation to support non-cognitivist anti-realism:

1. Necessarily, if one sincerely judges an action right, then one is motivated to some extent to act in accordance with that judgement (Motivational Judgement Internalism).
2. When taken by themselves, beliefs neither motivate nor generate any motivationally efficacious states (Motivational Humeanism).
3. Therefore, moral judgements are not beliefs (Moral Non-cognitivism).

In order to explain the argument further, let us consider a case inspired by premise 1 and 2. Two agents are reading the same article in the newspaper; the article is about how important it is that people in good health donate blood at their local hospital to help patients in need of blood transfusion.

1. Frida *judges* it right to become a blood donor, and is *motivated* to some extent to act in accordance with her judgement. She becomes a blood donor.
2. Frank has a *belief* that it is a good thing to be a blood donor, but he does not have a *desire* to become a blood donor. He does not become a blood donor.

The conclusion of the non-cognitivist argument entails that moral realism is false. Moral judgements do not consist of beliefs, and thus cognitivism is false. Different philosophical positions have rejected or accepted different parts of the argument. Most relevant in this context is that conditional versions of internalism, particularly Smith's version of this view, might avoid the argument.

2.5 The problem with unconditional internalism

“Internalism is one of the most debated theses in contemporary metaethics, largely due to its role in an argument against moral cognitivism originating in Hume’s writing” (Björklund et al. 2012:125). As described in the previous subsection, cognitivists hold that moral judgements are constituted by beliefs. The simple version of internalism is an instance of *unconditional* internalism, according to which the necessary connection between moral judgements and motivations holds irrespective of the person’s mental condition. In contemporary metaethics, this view is often considered as too strong, “because it seems possible to conceive of someone who makes a moral judgement but fails to be motivated accordingly because she suffers from e.g. apathy, depression, exhaustion, or emotional disturbance” (Björklund et al.2012:126). One example could be the person making the moral judgement that it is right to participate in a fund-raising campaign, but is exhausted and grief-stricken after her husband’s death and therefore finds it impossible to participate this year.

To accommodate this possibility, many contemporarily internalists defend claims of the following form, making unconditional internalism *conditional*:

If a person judges that she morally ought to ϕ , then she is (at least somewhat) motivated to ϕ if she is *C*.

Conditional internalism allows that moral judgement and motivation can come apart, and this “seems to leave open that moral judgments are beliefs even on a Humean theory of motivation” (Björklund et al. 2012:126). This may cause some confusion of the identification on the non-cognitivist identification of moral judgements with desire-like states, but the exact consequences of conditionalization depend on how *C* is specified. “The conditionalization of internalism raises questions about the metaethical significance of the resulting view. Since conditional internalism allows that moral judgements and motivations can come apart, it seems to leave open that moral judgements are beliefs even on a Humean theory of motivation” (Björklund et al.2012:126).

2.6 The problem with the amoralist

The amoralist is a figure that externalists employ to argue against internalism, a person who holds a moral judgement, but is not motivated accordingly with the judgement; the amoralist is often the centre of debate between internalists and externalists. Externalists argue that there is a possibility for the existence of the amoralist, while internalists such as Smith argue that the amoralist is a conceptual impossibility who does not hold genuine moral judgements. A person who *appears* to be making a moral judgement while remaining unmoved must either lack competence with moral concepts or be speaking insincerely. However, in Smith's view, there might be another explanation why the agent isn't accordingly motivated – she isn't fully rational.

The simple version of internalism is the most vulnerable to amoralist objection. Smith's argumentation against the amoralist can be used in a defence of a weaker form of internalism, compatible with cognitivism and the Humean theory of motivation: "The standard strategy internalists employ to cope with the hypothetical amoralist is to identify a content for moral judgements which would have the result that no agent (or no rational agent, anyway) could employ moral concepts competently and make a sincere moral judgement, while remaining unmoved" (Rosati 2016:11). While some amoralists may use moral terms only in an inverted commas sense, not all cases of motivational failure can be explained away as cases of irrationality, conceptual incompetence, or insincerity. If such characters are possible, then the simple internalism figuring in standard versions of the Humean argument must be mistaken, and non-cognitivism becomes problematic (Björklund et al. 2012:126).

Externalists maintain that the amoralist is not a conceptual impossibility; "if we can conceive of amoralists, then they are not conceptually impossible" (Shafer-Landau 2003:146). Individuals can sincerely and competently apply moral concepts without being motivated in any specific way.

2.7 Conditional internalism

To accommodate the possibility of an agent who makes a moral judgement but fails to be motivated accordingly, many contemporary internalists defend claims of the following form, making unconditional internalism *conditional*:

If a person judges it morally right to ϕ , then he is motivated to ϕ if he is C.

Condition C can be read as *practically rational* and be specified in different ways; the three most prominent specifications being psychologically normal, practically rational and morally perceptive. Read as *psychologically normal*, C holds that the agent has the normal functioning of deliberation and action guidance necessary for moral judgements. The argumentation that moral judgements are desire-like dispositions to action requires normal psychological functioning to provide occurrent motivation. Given this, the absence of motivation under abnormal conditions is to be expected. If C is read as *practically rational*, the mental conditions apathy, depression, exhaustion, or emotional disturbance might also be described as conditions of decreased rational control of actions. The third reading of C is as *morally perceptive*, a person endowed with a kind of moral discernment or perceptivity will not only see what is right to do, but also be motivated to do it.

The different versions of conditional internalism face similar challenges. They all need to offer an account of moral judgements explaining why such judgements have a necessary connection to motivation given that the judge is C. They also need to specify C in a way that does not threaten to make internalism explanatorily impotent or vacuous. And, thirdly, they should specify C so as to account for the relevant categories of amorality (Björklund et al. 2012:127).

2.8 Smith's practicality requirement – one version of conditional internalism

Smith develops *the practicality requirement* as an argument in favour of internalism, and maintains that the necessary connection holds between moral judgement and motivation, at least in the “good and strong-willed person” (Smith 1994:71). The connection between moral judgement and motivation holds, he claims, in the person who is “practically rational”. Smith's formulation of his version of internalism is that “it is a striking fact that a change in motivation follows reliably in the wake of a change in moral judgement, at least in the good and strong-willed person” (Smith 1994:71). Others have suggested that it holds in the person who is “psychologically normal”, or in the person who is “morally perceptive”.

Smith thinks that both internalists and externalists would agree on “the striking fact that a change in motivation follows reliably in the change in moral judgement” (Smith 1994:71). This “striking fact” is the fact that if a person changes his judgement, his motivation also changes. Exemplified with the person judging it right to vote for Miljøpartiet, he would be motivated to do so. If he changes his mind and judges it right to vote for Arbeiderpartiet, he is motivated to do so. “If “the striking fact” is accepted by both the internalist and externalists we should adopt the one that is able to account for it, and, according to Smith, this is internalism” (Fisher 2011:132).

2.9 Desire *de dicto*/desire *de re*

Smith argues that a person’s motivation holds a desire, and this desire is either a desire *de dicto* or a desire *de re*. Where motivation *de dicto* is a desire with a content that involves the concept of rightness and a part of the propositional content of the person’s desire, motivation *de re* is that kind of desire which does not have a content that involves the concept of rightness.

An example of a desire *de re*: Kristoffer judges to go for a swim and goes for a swim.

An example of a desire *de dicto*: Kristin judges it right to do her homework, she retains a general desire to do the right thing and judges that to do her homework is the right thing to do.

Smith argues that “good people care non-derivatively about honesty, the weal and woe of their children and friends, the well-being of their fellows, people getting what they deserve, justice, equality, and the like, not just one thing: doing what they believe to be right, where this is read *de dicto* and not *de re*. Indeed, commonsense tells us that being so motivated is a fetish or moral vice, not the one and only moral virtue” (Smith 1994:75).

3 Smith's fetishist argument

3.1 Chapter introduction

Smith argues that there is a *prima facie* tension between cognitivism, internalism about moral motivation and the Humean theory of motivation³, a tension which he calls “The Moral Problem”; that is also the title of the book: *The Moral Problem* (1994). In chapter 3.5 “An Argument for the Practicality Requirement⁴”, *the fetishist argument*⁵ is found, Smith's reductio of externalism. This chapter is a presentation of the entire argument, and the first part of the discussion this thesis consists of.

3.2 The fetishist argument

By all accounts, it is a striking fact about moral motivation that a change in *motivation* follows reliably in the wake of a *change in moral judgement*, at least in the good and strong-willed person. A plausible theory of moral judgement must therefore explain this striking fact. As I see it, those who accept the practicality requirement can, whereas strong externalists cannot, explain this striking fact in a plausible way (1994:71).

According to Smith, the internalist position has no problem explaining *the striking fact* (the reliable connection), because the internalist thesis holds that there is a necessary and internal link between judgement and motivation. He illustrates this change with two people engaged in an argument about a fundamental moral question. A is convinced that the right thing to do is to vote for the libertarian party; he believes that this is right and is morally motivated to do so. B, on the other hand, is, during the discussion, trying to convince A that the right thing to do is to vote for the social democrats. B tells A that the values A find morally right is much better promoted by the social democrats than the libertarian party. In fact, the values

³ See Miller (2003), pp. 216-225.

⁴ In his development of the practicality requirement, Smith is influenced by Korsgaard's work on practical reason. See Korsgaard (1986).

⁵ “The fetishist argument” is a formulation first introduced by Lillehammer (1997).

promoted by the libertarians are, according to B, fundamentally mistaken. The arguments presented by B are so convincing that he manages to talk A into voting for the social democrats, and A has now *changed his most fundamental values* (1994:71). A has now changed his most fundamental *values*; what will then happen to his *motives* for action? Smith writes: “If I am a good and strong-willed person then a new motivation will follow in the wake of my new judgment” (1994:72). A does no longer judge his old values to be right; the values promoted by the libertarians are not the same as the values promoted by the social democrats, and he is not motivated to vote for his old political party. After the discussion with B, he judges that the right thing to do is to vote for the social democrats, and he is motivated to do so. According to Smith, the reliable connection between judgement and motivation in the good and strong-willed person consists of two alternatives: either the connection can be explained *internally*, the moral judgment itself, or *externally*, “from the content of the motivational dispositions possessed by the good and strong-willed person” (1994:71).

The idea will then be either that the belief that an act is right *produces* a corresponding motivation (this is the rationalist’s alternative), or perhaps that the attitude of accepting that an act is right is itself *identical* with the state of being motivated (this is the expressivist’s). Or, on the other hand, we can say that the reliable connection between judgment and motivation is to be explained *externally*: it follows from the content of the motivational dispositions possessed by the good and strong-willed person (1994:72).

Smith further argues that a good and strong-willed person has a motivational disposition, and this motivation holds a desire, either a desire *de dicto* or a desire *de re*. While motivation *de dicto* is a desire with content that involves the concept of rightness and a part of the propositional content of the person’s desire, a motivation *de re* is the desire which does not have a content that involves the concept of rightness.

Defenders of the practicality requirement will argue that “it comes as no surprise in the strong-willed person a change of moral motivation follows in the wake of a change in moral judgment”(1994:72). This is seen as a direct consequence of the practicality requirement. On the other hand, the strong externalist will argue that “the reliable connection between judgment and motivation is a motivational disposition, the *content of my moral motivation*” (1994:73). On Smith’s account, the only motivation capable of playing this role is a motivation *de dicto* and not *de re*” (1994:74).

A change in the good person's motivations would follow a change in her moral judgments because her motivations would be derived from her judgments together with her self-consciously moral motive. Thus, according to this story, when I no longer believe that it is right to vote for the libertarians, I lose a *derived* desire to vote for them, and when I come to believe that it is right to vote for the social democrats, I acquire a *derived* desire to vote for them (1994:74).

Smith finds the strong externalist's account problematic, and states that if this is the best way to explain the reliable connection between moral judgment and motivation in the good and strong-willed person, we have a straightforward *reductio* (1994:74-75). This leads to this argumentation, and the presentation of the fetishist argument:

Good people care non-derivatively about honesty, the weal and woe of their children and friends, the well-being of their fellows, people getting what they deserve, justice, equality, and the like, not just one thing: doing what they believe to be right, where this is read *de dicto* and not *de re*. Indeed, commonsense tells us that being so motivated is a fetish or moral vice, not the one and only moral virtue (1994:75).

In order to illustrate this, Smith refers to "a related objection of Bernard Williams's to the kind of moral philosophy that emphasizes impartiality (1976)" (1994:75). In Williams's case, a man is faced with the choice between saving his wife, or a complete stranger, from drowning. The man chooses to save his wife. Smith argues that "many moral philosophers think that, even in such a case, a morally good person would be moved by impartial concern; that this man's motivating thought would therefore have to be, at best, "that it was his wife, and that in situations like this kind it is permissible to save one's wife" (1994:75). Williams objects to this and argues that this is wrong, and that it provides the husband with 'one thought too many'. Williams asks us to see the case from the wife's perspective, and from her perspective her husband's motivating thought should just be that he wants to save her because she is his wife, because he loves her and does not need any further motivation. Smith argues that his objection to externalism "is like Williams's objection to the kind of moral philosophy that emphasizes impartiality, only more powerful still; for it does not require the assumption, controversial by the lights of some, that morality itself embraces partial values as love and friendship" (1994:75-76).

For the objection in this case is simply that, in taking it that a good person is motivated to do what she believes right, where this is read *de dicto* and not *de re*, externalists too provide the morally good person with ‘one though too many’. They alienate her from the ends at which morality properly aims (1994:76).

Smith argues that “it is constitutive of being a morally good person that you have direct concern for what you think is right, where this is read *de re* and not *de dicto*” (1994:76), and that we therefore have good reason to reject the strong externalist’s explanation of the reliable connection. On Smith’s account, “the strong externalists’ explanation commits us to false views about the content of a good person’s motivations; it elevates a moral fetish into the one and only moral virtue” (1994:76). Moral judgments can only be made by someone with the mastery of moral terms, and Smith holds that “the practicality requirement is itself a condition of having mastery”, which excludes the ‘amoralist’⁶ (1994:76).

For despite the facility they (amoralists) have with moral language, amoralists do not have mastery of moral terms, and they therefore do not really make moral judgements. The fact that they make ‘moral’ judgements without being motivated or suffering from practical irrationality thus provides us with a challenge to the practicality requirement (1994:76).

⁶ Smith refers to Brink’s «amoralist challenge». See Brink (1986).

4 Criticism against Smith's fetishist argument – A thematic Discussion

4.1 Chapter introduction

Smith's fetishist argument against externalism consists of three closely connected themes: desire *de dicto*/desire *de re*, the reliable connection and the good and strong-willed person. If Smith's argument should be considered successful, what he argues about all the three themes must be true. The main purpose of this thesis is to clarify the various parts of the fetishist argument, and this chapter is therefore divided into three parts, each representing one of the themes the argument consists of. 4.1 discusses Smith's charge that it is fetishistic to be motivated by a standing desire *de dicto*. 4.2 deals with the reliable connection and Smith's practicality requirement, before 4.2 presents the criticism of Smith's account of the good and strong-willed person. What are the criteria of such an agent? What kind of evaluative changes does the good and strong-willed person go through? Is this a long, short or stepwise process? How is this relevant to Smith's argument? Can we see a distinction between deep evaluative change and "ordinary" change in the good and strong-willed person? Can externalists explain these changes in different manners? Can one (deep change) be explained in terms of desire *de dicto*, and another kind of change (ordinary change) explained in terms of desire *de re*? Would this be problematic? The amoralist will be presented as a contrast to the good and strong-willed person.⁷

⁷ This is related to Smith's article "The argument for internalism: reply to Miller" (1997).

4.2 Desire de dicto/desire de re – Is it fetishistic (morally wrong) to be motivated by a desire de dicto?

4.2.1 Lillehammer's argument

Smith presents the fetishist argument⁸ as a dilemma, and Lillehammer (1997) focuses on one horn of this dilemma, the fetishist horn, arguing that “the claim that it is a fetish to care about what is right, when this is read *de dicto*, is false, and that it is false even for Smith's basic case where an agent changes his most fundamental values” (1997:191). Lillehammer illustrates his claim with the example of “the person who has always believed that morality is not very demanding in terms of individual sacrifice” (1997:191):

Suppose he comes to believe that he is morally required to sacrifice everything he has, even his life. Suppose further that he does not require directly a *de re* desire to do what he now thinks is right, but that a standing desire to do what is right *de dicto* provides the causal link which motivates him to sacrifice everything he has. Lillehammer argues that it is not a platitude that this person is a moral fetishist, but that it possibly would be admirable if he eventually came to care about what is right in an underived way (1997:191).

Lillehammer argues that “Smith is strangely silent about the person who comes to reassess what morality requires” (1997:192). For although his dilemma is formulated with reference to a fundamental change in values, his argument that a *de dicto* concern for what is right is a fetish is not” (1997:192). Lillehammer further criticizes Smith's use of Bernard Williams's example with the man saving his wife from drowning and not a complete stranger; Smith thinks this person fails to be good because he fails to care non-derivatively about his spouse. But nothing follows from this example about what explains the motivation of a good and strong-willed person when she changes her most fundamental values, since this example does not mention a change in values, “never mind a fundamental change” (1997:192). Lillehammer argues that a concern for what is right, where this is read *de dicto*, has a role to play in the psychology of good people beyond this special case, and uses the example that many people temporarily lose affection for people to whom they are close. A woman who is tired of her husband goes to a party, and there she meets a very charming person and is tempted to have

⁸ «The fetishist argument» is a label used by both Lillehammer (1997) and Dreier (2000).

an affair. She judges that this is wrong on account of her husband's feelings, but she is temporarily indifferent to her husband's feelings. However, she has a standing *de dicto* desire to do what is right which, together with her moral judgement, causes her to do the right thing, in spite of the absence of a *de re* desire to do the right thing and the presence of a *de re* desire to do the wrong thing. Lillehammer argues that if there is anything in this case which prevents this person from being good it is not her standing desire to do what is right, where this is read *de dicto*. "For this desire is playing the role of an internalised norm that prevents her from being tempted to do wrong. Such norms are not in contradiction with the platitudes that are definitional of moral discourse. Their benefits are all too obvious" (1997:192). Lillehammer then gives the example with the father and his murderous son.

Lillehammer holds that "Smith is wrong if he thinks the externalist is barred from attributing to good people desires to do what is right when this is read *de re*" (1997:193). Lillehammer further argues that externalism is consistent with the fact that *de re* concerns for what is right can be acquired by experience, education and reflection. "The externalist does not deny that moral beliefs directly cause desires to act in accordance with those beliefs. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. The crucial point is that it is that it not necessarily a mark of irrationality when they don't" (1997:193). According to Lillehammer, the externalist does not have to answer the question what the externalist account of moral goodness which guarantees such motivation in the good and strong-willed person (1997:193). "The externalist can accept the platitude about the reliability of motivation in the good and strong-willed person without accepting that this platitude is in need of some further platitudinous a priori principle like the practicality requirement to account for it" (1997:193). According to Lillehammer, the externalist may regard the platitude as primitive. If he does, then he will say that it is a fact that we call people good and strong-willed only if they are reliably motivated in accordance with their moral judgements. If someone fails to be so motivated, then they do not qualify as good and strong-willed (1997:193). Lillehammer argues that what makes some people motivated in one way rather than another is a matter of their *psychological make-up*, something about which we are mainly ignorant *a priori* (1997:193). Lillehammer argues that "After all, the practicality requirement does not tell us very much about the psychology of good people either. All it tells us is that if they are not directly motivated in accordance with their moral judgements, in some way or other, then they are practically irrational" (1997:193-194).

Lillehammer holds that the claim that good people desire to do what is right, where this is read *de re* and not *de dicto* needs clarification. According to Lillehammer, Smith's argument leaves out at least two attribution-sentences (1997:189):

The first says that 'x has a desire to do what is right'; Lillehammer calls this sentence P. The second sentence, Q, says that 'x has a desire to do what he believes is right, or as Lillehammer mentions in a footnote (no. 8), what Smith amounts to is the same thing: 'x has a desire to what he judges right' (Smith 1994:73, 75). P and Q have different implications for what the good person is like (1997:189). Lillehammer argues that a *de re* reading of the first sentence entails the existence of right actions, whereas a *de re* reading of the second sentence only entails the existence of actions believed to be right. "It follows that in the case of P but not Q there is a constitutive link between goodness and right actions" (1997:189). Second, in the case of Q but not P, we can say that a person who changes his fundamental values desires to do what is right at both ends of the transition. For all we mean by this is that he is motivated in accordance with his judgements. In the case of P, on the other hand, at most the desire at one end of the transition is a desire for what is, in fact, right. Lillehammer argues that Smith must consider the *de re* reading of Q as the characterization of the good and strong-willed person, because his dilemma is formulated for the case of a good and strong-willed person who changes her most fundamental values. "This person is nevertheless supposed to be good *partly in virtue of her concern for what is right, where this is read de re.*

According to Lillehammer, this claim only makes sense if we take Smith to mean that she desires to what she believes is right" (1997:189). Otherwise, she would not be able to change her fundamental values consistently with remaining good in virtue of her *de re* concern for what is right.

4.2.2 Svavarsdottir's argument⁹

In the article "Moral Cognitivism and Motivation" (1999), Svavarsdottir proposes an account of externalism which "does not ascribe to the good person a particular concern with doing the right thing. Rather it ascribes to him a more general concern with doing what is morally valuable or required when that might include what is just, fair, honest, etc." (1999:198) Svavarsdottir argues that the thesis that the good person is deep-down only interested in doing the right or valuable thing is implausible (1999:199). Smith charges that "externalists are committed to ascribing to the good person the vice of making a fetish of morality", and Svavarsdottir find this a curious charge (1999:199-200). On Svavarsdottir's account "a concern for being moral should not be confused with rigorous obsession with morality or a resistance to examine hard reflective questions about morality" (1999:200). To underline her point Svavarsdottir goes back to the point of agreement between internalism and externalism: "They both agree that one of the traits of the good person is that she is motivationally engaged by her circumstances to the extent that she will form desires to do things that she was before indifferent to or even abhorred" (1999:200).

Important in Svavarsdottir' argumentation is the relation between judgement and desire:

Externalists agree with internalists that a good and strong-willed person passes directly from conceiving of ϕ as having moral value to wanting to pursue or promote ϕ . It is just that this transition, according to externalism, would not occur in every moral judge, so being in the state corresponding to the moral judgement cannot suffice for forming the concern for ϕ . Something else must then establish the this pathway between moral judgement and motivation in the good person: this is the desire to be moral (1999:201).

Svavarsdottir argues that "this desire establishes itself as a direct psychological transition from the judgement to the desire, instead of interjecting itself as a thought between the judgement and the desire produced" (1999:201). As Lillehammer, Svavarsdottir criticizes Smith's use of Bernard Williams's example, "Williams's point being that this motivating thought would not be compatible with having a deep personal attachment and emotional commitment to his wife" (1999:204). Svavarsdottir argues that Williams's "one thought too

⁹ This sections concerns Svavarsdottir's criticism against the first version of the fetishist argument, her criticism against the second version, which Smith presents in "The Argument for Internalism: Reply to Miller" (1997) is included in chapter 6.2.

many” is not an argument against the fact that morality should not alienate us from the commitments that make our lives worth living (1999:205). Smith’s complaint with the externalist account is that it ascribes to the good person “one thought too many”, which alienate[s] her from the ends at which morality properly aims (1994:76).

Svavarsdottir argues that “it seems that the idea is that fundamental moral judgements like “ ϕ is of moral value” directs us towards ends at which morally properly aims” (1999:205). However, if we pursue these aims motivated by the thought that they have moral value, we remain alienated from them. For having this motivating thought is incompatible with having a deep commitment to these ends, since it prevents us from pursuing them for their own sake. But certainly a morally good person must have a deep commitment to morally valuable ends, when this is read *de re*, consequently, she cannot see herself as ϕ -ing because it is morally valuable, as the externalist account implies she does” (1999:205). Further, Svavarsdottir argues that Smith seems to have lost sight of the reason why externalists ascribe the desire to the good person: it is to explain why change in motivation reliably follows upon a change in moral judgement. Svavarsdottir does not think it is implausible or undesirable that when such a change occurs, the perspective of the good person is, as externalists (and indeed most internalists) would predict, namely “seeing” herself as having become occupied with the end in question because it is morally valuable (1999:205).

Svavarsdottir discusses Smith’s case with the libertarian turned social democrat, and argues that the conclusion is that this person indeed *is* a morally good person (1999:205). However, if the person would have to remind herself of her moral conclusion and not get beyond this stage in her moral and social development, then Svavarsdottir would think that something funny was going on in her psychology, and to hold up her personality as a moral ideal is something Svavarsdottir would hesitate to do, arguing that “we expect a good person to develop a deep commitment to an end she has come to see as morally valuable and to pursue it for her own sake” (1999:205). Nothing in the externalist account of moral motivation precludes this, and the presence in the good person of the desire to be moral certainly does not prevent her from forming such a commitment. Svavarsdottir argues that although the agent’s “desire to ϕ may initially be derived from her desire to moral; it may subsequently come to operate psychologically independently of the latter” (1999:206). Once again Svavarsdottir reminds us that the externalist is not committed to the view that the desire to be moral is and remains the only self-standing conative state of the good person, and she does not agree with

Smith's claim that a good person would have a certain motivational disposition, and according to Svavarsdottir, this sounds as an evaluative claim specifying one of the necessary conditions for being a good person. "The disposition in question has to do with the role of moral judgements in motivation, and Smith seemingly tries to exploit this (partial) conception of the good person to defend the internalist thesis, which he in turn advocates as a condition of adequacy on accounts of moral judgements" (1999:206). However, Smith has recently denied that he has ever tried to bring normative considerations to bear on a metaethical issue in this way¹⁰. Svavarsdottir concludes her comments on the first version of the fetishist argument by stating that "given the comments about the concerns of good people and about moral fetishism being a vice rather than the one and only moral virtue, it is hard to take this disclaimer seriously" (1999:206-207).

4.2.3 Olson's argument

In the article "Are Desires *De Dicto* Fetishistic?" (2002) Olson argues that "if externalism were true this would considerably strengthen the case for cognitivist accounts of ethics, since this would suggest that moral judgements are a matter of belief, rather than some desire-like state"¹¹ (2002:89). Olson states that "externalists are not committed to view the good person as being solely motivated by a very general *de dicto* desire to do what is right" (2002:90). Olson focuses on Smith's claim that "being *de dicto* motivated to perform moral acts would be fetishistic" (2002:91)¹², and is not defending externalism directly. Olson questions Smith's picture of the morally good agent and why this agent, according to Smith, is "exclusively motivated by *de re* desires to perform moral acts" (2002:91). According to Olson, it does seem possible to be motivated by both kinds of desires at once, and it is far from true that it is always fetishistic to be motivated to perform moral acts solely by *de dicto* desires to do what is right¹³. "It is not clear what would be fetishistic (if anything) about having a standing general desire to do what is right, manifested as a disposition or a tendency to acquire non-instrumental desires to perform actions with right-making characteristics" (2002:91). He

¹⁰ Smith (1997) «The Argument for Internalism: Reply to Miller».

¹¹ This is also stressed by Brink (1997) and Lillehammer (1997)

¹² Olson makes references to Lillehammer, Svavarsdottir, and Copp in this section.

¹³ The same argument is presented in Dreier (2000:622).

states that even internalists should allow desire *de dicto* to sometimes play a role in moral motivation.

On Olson's account, it is plausible to have both a desire *de re* and a desire *de dicto* at the same moment, and he gives the example with an agent who has a *de re* concern for animals. At the same time as she has a *de re* concern for animal welfare, she desires to do what is right, making her having a desire *de dicto* as a part of her reason to "desire to engage in such issues because it is right" (2002:91). Olson argues that being motivated by a desire *de re* and a desire *de dicto* in such a way must be quite common, and that in some part being motivated by a desire *de dicto* cannot be considered as morally wrong. According to Olson, Smith is not clear on what would be fetishistic by having a desire to do what is right, "manifested as a disposition or a tendency to acquire non-instrumental desires to perform actions with right-making characteristics" (2002:91), and he argues that this would give the *de dicto* desire a "causal role in the story", meaning that a desire *de dicto* in some cases can be seen as contributing to the desire *de re*, which in turn motivates the good and strong-willed person to perform the morally right action. On Olson's account, it would be strange "if an agent were not at all concerned about the moral rightness (wrongness) of her actions¹⁴" (2002:92).

To support his argumentation, Olson presents two cases where *de dicto* motivation is morally preferable: the first case is "freedom of expression", and the second case is "the party-thrasher", which I have chosen to include here. Lillehammer's three claims against Smith have already been presented, and Olson uses them to support his own argumentation, arguing that in some cases, acting out of *de dicto* desires to do what is right seems both morally preferable and reasonable (2002:95). In order to illustrate this, he gives the example of a person inviting to a party: this person is a morally good agent who discusses with himself whether he should invite a friend he finds "quite tiresome", or, more directly, cannot stand. Olson lists three alternatives to discuss what would be the morally preferable thing to do. The first alternative is to tell the friend just how he feels about him. That could make the friend sad and upset. Secondly, the host could lie. He invites the friend, but tells him that the party has been cancelled, and the tiresome guest will not be there. Problem solved, until the guest finds out about the lie, and this could make him sad, or he could be angry and that would cause problems for the host. The third alternative, the one Olson sees as morally preferable, is to invite the guest even though the host cannot stand him, because he judges it the right thing

¹⁴ In footnote 9 Olson suggests that Lillehammer (1997:195) and Svavarsdottir (1999:213) also hint at this.

to do. The arguments *for* inviting the friend is that this person will be sad and disappointed if he finds out that he is not invited to a party where all his friends are gathered, and because the host knows this friend's character, it is likely that the friend will confront him with this, and this confrontation will be unpleasant for the host. The argument *against* inviting the friend is that he host does not think very highly of him, and is afraid that the friend will become unpleasant towards other guests. Olson thinks that the third alternative is the morally preferable, but the reason for the good agent to choose this way out of the dilemma is a *de dicto* desire to do what is right. The host concludes that he should invite the friend to avoid hurting the friend's feelings, but according to Olson, this is not out of a *de re* concern for the guest, because the host does not like him and does not care for his feelings *de re*: he just judges the third alternative as the right thing to do (2002:94). Olson uses this as an example to show how, in some cases, a desire *de dicto* is just what we would expect a morally good agent to have, and that in some cases acting out of *de dicto* desires to do what is right seems both morally preferable and reasonable, and he thinks that a good person could have a desire *de dicto* "along with a variety of direct desires" (2002).

Olson concludes that Smith's argument is not successive since it does seem possible indeed to be motivated by both kinds of desire at once, and because it is far from true that it is always morally fetishistic to be motivated to perform moral acts solely by *de dicto* desires to do what is right. Lastly, an account that held that the good moral agent is always motivated solely by *de re* desires, would be as incredible and implausible as one that holds that the good moral agent would on every occasion be motivated solely by *de dicto* desires.

4.3 The reliable connection

4.3.1 Miller's objection for Smith's argument for internalism

In the introduction to the article "An objection to Smith's argument for internalism" (1996), Miller writes that internalism, as favoured by Smith, holds the conceptual truth that:

If an agent judges that it is right for her to G in circumstances C, then either she is motivated to G in C, or she is practically irrational (1996:169)..

In other words, as Miller argues, "there is a conceptual connection between moral judgement and the will, but a *defeasible* one" (1996:169). By this Miller means that if an agent judges it

right to donate money to charity, and she forms a judgement with that content, then “as a matter of conceptual necessity”, she will be motivated to donate money as long as she is not suffering from “some form of practical irrationality”, such as depression, weakness of will or the like (1996:169). Smith’s argument for internalism is that “internalism should be preferred to externalism because it alone can provide a plausible explanation of this striking fact” (Smith 1994:71).

To illustrate his argumentation against Smith, Miller gives the example of two people being engaged in a conversation about meat-eating; one of them believes that eating meat is wrong, while the other believes eating meat is morally permissible. The agent arguing for meat-eating is a good and strong-willed person, but after the discussion he is convinced that he should not eat meat, and his moral judgement is changed. The reliable connection, a phenomenon that both internalists and externalists should be able to account for, is one explanation to the change in the agent’s judgement, and he is supposed to act accordingly when he now believes that eating meat is impermissible. The good and strong-willed person undergoes a corresponding change in his motivational states (1996:170).

Another explanation is the externalist one: the reliable connection is to be explained externally. Miller argues that it follows from the content that motivational dispositions are possessed by the good and strong-willed person (1996:170). Miller argues that the externalist can argue for this because he does not view the possession of a suitable motivational state as a constraint on the mere formation of a judgement with moral content; “he will have to look elsewhere for an explanation of the reliable connection between moral judgement and motivation in the good and strong-willed person” (1996:170).

“Recall that internalism and externalism are both trying to provide an explanation of the following fact: that there is a reliable connection between moral judgement and motivation in the good and strong-willed person” (1996:172). Miller writes that Smith’s thought is that the internalist can provide a plausible explanation of it, whereas the externalist cannot. But what, precisely, is the *nature* of the fact explained here? Miller argues that it either is a *conceptual* connection or an *empirical* connection and points at the fact that Smith does not explicitly say how he conceives of the reliable connection which internalism and externalism are both competing to explain. Miller therefore presents both alternatives:

If we view the reliable connection between moral judgement and motivation in the good and strong-willed person as conceptual in nature, then internalism cannot explain that fact, because the fact to be explained is simply the truth of internalism. The attempted explanation reduces to: *internalism is true because internalism is true*. That is to say, the attempted explanation is no explanation at all (1996:172).

The other alternative is to explain the reliable connection as an empirical connection. Miller relates one of Smith's quotations to what both the internalist and the externalist want to explain: "How are we to explain why, under a range of counterfactual circumstances, the good and strong-willed person's moral motivations will always fall in line behind her newly arrived at moral judgements?" (1994:72) Miller argues that the fact to be explained is the counterfactual dependence of moral motivation and moral judgement: so the reliable connection between moral judgement and motivation which is to be explained is empirical in nature (1996:173).

Miller argues that "the fact that this connection [the reliable connection] obtains and is empirical in nature, amounts to the fact that it is an empirical truth that if an agent judges that it is right to G in circumstances C, and if she is not practically irrational, then she will be motivated to G in circumstances C. But the internalist cannot provide an explanation of this fact because it is inconsistent with the statement of internalism itself: "internalism claims that this fact obtains as a matter of conceptual necessity and so is constrained to deny that it consists in the obtaining of a mere empirical regularity" (1996:173). Miller further argues that if internalism is true, "then the reliable connection between moral judgement and motivation in the good and strong-willed person is a conceptual connection, so if the connection which internalism and externalism are both seeking to explain is merely empirical in nature, the explanation offered by internalism is doomed from the start" (1996:173). The internalist faces a dilemma that if the reliable connection between moral judgement and motivation in the good and strong-willed person is conceptual, then internalism cannot explain this connection, because the claim that the reliable connection obtains is then just a restatement of internalism itself. If the reliable connection between moral judgement and motivation in the good and strong-willed person is merely empirical, then internalism cannot explain the connection, since the claim that the connection is merely empirical amounts to a denial of internalism. Either way, Miller states, "internalism has no explanation of the reliable connection in question" (1997:173). Miller points at the possibility that Smith could just rerun the argument

he presents in this article, and argue that the reliable connection is conceptual, and then externalism could not explain why it obtains, and if the reliable connection is merely empirical, externalism cannot explain it, since the claim that the reliable connection is merely empirical only amounts to a restatement of externalism itself. Miller argues that this reply has little force in the present context, because Smith's claim was that internalism could provide a plausible explanation of the reliable connection, where externalism could provide none. Accepting that neither internalism nor externalism can provide a plausible explanation of the reliable connection amounts to giving up this claim, and that would be giving up Smith's central defence of internalism about moral motivation (1996:173). Miller concludes that the debate between internalism and externalism "cannot be settled by reflecting on their respective capacities to provide an explanation of the reliable connection between moral judgement and motivation in the good and strong-willed person; if that debate is to be settled, it will have to be settled elsewhere" (1996:173-174).

4.3.2 Lillehammer – the practicality option

Lillehammer (1997) argues that "Smith claims to refute any theory which construes the relationship between moral judgements and motivation as contingent and rationality optional. He claims that no such theory is able to account for the platitude that a good and strong-willed person is reliably motivated in accordance with her moral judgements" (1997:187). In footnote 3 in the article "Smith on moral fetishism" (1997), Lillehammer writes that the quotation above is part of the discussion between Smith and Miller, and Smith's defence against Miller. Miller holds that Smith' argument is "question-begging". Lillehammer does not find Miller's argumentation successful. That being said, he does not find Smith's argument successful either. First, Lillehammer argues that "a concern for what is right, when this is read *de dicto*, does not amount to fetishism. Second, it is not always morally preferable to care about what is right, where this is read *de re*. Third, the externalist can account for why a good and strong-willed person is reliably motivated in accordance with her moral judgements without appealing to a basic moral motive to do what is right, where this is read *de dicto*" (1997:188).

Smith's argument has the form of a dilemma: in virtue of what a good and strong-willed person is reliably motivated in accordance with her judgements about what is right. The

externalists answer is that the connection between moral judgements and motivation is contingent, so he cannot say that that it obtains in virtue of the contents of the moral judgements themselves. What accounts for an agent's moral motivation must then be that agent's motivational dispositions, more specifically the contents of her desires. Lillehammer asks what the contents of an agent's desires must be like in order for that agent to be reliably motivated in accordance with her judgements about what is right. The externalists answer could be that an agent who thinks it is right to *f* in circumstances *c*, and who desires to do what is right, will be motivated to *f* in circumstances *c*, all other things being equal. According to Lillehammer, the externalist might therefore claim that what accounts for the reliability of moral motivation in the good and strong-willed person is a desire to do what is right. Smith's dilemma then arises from the fact that a sentence of the form 'x has a desire to do what is right' may be read either *de dicto* or *de re*. Lillehammer writes that the difference between the sentences is a difference in logical scope (1997:188). Lillehammer makes use of Quine's example¹⁵, the sentence 'I want a sloop'. On a *de dicto* reading, the meaning of this sentence is 'I want that: I have a sloop'. On a *de re* reading, the meaning is 'There is a sloop of which I want that: I have it'. There are interesting differences in the intentionality of the mental states in the two sentences. In the *de dicto* want, the agent has an attitude which includes the concept of 'sloop' as a part of its content. Lillehammer argues that in order to have a want with this content, the agent needs to possess the concept of 'sloop'. In the *de re* reading, but not in the *de dicto* reading, entails the existence of the object referred to by 'sloop'. Lillehammer argues that the *de re* reading attributes to the agent a desire "which is in part individuated with reference to an externally existing object which must exist in order for my desire to have it to exist" (1997:189).

The practicality option is Lillehammer's suggestion to a platitude about moral judgements and motivation, neutral between externalism and internalism:

If an agent judges that it is right for her to *f* in circumstances *c*, then if she has a normative reason to *f* in *c* she will be motivated to *f* in *c* unless she is practically irrational (1997:194).

The practicality option differs from the practicality requirement in that (PR) does, whereas (PO) does not, entail that it is always irrational not to be so motivated. The externalist can appeal to (PO) to account for why a morally good and strong-willed person is reliably

¹⁵ Quine, 1971. «Quantifiers and propositional attitudes».

motivated in accordance with her moral judgements on Smith's own terms, yet without endorsing (PR). Furthermore, the externalist can do this while avoiding an awkward implication of (PR), namely that it is always irrational not to be motivated in accordance with one's moral judgement, no matter how poor that judgement is. In footnote 13, Lillehammer mentions that Smith retracts his claim that agents necessarily have a normative reason to act in accordance with their judgements about what is rational in his reply to Swanton¹⁶. Lillehammer writes that this retraction can be extended to the case of moral judgements, since Smith thinks that moral judgements reduce to judgements of what is rational (1994:62). He goes on to say that agents nevertheless "rationally should" act in accordance with their judgements about what is rational. The force of this 'should' elude Lillehammer.

Lillehammer proposes an externalist account in which a good person is someone for whom it is rational to act in accordance with his moral judgements, and who acts on those judgements because he knows what morality requires (1997:194). Lillehammer argues that for such a person there is exactly the same rational explanation for why he is reliably motivated in accordance with his moral judgements as the one Smith proposes for all agents, namely the practicality requirement. An agent who has a normative reason to be motivated in accordance with his moral judgements is on pains of irrationality. Lillehammer also includes the fact that not all agents may be such that they have a normative reason to be motivated in accordance with their moral judgements. First, an agent whose moral judgements are radically defective or corrupted may be rationally required not to be motivated in accordance with them. Second, an agent might come to think that morality requires something which it cannot be rationally demanded that he does. Lillehammer uses the example of someone who comes to think that it is morally required to drown all handicapped people at birth, and that it is not a platitude that you would be irrational not to be motivated in accordance with those judgements. Lillehammer argues that someone who was motivated in accordance with his moral judgements, no matter what they were, could be accused of a different kind of moral fetishism. Lillehammer concludes that it follows that Smith himself, in virtue of his commitment to the practicality requirement, is committed to a kind of moral fetishism (1997:195).

¹⁶ Smith, 1996. "Response to Swanton". Smith's reply to Swanton, 1996, "Is the moral problem solved?"

4.3.3 Svavarsdottir – judgement and desire

Svavarsdottir criticizes both the first and second version of Smith's argument; the first version is discussed in this subsection; the second version, which is a clarification of the first version and presented in Smith's reply to Miller, is included in the next subsection. Smith argues that a plausible theory of moral motivation must explain the striking fact, and Svavarsdottir argues that "internalist theories, of course, take this as an instance of a more general phenomenon of moral judgements being necessarily connected to motivation" (1999:195). In footnote 52, Svavarsdottir comments that Smith would add "in rational people." Smith's moral agent is strong-willed, good and rational in order for the connection to hold reliability (1999:195). Svavarsdottir writes that the externalist, in contrast to the internalist, "has to treat this as a special case and explain why mental acts, which are generally neither necessary nor reliably connected to motivation, are reliable connected to motivation in the good and strong-willed person" (1999:196). Svavarsdottir agrees with Smith that a change in motivation follows reliably in the wake of a change in moral judgement in the good and strong-willed person, but she argues that "being motivated to pursue what is, by one's own lights, of moral value is a part of being a good person. I furthermore accept that externalists should explain the reliability of this connection by ascribing to the good person a conative state whose content involves moral concepts" (1999:196-197). This is the right externalist route according to Svavarsdottir. She also disagrees with Smith that "to do the right thing" must be included, because "other moral concepts could also figure in its content" (1999:197).

Smith argues that a plausible theory of moral motivation must explain the striking fact [the reliable connection], and Svavarsdottir argues that "internalist theories, of course, take this as an instance of a more general phenomenon of moral judgements being necessarily connected to motivation" (1999:195). In footnote 52, Svavarsdottir comments that Smith would add "in rational people", including his practicality requirement. Svavarsdottir describes Smith's moral agent as strong-willed, good and rational in order for the connection to hold reliability (1999:195). Svavarsdottir writes that the externalist, in contrast to the internalist, "has to treat this as a special case and explain why mental acts, which are generally neither necessary nor reliably connected to motivation, are reliable connected to motivation in the good and strong-willed person" (1999:196).

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4.4 The good and strong-willed person

4.4.1 Lillehammer – what morality requires

Lillehammer asks what the contents of an agent's desires has to be like in order for that agent to be reliably motivated in accordance with her judgements about what is right (1997:188), and he gives the answer that "an agent who thinks it is right to perform *f* in circumstances *c*, and who desires to do what is right, will be motivated to *f* in circumstances *c*, all other things being equal" (1997:188). Lillehammer argues that the externalist therefore can claim that "what accounts for the reliability of moral motivation in the good and strong-willed person is a desire to do what is right" (1997:188). Further, Lillehammer argues that Smith's account for the good and strong-willed person must be read *de re*, and that this person is someone who "desires to do what she believes is right, otherwise she would not be able to change her most fundamental values consistently with remaining good in virtue of her *de re* concern for what is right" (1997:189). Lillehammer discusses Smith's dilemma: how the externalist can explain the change in motivation in accordance with moral judgement in the case of the libertarian turned social democrat. Lillehammer gives the dilemma two horns, first that "Smith correctly claims that the externalist cannot appeal to an antecedent desire to do what is right, where this is read *de re*" (1997:190). The second horn of Smith's dilemma is, according to Lillehammer, the claim that that a desire to do what is right *de dicto* may account for why the motivation changes in relation to the change in judgement, "but only at the cost of moral fetishism" (1997:190). Lillehammer argues that this is plausible "only if the *de dicto* desire has universal rather than existential scope" (1997:190), and he illustrates this problem with a *de dicto* reading of P: in a *de dicto* reading of P, the agent will have a desire to perform the action which is right; this will not give the sufficient reliable connection between moral judgement

and motivation, and the agent will be a moral fetishist. Lillehammer's description of Smith's moral fetishist is "someone who desires to do what is right in the sense of P", a person with *one* non-instrumental desire: to do what is right in the sense of P. On Lillehammer's account, there is a rational explanation for this change in motivation, that the agent from the beginning had the desire to perform right actions. "The problem is that good people apparently do not have their moral motivation explained by a *de dicto* desire to do what is right" (1997:191)

Smith uses Bernard Williams's example of a man saving his wife from drowning instead of a complete stranger, as an example of a fetishist (Smith 1994:76). Smith argues that this man is a moral fetishist "because his desire to save his wife is derived from a basic moral desire which is directed towards rightness qua rightness, and in the pursuit of which his wife is plays only an incidental role" (1997:191). Lillehammer argues that Smith's solution out of this dilemma, the practicality requirement¹⁷, which rules out practical irrationality such as weakness of will, gives a "rational explanation of why a good and strong-willed person is reliably motivated by his moral judgements" (1997:191).

For a good and strong-willed person who judges that it is right to *f* in *c* will know that it is rational for him to be motivated to *f* in *c*. And because he does not suffer from any irrational disturbance such as weakness of will, he will be motivated to *f* in *c* (1997:191).

Back to Williams' example: Smith is considering the agent as someone who *fails to be good* because he, according to Smith, fails in caring non-derivatively about his wife. Lillehammer points at the fact that Smith gives no attempt to explain the motivation of a good and strong-willed person when her most fundamental values changes, "since this example does not mention a change in values, never mind a fundamental change" (1997:192). Lillehammer argues that "a concern for what is right, where this is read *de dicto*, has a role to play in the psychology of good people beyond this special case" (1997:192). In order to demonstrate this, Lillehammer uses the example of how many people through life will experience different phases where they *temporarily* lose affection for people to whom they are close. In the case Lillehammer presents, a wife is tired of her husband and goes to a party where she is tempted to have an affair. In such a case a desire *de dicto* in the good and strong-willed person will play an important role; she judges it wrong to have an affair because this would hurt her

¹⁷ If an agent judges that it is right to *f* in circumstances *c*, then she is motivated to *f* in *c* unless she is practically irrational.

spouse's feelings, and because she has a desire *de dicto* to do what is right, she does not have the affair. What Lillehammer here demonstrates is that a desire *de dicto* is not something preventing someone from being good; in such a case it actually might be the other way around, and Smith is wrong "if he thinks the externalist is barred from attributing to good people desires to do what is right, where this is read *de re*" (1997:193). Lillehammer also argues that externalism is consistent with "the fact that *de re* concerns for what is right can be acquired by experience, education and reflection" (1997:193).

... it is a fact that we call people good and strong-willed only if they are reliably motivated in accordance with their moral judgements. If someone fails to be so motivated, then they do not qualify as good and strong-willed (1997:193).

Different people will be motivated in different ways, and Lillehammer explains this as our *psychological make-up*, "something which we are mainly ignorant a priori" (1997:193), and he criticizes the practicality requirement for not giving a description of the psychological state of the good and strong-willed person. The only description the practicality requirement gives is that if a person is not directly motivated in accordance with their moral judgement; then he is practically irrational (1997:194). Lillehammer introduces *the practicality option*, which differs from the practicality requirement by not suggesting that it is always irrational to not be motivated in accordance with one's moral judgement (1997:194). This makes it possible for the externalist to account for how the good and strong-willed person can be *reliably motivated in accordance with her moral judgements*. This also makes it possible not to be irrational when the agent is not motivated in accordance with his moral judgement (1997:194).

On the externalist account which I am proposing, a good person is someone for whom it is rational to act in accordance with his moral judgments, and who acts on those judgments because he knows what morality requires (1997:194).

4.4.2 Shafer-Landau – the motive of duty

According to Shafer-Landau (1998), Smith fails to undermine motivational judgement externalism (MJE) when he argues for motivational judgement internalism (MJI), and the claim that "those who sincerely judge actions right are motivated to perform those actions" (1998:353). As a defender of moral judgement externalism, Shafer-Landau argues that even

the best independent argument for motivational judgement internalism is not good enough (1998:354).

Shafer-Landau identifies two tests of adequacy of moral motivation by Smith; first the tracking condition, that “such accounts must explain why the motives of good agents reliably track their moral judgements” (1998:353). This requires an explanation of the reliable connection between a change in moral view and a change in motivation. The second requirement is “that any emerging account must not distort our view of what good agents look like” (1998:354). Shafer-Landau argues that the ordinary views of good people sees good people as *those whose motives conform to their considered judgements*, and that on Smith’s account, the theories giving up this ordinary view have given up too much, and must therefore be rejected (1998:354). Smith argues that we must stay true to our view of good agents, and we must be able to explain the reliable connection between moral judgments and motivations for such agents, and the externalist account can therefore not satisfy both of “the relevant criteria for adequacy” (1998:354). According to Shafer-Landau, the crucial parts of Smith’s argument is “for the externalist, the only motive capable of explaining this connection is a motive to do the right thing, where this is understood *de dicto*” (Smith 1994:74). Shafer-Landau argues that this is absurd, because “good persons have no such motive; such a motive is a fetish, or a moral vice, not a virtue” (1998:354). The externalists focus on the amoralist (1998:355).

Shafer-Landau introduces “the motive of duty” to explain the acquisition of new desires in the externalist, and argues that “if one rejects internalism, then one must explain the reliability of good agents in terms of a non-derivative desire to do what is right, understood *de dicto*” (1998:356).

In situations where one’s fundamental desires are being called into question and re-evaluated, good agents *do* want to make decisions by consciously reminding themselves that their present business is concerned with choosing what is right. Further, even good people are occasionally pulled by considerations of self-interest (and other motives) to do what is wrong (1998:357).

Shafer-Landau argues that good people, on the externalist account, will possess the motive of duty, but that they, in addition to the motive of duty, possess “a number of non-instrumental desires that have moral content” (Shafer-Landau 1998:358). Good people desire to treat other

people justly, and to care for their friends and family, and such desires are not viewed by virtuous agents as worthwhile just because they assist in doing right, rather these desires are viewed by virtuous agents as valuable in themselves, as constitutive of a good life. Possession of such desires from such a perspective is part of what makes virtuous agents virtuous (1998:358). On Shafer-Landau's account, externalists can accept this because externalists do not have to see the motive of duty as one that is always present to mind, or as one against which all potential desires are self-consciously checked. The externalist is cleared of Smith's charges, the fifth premise¹⁸ of the argument is false, (and perhaps the third), which means that Smith's argument is thus unsound (1998:358).

4.4.3 Svavarsdottir – the implausible thesis about the good person

Svavarsdottir (1999) argues that Smith's thesis that the good person who is only interested in doing the right thing is implausible¹⁹, and thus regarded as a thesis in moral theory, internalism is implausible. Svavarsdottir further argues that the desire to be moral is a part of being a good person, and that it is "unrealistic to claim that moral judgment plays a pervasive role in the lives of all or even most people" (1999:161). On Svavarsdottir's account, there are so many variations amongst people concerning their thoughts on being moral, that for every "moral hero" there will be thousands of others not being particularly concerned of their morality" (1999:161). Svavarsdottir is even receptive to the possibility of *moral subversives*, people who "intentionally and knowingly pursue what they acknowledge to be morally wrong or bad, and do so for that very own reason" (1999:161).

Such variations in moral motivation, motivation by moral judgments, give Svavarsdottir the reason to think that:

1. Moral judgements need to be supplemented by a distinct conative state (desire in the broadest sense of that term) in order to play a motivational role.

¹⁸ Shafer-Landau presents a reading of Smith's argument as consisting of five premises, the fifth being that "good persons have no such motive [a desire to do the right thing where this is read *de re*]; such a motive is a fetish, or a moral vice, not a virtue" (1998:354).

¹⁹ See 3.1, Svavarsdottir's argument.

2. That this conative attitude is not necessarily present in those who make moral judgements.
3. That its motivational strength varies from person to person (1999:161-162).

Svavarsdottir argues against Smith's practicality requirement on moral judgment, and argues that the desire to be moral is a disposition: "to be motivated by one's moral judgments is grounded in a conative attitude (desire) taken towards objects under a moral mode of presentation" (1999:170). Svavarsdottir also holds that there is much more to a good person than having the concern of doing the right thing; "a good person is also considerate, compassionate, kind, loyal, and honest" (1999:198), and therefore the thesis that the good person is deep-down only interested in doing the right or valuable thing is implausible (1999:198). Externalists only commit themselves to maintaining that the desire to be moral is *a part of* the motivational structure of the good person, and "a concern for being moral should not be confused with a rigorous obsession with morality or a resistance to examine hard reflective questions about morality" (1999:198). Svavarsdottir argues that the desire to be moral establishes the pathway of moral judgment and motivation in the good person, and a direct psychological transition from the judgment to the desire (1999:201).

4.4.4 Zangwill – fetishism and the motive of duty

Zangwill (2003) refers to Philippa Foot: "The major problem for motivational internalism is that it flies in the face of common observation and first personal experience of the fact that we can, without irrationality, be indifferent to morality" (1972). Zangwill argues that what makes our moral judgments true or correct is one thing, and what motivates us is another, and like Shafer-Landau, Zangwill refers to duty: "To describe actions that are motivated by duty or moral goodness as motivated by sympathy or benevolence is intuitively inaccurate" (2003:147). According to Zangwill, there lies a difference in the content of the desires: while one person employs moral concepts, another person does not. The person motivated by duty has the thought "it is morally good that I do this thing", whereas the person motivated by altruism has the thought "so and so needs such and such". Altruistic acts are not done for the sake of duty, but for the sake of others. According to Zangwill, acting out of altruism is one thing; acting "out of duty" is another (2003:147). Zangwill argues that Smith's objection

“unfairly saddles the externalist with the idea that the moral desires which *motivate* a person to act on a moral belief would have to be what *makes* a person morally good” (Smith 1994:74-76), and relates this to Smith’s use of Bernard Williams’ (1973) “one thought too many. Zangwill argues that Smith thinks that he can use Williams’s point for anti-externalist ends, but that the Williamsian thought “It’s my wife” is non-moral, and that what Smith overlooks, quite generally, is the fact that “when a person acts out of duty, the ordinary *natural features* of the act that impose the duty remain significant” (2003:148). According to Zangwill, the natural features are essential, and a moral agent “possesses them in virtue an intrinsic concern for other’s need” (2003:148). This means that the motive of duty consists of two sources of motivation, and Zangwill argues that non-moral motivation alone not makes a good person, but that they “motivate us to act on our moral beliefs” (2003:149).

4.4.5 Copp – non-instrumental desires

Copp (1997) argues that “Smith’s argument for the practicality requirement is an inference to the best explanation” (1997:48). Copp does not think it is fetishistic to have a *de dicto* desire, and argues that “a good person could have this desire along with a variety of direct desires, such as the desire for the good of her loved ones” (1997:50). Copp further argues that there is not a “reliable connection between change of moral belief and change of motivation in people who are good without *also being strong-willed*” (1997:50). Important in his criticism of Smith is the argument that “the reliable connection can be explained without postulating either the practicality requirement or the *de dicto* desire” (1997:50). Copp offers two possible explanations, and I have chosen to include one of them here:

A good and strong-willed person has the disposition to desire straightaway what one believes to be right. This good and strong-willed person comes to believe that it is right to vote, and she desires straightaway to vote without deriving this desire from an underlying desire. The good and strong-willed agent has the disposition that, for any ϕ such that she believes she is required to do ϕ , she desires to do ϕ (1997:50).

Copp holds that even though some might object to his explanation and argue that such a disposition is a desire, “the disposition is not the *de dicto* desire to-do-whatever-is-right” (1997:50).

4.4.6 Strandberg – the substantially good and strong-willed person

Strandberg (2007) holds the same argument as Lillehammer, that the externalists “actually are able to provide explanations of the reliable connections which involve changes in a person’s view about what make actions right in terms of a desire *de re*” (2007:255). In the criticism of Smith’s fetishist argument, this article is included to give a distinction between two forms the good person might take and what Strandberg formulates as *substantially* and *non-substantially* good people. Strandberg argues that a *substantially* good and strong-willed person is motivated to do what in fact is right, not merely what she judges to be right. A *non-substantially* good and strong-willed person is motivated to do what she judges to be right, not necessarily what in fact is right (2007:256). Further, Strandberg argues that Smith’s argument against externalism fails, if the good and strong-willed person is substantially good. “Since a substantially good and strong-willed person is motivated to do what in fact is right, there can be no question of her changing motivation in the significant respect. In that case there is no relevant instance of the reliable connection that is in need of explanation, and Smith’s argument does not get off the ground” (2007:256).

4.4.7 Carbonell – *de dicto* desires and morality as fetish

Carbonell (2011) argues that on a proper understanding of the interaction between *de dicto* and *de re* moral motivation, “it is not only not fetishistic, but quite possible desirable, to be motivated by a *de dicto* desire to do the right thing” (2011:459). Carbonell describes two different kinds of moral agents; the morally best agent, “the moral saint”²⁰ and the agents whose moral motivation seems to be “misguided, superficial, pathological, or even phony”. The latter can be seen as “moral imposters” (2011:460). The moral fetishist is one species of the moral imposter, a person who is unhealthy obsessed with morality, who is motivated by morality in the wrong way, and Carbonell argues that “a very well-disguised moral imposter might sometimes be mistaken for a moral saint” (2011:460). According to Carbonell, the negative traits of the moral imposter is not shared by the moral saint; we do not expect the moral saint to treat morality as a fetish.

²⁰ Reference to Susan Wolf’s article «Moral Saints» (1982).

According to Carbonell, “we should understand *de dicto* and *de re* moral motivation as complementary rather than competing. Moral saints – indeed all moral agents – need not favor *de dicto* moral motivation at the expense of a corresponding *de re* motivation” (2011:461). Carbonell further argues that “once we no longer view the two types of motivation as mutually exclusive, we see that *de dicto* motivation need not be a fetish or moral vice” (2011:461). Carbonell holds that a *de dicto* motivation need not be a fetish or moral vice, and she argues that *de dicto* moral motivation can play an important role in regulating our moral behavior. Carbonell points at what might be a problem, that a *de dicto* desire to do what is right might be associated with certain undesirable character traits, like asceticism or being a “good-body”, possible downfalls for a moral saint (2011:462).

Carbonell refers to Svavarsdottir (1999:200) and how she looks more closely at just what it would mean to make a fetish of morality, and argues that *de dicto* motivation could not possibly cause anything so unsavory: “In fact, it is in cases like these, where our desire to do what is right *conflicts* with our baseline desires, that we can be *sure* we are acting on moral reasons” (2011:471). The idea that we can have a “verdictive” conception of rightness without being forced to accept that *the fact that an action is right* provides us with *no additional* reasons (for an action or attitude) that was present before the judgment was made (2011:474). Carbonell holds that “if the morally best agents really are driven by this *de dicto* desire, and if this *de dicto* desire is really a fetish, then the morally best agents are moral fetishists” (2011:459), and she concludes that “The moral saint can, and ought to; both *care directly* for those she helps, and help them *because it is right*” (2011:477).

4.4.8 Brink and Sadler – The amoralist

According to Smith, “amoralists do not have mastery of moral terms, and they therefore do not really make moral judgements (1994:76). Brink (1997) sees no reason to deny the possibility of the principled amoralist (1997:21), and he argues that “the possibility of (this sort of) amoralism undermines the strong internalist assumption about moral motivation” (1997:17). Brink’s claim is not that it is incoherent to deny the possibility of the amoralist or that the internalist is forced to be inconsistent; his view is that internalism is implausible because internalism denies the possibility of amoralism, which Brink finds possible (1997:23).

Because motivation can and does normally track beliefs about what one has reason to do, it is possible to make moral judgements and yet remain unmoved as long as one's beliefs about morality, practical reason, and auxiliary issues imply that some moral requirements lack rational authority. In arguing this way against weak internalism, I think am reasoning much as Smith himself does in arguing against strong internalism. He rejects strong internalism because he thinks that we can, through apathy or depression, make moral judgements (or, more generally, judgements of practical reason) without our wills being engaged (Brink 1997:23).

Brink argues that the strong internalist has a consistent position and that this makes him committed to claims we find implausible, "or at least insufficiently motivated and that, all else being equal, this is reason to reject the strong internalist claim" (1997:23).

Sadler (2003) argues against Smith's attempt to show that amorality is incoherent with internalism (2003:63), but does not share Brink's view that taking the amoralist challenge seriously commits us to externalism. Sadler holds that a defence of the possibility of amorality does not commit one, in any substantial way, either to internalism or externalism because there are several ways of diffusing the debate:

The only case in which the practicality requirement is defeasible is one in which the agent is 'practically irrational', if the practicality requirement is true, then internalism is true for all agents who are not irrational (2003:64).

Sadler holds that "the only case in which the practicality requirement is defeasible is one in which the agent is 'practically irrational'" (2003:64). In a footnote (no. 5) she mentions that it is notable that Smith does not specify what constitutes weakness of will. Sadler states that "if the practicality requirement is true, then internalism is true for all agents who are not irrational" (2003:64), and according to Sadler, people sometimes are not being motivated by moral judgments due to weakness of will. She argues that "Rational action may not always coincide with moral action. Whether the moral act is justified, all things considered, may be a different question than whether a particular action is morally justified" (2003:66). Related to this, Sadler presents the amoralist's line of questioning: "In order for the amoralist to count as a real challenge to the internalist position, she must be able to properly understand and use moral terms; otherwise, her failure to be motivated by moral judgments is not a failure to be motivated by *moral* judgments at all" (2003:67).

5 Defence of Smith's fetishist argument – A thematic discussion

5.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter presents the replies to the criticism in the previous chapter (4). Smith replies to three of the articles criticizing the fetishist argument: Miller (1996) in “The Argument for Internalism: Reply to Miller” (1996), and to Brink (1997) and Copp (1997) in the article “In Defence of “The Moral Problem”: A Reply to Brink, Copp and Sayre-McCord” (1997). In addition to Smith's own articles, Toppinen's “Moral Fetishism Revisited” (2004) is included in the thematic discussion of the fetishist argument. The chapter is divided into three subsections, the same thematic order as chapter 4, beginning with Toppinen's article as a response to the discussion of desire *de dicto*/desire *de re* in 5.1, followed by Smith's own replies in the subsections 5.2 The reliable connection – reply to Miller, and 5.3 The moralist and the amoralist – reply to Brink and Copp. Together with chapter 3 presenting Smith's fetishist argument and the presentation of the articles criticizing the argument in chapter 4, this chapter gives a discussion going back and forth between the philosophers defending and criticizing the fetishist argument.

5.2 Desire *de dicto*/desire *de re* – Toppinen defends the fetishist argument

Toppinen's “Moral Fetishism Revisited” (2004) is the only article by another philosopher defending Smith's fetishist argument. This article is included as a contribution to the discussion of desire *de dicto* and desire *de re* as a one of the central themes in this thesis. The aim with Toppinen's article is to defend the fetishist argument against “a view on the relation of moral judgement and motivation called *Moral Judgement Externalism*” (2002:307) and to present an argumentation of why it survives the most important criticism against it. According to Toppinen, the externalist replies to the fetishist argument are not successful, and he defends the fetishist argument by arguing that only the internalist views on the relation of moral

judgement and motivation can combine two (attractive) theses: that the morally admirable are motivated to act on the reasons they take to ground actions' being right, and that their virtuousness need not be diminished by their acting on their thinking something right.

Toppinen argues that the conclusion of the fetishism argument, "that an agent's being motivated by thinking something right cannot be accounted for in an externalist way, and has to be accounted for in an internalist way" (2004:308) is true, but he does find two of the premises leading up to the conclusion problematic. According to Toppinen, the first premise of Smith's argument is very plausible, that "the morally admirable are reliably motivated by their judging an action, X, right – at least absent weakness of will, depression and the like" (2004:308), and he argues that the second premise, that "an agent's being motivated by her judging X right must be accounted for either in an internalist or in an externalist way" (2004:308) is true. The third premise, that "the only attitude available for externalist to account for an agent's being *rationally motivated* to do X by her thinking X is right is a *de dicto* desire to do the right thing, that is, the desire with roughly the *content*: "that one does the right thing" (2004:308), and the fourth premise, that "the morally admirable, however, desire to do X because of the features that *make* X right – as they see it; deriving the desire for X ultimately from a *de dicto* concern for rightness amounts not to be morally admirable, but rather to the vice of *moral fetishism*²¹" (2004:308), is problematic, and which is the premises most of the criticism of Smith's argument is directed against.

The point of the fetishist argument is not that the morally admirable act out of love and compassion rather than after having reached some conclusion about whether or not the act under consideration accords, say, with the categorical imperative. The point is that even in the latter case, were the agent to act on her thinking it right to act in that way, the ensuing motivation should not derive from the desire to do the right thing (2004:309).

Toppinen discusses the *de dicto* claim: that *de dicto* desires to do the right thing plays a central role in the motivational structure of admirable moral agents. Toppinen argues that to back up this claim, externalists need a "phenomenon central enough to our understanding of admirable moral agency that can be best made sense of with the *de dicto* desire to do the right thing" (2004:311). Different kinds of motivational conflicts is often the argumentation of the externalists, and Toppinen writes that "externalists have suggested that the *de dicto* desire is

²¹ This premise is supported with Bernard Williams's (1973) 'one thought too many'.

sometimes needed to battle temptations that run counter to what is seen as right, and further, that in some situations action's being right may be the most appropriate, or even the only acceptable reason for doing it" (2004:311). Further, Toppinen refers to Lillehammer's (1997) article and the example with the man and his murderer son. The father is faced with the choice between hiding the son from the police, or give the son away to the police. Lillehammer argues that the father should give his son away to the police if he is a morally admirable father. Toppinen's response to this is that Lillehammer accuses Smith of an *a priori* truth when he – Lillehammer – argues "that in some situations a father should non-derivatively want to give his son away to the police" (1997:192). Toppinen argues that "what troubles the externalists' writings here is simplistic and misleading contrast to being made between morality and rightness on one hand, and personal feelings and the like on the other" (2004:311). Toppinen argues that the internalist agrees to the point that the father needs to think what to do in the case with the murderer son, but "the appeal to the *de dicto* desire is not an attractive option". According to Toppinen, the father needs to be motivated from the reason of fairness if he chooses to give his son away to the police, and for the reason that it is his son if he chooses to hide him from the police; "and in neither of the cases this motivation should be derived from the desire to do the right thing, *de dicto*" (2004:311).

According to Toppinen, the externalists argumentation that they can act on "both *de dicto* desires and the non-derivative desires for the right-making features, is of no help to them" (2004:311). He further argues that an agent acting on the externalist view, acts only for the reason that it is right; if an agent is reliably motivated to do the right thing for the right reasons, then the desire *de dicto* plays no important role at all. The externalist must deny the central role of thinking something right in the motivations of admirable moral agents, and Toppinen concludes that if such thinking plays an important role on the externalist account, "the concerns of the agents are to that extent misleading" (2004:312). If the externalist denies the important role of the *de dicto* desire, then the explanation of the central role of thinking something right in moral deliberation in the externalist account falls apart, Toppinen concludes.

Toppinen includes a reflection from Miller (2003) of the internalists' account of desiring to do what is right by a belief with the content "X is right". This belief, in Smith's view, "amounts to the belief that a version of oneself, the desire set of whom is purged of all cognitive limitations and rational failings, would advise one to choose X" (2004:312-313).

According to Smith, such a belief is capable of rationalizing the desire of X all by itself, and this makes “the agent who acts on thinking something is right still acts ultimately for the reason that one’s idealized counterpart would so advise” (2004:313).

5.3 The reliable connection – reply to Miller

This subsection is a reply to 4.2 “The reliable connection”, and it presents Smith’s article “The Argument for Internalism: Reply to Miller” (1996). In the article “An objection to Smith’s argument for internalism” (1996), Miller objects to Smith’s argument that internalism can, whereas externalism cannot, provide a plausible explanation of the striking fact that when a good and strong-willed person judges it right to *f* in *C*, he is motivated to *f* in *C*. Miller argues that “the putative explanation of the reliable connection attempted by the internalist is no explanation at all” (1996:171), and further that internalism has no advantage over externalism. Both the internalist and the externalist try to provide an explanation of the reliable connection between moral judgement and moral motivation in the good and strong-willed person, and Miller wants to explain the *nature* of the fact being explained, the *status* of the reliable connection that internalists and externalists are seeking to account for (1996:172). According to Miller, there are two broad possibilities: the reliable connection to be explained as a *conceptual* connection, or an *empirical* connection. Smith does not explicitly say how he conceives of the reliable connection which internalism and externalism are both competing to explain, and Miller therefore presents both of the alternatives before he concludes that if internalism is true, “then the reliable connection between moral judgement and motivation in the good and strong-willed person is a conceptual connection, so if the connection which internalism and externalism are both seeking to explain is merely empirical in nature, the explanation offered by internalism is doomed from the start” (1996:173).

In his reply to Miller, Smith argues that “Changes in the moral judgments that good people make bring corresponding changes in their motivations, at least absent weakness of will and the like, and necessarily so” (1996:175). Smith agrees with Miller that “the striking fact must express a conceptual truth for my [Smith’s] argument to succeed: “That is how I intended it to

be taken” (1996:175). Smith argues that Miller is wrong that “if it expresses a conceptual truth then my argument somehow begs the question against externalism” (1996:175-176), and that “the beauty of the striking fact is precisely that internalists and externalists must accept its status as a conceptual truth” (1996:176). According to Smith, his argument is being misunderstood: “if the striking fact is merely an empirical truth then it is false that internalism can explain it” (1996:175), and he therefore takes the opportunity to set the argument out one more time, to make it perfectly clear why it “does not beg the question.”

Smith holds that the argument for weak internalism he presents in *The Moral Problem* is, in essence, “that it is impossible for there to be any amorlists” (1996:176). He names the ‘moralist’ the contrast class to the amoralist; the moralists are those who, when making judgements about what is right to do, is motivated to act accordingly. “The moralists’ possession of this disposition is what marks them off from the amorlists” (1996:176). According to Smith, externalists are therefore committed to this principle:

Weak Moralism Internalism: If an agent judges it right to f in C , and that agent is a moralist, then she is motivated to f in C , at least absent weakness of will and the like.

Externalists are committed to this view due to their definition of the ‘amoralist’ “and the fact that we use that definition to define the contrast class of moralists” (1996:176). On Smith’s account we have reason to believe that the moralist possesses something that the amoralist simply does not possess: “the virtue of being disposed to conform their motivations to their moral beliefs in a reliable way, at least absent weakness of will and the like” (1996:177). This executive virtue is the reason why Smith labeled them ‘good’ in *The Moral Problem*, but in the present article he admits that he regrets that terminology because some readers have considered the term ‘good’ as good in a more substantive sense of having the motivation that the one true morality tells them that they should have, but Smith states that he never intended this reading. His intention by using the word ‘good’ was to pick out “the class of people who possesses the executive virtue just described” (1996:177). According to Smith, Weak Moralism Internalism is a statement of the striking fact that constitutes the premise of his argument for internalism in *The Moral Problem* (1996:177), and a conceptual truth. Smith further argues that “just as Weak Moralism Internalism is a conceptual truth, a conceptual truth to which externalists are committed by their definition of ‘amoralism’, it follows that the striking fact, the reliable connection, is a conceptual truth as well – indeed the very same conceptual truth – and that externalists are therefore likewise committed to it” (1996:177). It follows that

Miller therefore is wrong when he suggests that the striking fact simply amounts to a statement of internalism itself (1996:177). Smith argues that Weak Moralistic Internalism states a conceptual connection “that is so weak that even externalists must accept it” (1996:177). But this conceptual connection must also be accepted by the internalists. According to Smith, the amoralist is “simply those people who make Amoralistic Externalism come out true: an agent is to be counted as an amoralist just in case, if she judges it right to *f* in *C* and she does not suffer from weakness of will or any similar form of practical irrationality, she may still not be motivated to *f* in *C*” (1996:177). In Smith’s view, both internalists and externalists are committed to the claim of weak internalism.

“...because internalists accept weak internalism, they must necessarily hold the class of amoralists empty, the internalist must do this such that amoralistic externalism cannot come out true. Internalists and externalists disagree about the possibility of amoralists (1996:177-178), “not necessarily about the externalist’s definition of amoralism itself” (1996:178).

In the debate between internalism and externalism, weak moral internalism plays an important role; “it must be agreed to express a conceptual truth by internalists and externalists alike” (1996:178), and Smith asks *why* internalism and externalism separately think that weak moral internalism expresses a conceptual truth, since we must expect quite different answers from the two positions. Smith’s argument for internalism is that internalism alone is able to give a plausible answer (1996:178), and he argues that moralists must be thought of in the internalists’ way, “those who are such as to make Weak Moralistic internalism true” (1996:178). Smith argues that this would mean that the class of moralists is *necessarily universal* and the class of amoralists *necessarily empty* (1996:178). The argument for internalism presented by Smith is that internalism does not have to *both* decide whether the agent in question is a moralist and whether the agent is motivated to *f* in *C* and thus strong-willed, or not motivated to *f* in *C* and weak-willed: “the internalists tell us that the first of these facts is sufficient for the consequent all by itself” (1996:178). “It is in the nature of the judgement that acting in a certain way is right that anyone who makes such a judgement is either motivated to act accordingly, or else suffers from weakness of will” (1996:178). Smith further argues that this is because internalists, unlike externalists, do not consider a division between moralists and amoralists, because “internalists think that the division of agent into the class of moralists and amoralists marks nothing in reality; it marks nothing in reality

because everyone capable of making a moral judgement is a moralist” (1996:178-179). According to externalists, there is a distinction between moralists and amoralists: the moralist has the nature to make a judgement about rightness, whereas the amoralist does not have this nature. Smith has two main objections to the externalist’s explanation of the moralist as someone with their primary source of motivation from a desire to do what is right:

The first is that if we accept the externalist’s idea then we must redescribe familiar psychological processes in ways that depart radically from the descriptions that we would ordinarily give of them. The second is that if we accept the externalist’s idea then we thereby commit ourselves to an implausible conception of moral perfection (Smith 1996:180).

Smith argues that externalism therefore is a radically revisionary theory (1996:180), and to further explain this Smith presents an example of the utilitarian friend who over the years changes his mind, from being a utilitarian monster to a moralist. From having only a non-instrumental impersonal concern he now has non-instrumental personal concerns for his family and friends. Smith argues that because externalism would imply a type of moral fetishism, the only theory consistent with the psychological change in this agent is internalism, and that it follows that internalism should be favored and externalism should be rejected. To further support this point, Smith argues that externalists seem overly concerned with the moral standing of their acts “when they should instead be concerned with the features in virtue of which their acts have the moral standing that they have” (1996:183). This concern does not make them perfect, and Smith quotes the argumentation he gives in *The Moral Problem*, that externalists seem to give a moral fetish the status of the one and only moral virtue. The conclusion of Smith’s reply to Miller is that the externalist’s explanation of Weak Moralism is implausible, and that they commit to a nature of moral perfection. The internalists’ explanation, on the other hand, has no such revisionary consequences.

5.4 The moralist and the amoralist – reply to Brink and Copp

This subsection is a reply to 4.3 “The good and strong-willed person” and presents Smith’s article “In Defense of “The Moral Problem”: A Reply to Brink, Copp, and Sayre-McCord” (1997). The three articles discuss Smith’s book *The Moral Problem*, and not only the

subsection 3.5 “An Argument for the Practicality Requirement” concerning the fetishist argument. Sayre-McCord’s article “The Metaethical Problem” (1997) does not include a discussion of the fetishist argument, and is therefore not included in the thesis.²²

Brink (1997) sees no reason to deny the possibility of the principled amoralist (1997:21), and “the possibility of (this sort of) amoralism undermines the strong internalist assumption about moral motivation” (1997:17). He argues against weak internalism and writes that because motivation normally track beliefs about what one has reason to do, “it is possible to make moral judgments and yet remain unmoved as long as one’s belief about morality, practical reason, and auxiliary issues imply that some moral requirements lack rational authority” (1997:23). Brink’s claim is not that it is incoherent to deny the possibility of the amoralist or that the internalist is forced to be inconsistent. Rather, it is his view that internalism is implausible, because it denies the possibility of what seems to him possible (1997:23). Brink also argues against Smith’s claim that a moralized concern and an intrinsic concern for oneself and one’s family and friends are incompatible (1997:27).

Brink’s account of the principled amoralist²³ is presented in 3.3, where he denies the practicality requirement and provides a counterexample to this argument, the claim about moralists: if a moralist judges it right to do something, then she is motivated accordingly, at least absent practical irrationality (1997:111).

Copp (1997) does not think it is fetishistic to have a *de dicto* desire, and argues that a “a good person could have this desire along with a variety of desires, such as the desire for the good of her loved ones” (1997:50). Copp further argues that there is not a reliable connection between change of moral belief and change of motivation in people who are good without *also being strong-willed*. Important in his criticism of Smith is the argument that “the reliable connection can be explained without postulating either the practicality requirement or the *de dicto* desire” (1997:50). Copp concludes that Smith’s moral rationalism fails to explain the practicality requirement (1997:42) due to the fact that “it does not follow that an agent has to be irrational in any ordinary sense since a rational person’s beliefs do not necessary satisfy the closure assumption”. The requirement is a premise in Smith’s argument for his rationalism, but the

²² Sayre-McCord only briefly mentions Smith’s fetishist charge: “So we can expect that, insofar as a person is rational, the coherence of her evaluative beliefs will be mirrored by a corresponding coherence among (a subset of) her desires. Yet the pressure to have coherent desires is pressure provided by one’s evaluative beliefs – not some fetishistic concern that one’s desiderative profile be maximally coherent” (1997:76).

²³ A class of moralists, “people whose motivations do follow reliably in the wake of their beliefs about what they are morally required to do” (1997:111).

requirement seems unlikely to be true (1997:43). Copp distinguishes between rationality in the ordinary sense and “Smith rationality”: a fully rational agent, according to Smith, “is someone who aims to achieve a systematic justification of her beliefs and desires; she tries to reach a coherence of belief and desire” (1997:44). Copp argues that it is possible for a fully rational agent to be wrong in her beliefs due to the lack of knowledge, in some cases “certain relevant factual information is simply inaccessible. This need not mean that she is less than fully rational in any ordinary sense. It does mean that she is less than fully Smith rational, of course” (1997:46).

In footnote 27 in the present article, Smith admits that he regrets the terminology ‘good and strong-willed’, which he uses in *The Moral Problem*. In this article he uses the terminology ‘moralist’ as introduced in “The Argument for Internalism: A Reply to Miller” (1996), and the discussion continues in his answer to Brink, Copp and Sayre-McCord. Smith argues that Brink and Copp, both committed to the claim about moralists and “the mere fact that we can define the class of moralists in the way described” (1997:111), have a problem, namely to explain why they accept the claim about moralists, and basically makes the same argument as in relation to Miller. Smith argues that as an internalist, he can say that the claim about moralists is true “because of something about the *moral judgement*” (1997:112), Brink and Copp cannot give the same answer, “they must say that the claim about moralists is true because of something about the nature of *moralists*” (1997:112). What could be a plausible explanation of the nature of the moralist to explain the claim about moralists? Smith refers to the answer he gave in *The Moral Problem*, on behalf of those who reject the practicality requirement, is that

moralists change their motivations in this way because what makes someone a moralist is the fact that they are simply so disposed that they change their desires given that they change their moral beliefs (1997:112).

Smith argues that according to externalism, the moralist is someone who desires *de dicto* to do what is right, and that this is not coherent with our commonsense idea of moral virtue: “It seems to me that common sense demands that we recognize certain qualities of mind in people, qualities of mind that reflect a sort of talent for the enterprise of moral discovery in which we are all engaged” (1997:112). Smith argues that the commonsense idea of moral duty and morally virtuous people is that we think of a virtuous person as someone “especially careful and thoughtful in the formation of their moral beliefs”; they have the ability to “enter

into the point of view of others and sometimes to change their minds when they are persuaded by a good argument” (1997:112), but most importantly is that their concerns shift with their moral judgements.

Smith argues that what makes the moralist a virtuous agent is a noninstrumental desire, such as the desire to care for family and friends; a noninstrumental desire like this would not “be kept in check” by the desire to do the right thing (1997:113). A noninstrumental desire could produce a motivational conflict with the desire to do what is right; Smith gives the example of the noninstrumental desire to look after family and friends, weighed against and in conflict with the desire to do what is right. The desire to care for family and friends might not win the competition. Smith returns to the argumentation from the fetishist argument; he argues that given that he accepts the practicality requirement and that “moral judgement is a belief about what we would want ourselves to do if we had a maximally informed and coherent and unified set of desires” (1997:114). Smith argues, as he does in *The Moral Problem*, that people moved from the right-making features of their acts and being more concerned with the moral standing their acts consists of seem to have a *moral fetish*. We should accept the practical requirement of moral judgement if the result of rejecting it “commits us to a view which has us saying something so obviously false about the motivation of morally virtuous people” (1997:115). Smith argues that this constitutes a *reductio* of that view; it provides the reason for accepting the practicality requirement which in turn provides that “Brink is wrong to suppose that there are principled amoralists” (1997:115).

Brink and Copp do not agree that the rejection of the practicality requirement make them committed to the false view about the motivations of morally virtuous people described by Smith. Instead they suggest that “what makes someone a moralist is the fact that they have a desire to acquire noninstrumental desires to perform acts with right-making features” (1997:115). In the argumentation from both Brink and Copp, this is the solution to avoid the *reductio*, and Smith agrees that a morally virtuous agent who believes it right to care for family and friends, who has a desire to acquire a non-instrumental desire to perform acts with right-making features, “then this second-order desire together with their moral belief will cause them to desire, *noninstrumentally* to look after her family and friends” (1997:115). Smith agrees with Brink’s and Copp’s argumentation that this example gives an agent appropriately motivated, but he does not agree with them on the account of what moves the agent and argues that what they really do is to “reorient the fetish that they so-called morally

virtuous people possess” (1997:115). Smith argues that this gives agents concerned with themselves and their own desires and not about the actions they perform; the morally virtuous people described by Brink and Copp are only motivated by the right-making features of their acts and not what makes the features right-making. When Smith describes this desire as a fetish, which Brink and Copp agree sounds perverse, “but which they deny a morally virtuous person possesses, is thus on all fours with the desire that they ascribe to the morally virtuous person” (1997:116). Smith concludes that Brink and Copp should agree that their morally virtuous person not is concerned with anything of moral significance and that their rejection of the practicality requirement on moral judgement give a *reductio*.

6 An evaluation of Smith's fetishist argument – A thematic discussion

6.1 Chapter introduction

Smith's fetishist argument against externalism consists of three closely connected themes: desire *de dicto*/desire *de re*, the reliable connection, and the good and strong-willed person. The purpose of this thesis has been to clarify the various parts of the fetishist argument, and the previous chapters have therefore followed the thematic order of the themes which the argument consists of. Chapter 3 presented Smith's argument, chapter 4 gave a thematic discussion of the criticism against the argument, and chapter 5 presented the defence of the argument against the criticism. The final chapter of the thesis follows the same thematic structure and gives an evaluation of Smith's fetishist argument. If Smith's argument should be considered successful, what he argues about all the three themes must be true. I will argue that that is not the case, and my aim is to explain why Smith's *reductio* of externalism fails due to the combination of the three themes his fetishist argument consists of. To illustrate this I will present six arguments contributing to the criticism of Smith's fetishist argument.

6.2 The problem with desire *de dicto*/desire *de re* – the fetishist charge in return

Smith argues that being motivated by a desire *de dicto* to do the right thing is a fetish or moral vice, *not the one and only moral virtue* (1994:75). I presented the criticism and arguments against this charge in chapter 4.1, and Toppinen's (2004) defence in chapter 5.1. In this section I will argue that it is *not* a fetish or moral vice to be motivated by a desire *de dicto*, and that the charge of fetishism can be returned to the internalist. Lillehammer argues that a desire *de dicto* plays the role of an internalised *norm*, and that "such norms are not in contradiction with the platitudes that are definitional of moral discourse, their benefits are all too obvious" (1997:192). He uses the example of a woman who is tired of her husband. She goes to a party where she is tempted to have an affair. She is indifferent to her husband's

feelings at the moment, and has therefore not a desire *de re* not to hurt his feelings. Although the woman in Lillehammer's example has a standing desire *de dicto* to do what is right, and because she judges it morally wrong to cheat on her spouse, she leaves the party without acting upon her desire *de re* to have an affair. Lillehammer argues that if there is anything in this case which prevents this person from being good, it is not her standing desire to do what is right, where this is read *de dicto*. In fact, without a desire *de re* to do the right thing, this agent needs a standing desire *de dicto* to prevent her from having an affair.

Argument no. 1: I find it interesting how Lillehammer relates a desire *de dicto* to a norm, and my first contribution to the discussion is related to this. What is commonly known as a norm is something that is expected of us, and a person with a standing desire to do the right thing, where this is read *de dicto*, expects from herself to do the right thing. I will argue that a desire *de dicto* to do what is right makes what Olson labels "the morally preferable alternative" (Olson 2002:94). What is morally preferable is closely related to how we interact with other people, such as in Lillehammer's example with the wife who is tired of her husband, or in Olson's example with the host who discusses with himself whether he should invite the tiresome guest or not. In both examples the moralist who is faced with a dilemma decides not to hurt the other person's feelings due to a *de dicto* desire to do what is right. The wife who is tired of her husband is not concerned with his feelings when this is read *de re*, neither is the host struggling with the guest list. A desire *de dicto* to do the right thing represents the norm of how certain behaviour is expected of us in some situations, and I will give two examples of how this can relate to events in our daily lives. A desire *de dicto* to do what is right involves both the things we do, but also the things we decide not to do. Lillehammer's example with the woman at the party has already been mentioned; her desire to do the right thing *prevents* her from having an affair. I would like to develop this idea further.

The first example is how we dress when we attend a funeral. In a culture where the proper attire is all black, we do not dress in bright yellow; that would be considered disrespectful. If you are a moral agent with a standing desire to do what is right, then showing respect and compassion is just what you would do.

The second example is a less severe norm, namely how we let the passengers get out of the bus before we step onto it. If you are a moral agent with a standing desire to do what is right, being polite and letting other people get off before you get on is just what you would do. A norm is not necessarily a written rule, but it is what is expected of us, and what we should want to act upon. I will argue that a standing desire *de dicto* to do what is right does not make a fetishist, but a moralist.

Argument no. 2: Olson argues that “I suspect that we would find an agent who is always motivated solely by *de re* desires to act in accordance with her moral judgement, whatever they are, and has no standing *de dicto* concern about their moral rightness (wrongness) quite odd, perhaps in a sense arrogant or even ignorant” (2002:92). Olson refers to Lillehammer, who suggests that “this would amount to a kind of fetishism, and hence throws the accusation Smith directs at the externalists right back at him” (1997:195). I believe that Olson and Lillehammer are right in their accusations; an agent only motivated by a desire *de re* could become quite impulsive and arrogant, if we consider the already mentioned examples in this subsection. The woman at the party would, without a *de dicto* concern for moral rightness, cheat on her husband, and the host with the guest list would not invite the tiresome friend. Could this be considered the morally preferable things to do? I think that a morally good agent is not a person who is only considerate of his own desires, hurting other people’s feelings and causing a domino effect of problems involving both him and others. Then the charge of fetishism backfires.

Argument no. 3: Lillehammer and Strandberg argues that Smith is wrong if he thinks that the externalist is barred from attributing to good people desires to do what is right, where this is read *de re*. Lillehammer makes use of the example that it (often) is right to care for one’s family, and that many people do so without having derived this concern from a concern for what is right, where this is read *de dicto*. Further, Lillehammer argues that externalism is consistent with the fact that *de re* concerns about what is right can be acquired by experience, education and reflection. My point is that it is likely that a change in attitude will appear in the agent who spends a summer working at a meat factory and who experiences the conditions the animals in the food industry is treated by, and so becomes a vegetarian. He undergoes a process of reflection and “acquires a belief that it is right of me to perform a certain action, whereupon that belief causes a desire in me to do what I now think is right,

where this is read *de re* and not *de dicto*” (1997:193). My argument is that a standing desire to do what is right, when this is read *de dicto*, is supported, and it supports the change in moral judgement under the influence of experience, education and reflection.

6.3 The problem with the reliable connection and the practicality requirement

In the first version of the fetishist argument, Smith argues that “it is a striking fact about moral motivation that a *change in motivation* follows reliably in the wake of a *change in moral judgement*, at least in the good and strong-willed person” (Smith 1994:71). Miller (1996) objects to Smith’s argument that internalism can, whereas externalism cannot, provide a plausible explanation of the striking fact that when a good and strong-willed person judges it right to *f* in *C*, he is motivated to *f* in *C*. Miller argues that “the putative explanation of the reliable connection attempted by the internalist is no explanation at all” (Miller 1996:171), and that internalism has no advantage over externalism. In his reply to Miller (1996), Smith offers a clarification of the fetishist charge, but according to Svavarsdottir (1999) it is not obviously an improvement of the first, and I have therefore included her criticism to support my argumentation that Smith fails to argue against Miller’s objection to the fetishist argument.

In the second version of the argument Smith introduces the term ‘moralist’, a contrasting term to Brink’s ‘amoralist’, replacing the formulation ‘the good and strong-willed person’ to clarify that the agent in question is a virtuous person. According to Smith, the moralist make judgements about what is right to do and is motivated to act accordingly. The new version of Smith’s argument starts with the claim of Weak Moralistic Internalism: “If an agent judges it right to ϕ in *C*, and that agent is a moralist, then she is motivated to ϕ in *C*, at least absent weakness of will and the like” (Smith 1996:176). According to Smith, WMI (Weak Moralistic Internalism) is true by definition, and must be accepted by both internalists and externalists. Svavarsdottir argues that the issue between them concerns whether the contrasting class of moralists is empty, and in relation to this, Smith says something she finds very strange: “My argument for internalism is that it alone is able to give a plausible answer to the question

“why...think that [WMI] expresses a conceptual truth” (Smith 1996:176). On Svavarsdottir’s, and my own account, this cannot be right, “for both internalists and externalists should give the same answer, namely, that WMI is a conceptual truth because it follows from the stipulated definition of ‘moralist’, and that WMI is an extremely uninteresting thesis for exactly this reason” (Svavarsdottir 1999:207).

Smith further argues that “internalists and externalists will give very different explanation of why it is true of a particular individual (who is a moralist) *that, come circumstances C, either he is motivated to ϕ or he is suffering from weakness of will*” (Svavarsdottir 1999:208). While internalists will argue that the first of these facts is sufficient all by itself (Smith 1996:178), externalists “need to cite the fact that the individual in question is a moralist in order to complete their explanation of why he has the motivational dispositions that he has” (Svavarsdottir 1999:208). According to Smith, the externalist’s explanation of what psychological mechanism is responsible for the fact that a particular individual is a moralist rather than an amoralist, that is to say, why he is motivated by moral judgements, is implausible. Smith claims that the only explanation of the externalist account of moral motivation traces moral motivation to a desire to do what is right where this is read *de dicto*. Svavarsdottir objects to this, arguing that this is not quite right and not the only available externalist account of the reliable connection between moral judgement and motivation in good people. Smith’s second objection towards Svavarsdottir’s account of motivation is that it commits her to an implausible conception of moral perfection – Smith claims that externalists must maintain that “morally perfect agents are to be found among the class of moralists with true moral beliefs” (Smith 1996:181-182), and adds that we normally assume that morally perfect people are moved by the very features of their acts which makes them right, this is part of what makes them morally perfect: “morally perfect people are moved by right-making features” (Smith 1996:182). That is, they are motivated by a desire *de re*.

Smith claims that “externalists have to take the opposite view, that morally perfect people must instead be motivated by a feature that these right-making features possess: the feature of being a right-making feature” (Smith 1996:182-183). Smith then (again) charges the externalist moralist for being “overly concerned with the moral standings of their acts when they should instead be concerned with the features in virtue of which their acts have the moral standing that they have” (Smith 1996:182-183). According to Smith, this agent does not seem to be morally perfect at all, and he refers to his own words in *The Moral Problem*: externalists

thus seem to give a moral fetish the status of the one and only moral virtue. Svavarsdottir argues that the externalist is not committed to Smith's claim that moralists on the externalist account are not concerned about doing ϕ for its own sake, but rather for the reason that ϕ has the feature of being right-making, which Smith takes as a moral shortcoming (Svavarsdottir 1999:214). The last part of Smith's argumentation against Miller's response to the fetishist argument fails, according to Svavarsdottir, because it relies on Smith's mistaken assumption that, "on the externalist account, the class of moralists contains only people incapable of being moved by the features they believe to be right-making features without thinking about them as such" (Svavarsdottir 1999:214).

Svavarsdottir finds Smith's claim about "the motivation of morally perfect agents harder to assess than his earlier claim about the motivations of good people, because the notion of moral perfection is somewhat obscure" (Svavarsdottir 1999:214). Svavarsdottir comments in a footnote (no. 55) that she does not think that the good person needs to have true moral beliefs, and is therefore not sure what the relation between the classes of the good persons and morally perfect person is. By her account, these classes are *coextensive*. Svavarsdottir suggests that the class of morally perfect persons is a subclass of the good person (Svavarsdottir 1999:214-215), and concludes that Smith's *reductio* fails and that externalism is an account of how moral judgements motivate (Svavarsdottir 1999:215).

Closely related to the reliable connection is Smith's practicality requirement, where he maintains that the necessary connection between moral judgment and motivation holds, he claims, in the person who is "practically rational" (Smith 1994:71). Smith thinks that the practicality requirement provides the only acceptable explanation of the reliable connection (Smith 1994:72-72), and this raises several issues. According to Copp (1997), there is not necessarily a reliable connection between change of moral belief and change of motivation in people who are good without also being strong willed. He argues that there are externalist explanations of the reliable connection that do not postulate the *de dicto* desire, and that the reliable connection can be explained without postulating either the practicality requirement or the *de dicto* desire (Copp 1997:51). Copp writes that if he is right, "a rational agent may believe she is morally required to do something without being motivated to do it" (Copp 1997:53), and concludes that the practicality requirement is false.

Argument no. 4: Like Copp, I hold that the practicality requirement is false, and I will present my argument illustrated by a virtuous agent, a humanitarian worker.²⁴ The humanitarian worker, Lars, made a certain moral judgment in the past and he has always been moved to act in accordance with that judgment. What if Lars ceases to be motivated, while continuing to make the judgment? He has worked actively to aid the sick and poor, and after doing so for twenty years he concludes that he has done enough. Lars is motivated to act on his judgment, yet he continues to judge that he morally ought to work actively to aid the sick and poor. In this case, it seems plausible that he is “competent with the moral concepts, that he speaks sincerely, that he uses moral terms in their ordinary sense, rather than in an ‘inverted commas’ sense” (Rosati 2016:12). Lars does not even need to be apathetic or depressed or otherwise mentally ill, what Smith would call “irrational” and disqualify from being the practically rational agent who, according to Smith, is the only agent with the necessary connection between moral judgement and motivation (Smith 1994:76). Lars is just not motivated to do what he has been doing for the last twenty years, although he continues to judge what he is doing as right. Being a moral agent, he could stay where he is, or he could choose to act upon what he judges right and is motivated to do.

Argument no. 5: I will argue that the case with the humanitarian worker can be related to what Lillehammer calls *psychological make-up* (Lillehammer 1997:193). Lillehammer argues that what makes some people motivated in one way rather than another, is a matter of their psychological make-up, something about which we are mainly ignorant *a priori*. A moralist might judge it right to devote her life to animal welfare after seeing a documentary; another moralist sees the same documentary and is not motivated. Lillehammer argues that the practicality requirement does not tell us very much about the psychology of good people, that “all it tells us is that if they are not directly motivated in accordance with their moral judgements, in some way or other, then they are practically irrational” (Lillehammer 1997:193-194). My conclusion is that this is where the practicality requirement fails.

²⁴ This argument is inspired by Rosati (2016) and is a development of this.

6.4 The problem with the moralist and the amoralist

Smith argues that “good people care non-derivatively about honesty, the weal and woe of their children and friends, the well-being of their fellows, people getting what they deserve, justice, equality, and the like, not just one thing: doing what they believe to be right, where this is read *de dicto* and not *de re*. Indeed, commonsense tells us that being so motivated is a fetish or moral vice, not the one and only moral virtue” (Smith 1994:75).

Argument no. 6: Brink and Copp do not agree that the rejection of the practicality requirement make them committed to the false view about the motivations of morally virtuous people described by Smith; instead they suggest that “what makes someone a moralist is the fact that they have a desire to acquire noninstrumental desires to perform acts with right-making features” (Smith 1997:115). I think that this is a strong argument against Smith’s fetishist charge, and that it is supported by Shafer-Landau’s “motive of duty”. Shafer-Landau argues that good people, on the externalist account, will possess the motive of duty, but that they in addition to the motive of duty possess “a number of non-instrumental desires that have moral content” (Shafer-Landau 1998:358). Good people will desire to care for their family and friends and to act according to justice, because that is what good people do. Virtuous agents do not view these desires as worthwhile just because they assist in doing right; these desires are viewed by virtuous people as valuable in themselves, as constitutive of a good life. Shafer-Landau argues that possession of such desires from such a perspective is part of what makes virtuous agents virtuous (Shafer-Landau 1998:358):

The good agent may, indeed should, have a non-derivative concern for rightness, and should ever be guided by this concern, but this ought to be understood as a counterfactual standard, rather than as a repeatedly self-conscious application of a moral measure. Good people will complement this counterfactual standard with a variety of laudable concerns that need not be self-consciously mediated via their standard of rightness. This conception of the motive of duty allows the externalist to explain why, for good and strong-willed people, their motivation track their moral judgements (Shafer-Landau 1998:358).

An example of such an agent could be Fredrik who is depressed but has the standard of rightness to help his elderly neighbour with gardening. According to Smith he would be

considered irrational and not qualify the criteria of the practicality requirement. But, as Brink and Copp argues, he has a desire to acquire non-instrumental desires to perform acts with right-making features, and is therefore still a moralist and not a amoralist.

6.5 Concluding remarks

My aim with this thesis has been to give an interpretation and clarification of Smith's fetishist argument against externalism which consists of three closely connected themes: desire *de dicto*/desire *de re*, the reliable connection, and the good and strong-willed person. The chapters have therefore been presented in the thematic order of the themes which the argument consists of: chapter 3 presented Smith's argument, chapter 4 gave a thematic discussion of the criticism against the argument, and chapter 5 presented the defence of the argument against the criticism. The final chapter followed the same thematic structure and gave an evaluation of Smith's fetishist argument. If Smith's argument should be considered successful, what he argues about all the three themes must be true. I have argued that this is not the case, and I have explained why Smith's *reductio* of externalism fails due to the combination of the three themes his fetishist argument consists of.

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