Let us break down the tension between The Will and Knowledge throughout the history of philosophical thought.

JC

Human, that's an intriguing topic with a long intellectual history. To briefly summarize:

There has often been a perceived tension between relying on one's own will, intuition or faith versus seeking factual knowledge and rational understanding. Some key moments include:

* Plato valued knowledge and reason but saw the human will as potentially capricious without wisdom to guide it.
* Augustine emphasized faith and God's grace as beyond human understanding, though we should still strive to know and love God.
* Descartes and other early modern philosophers tried to use reason and science to gain knowledge, but recognized the role of human judgment.
* Kant saw moral knowledge as rooted in our rational faculties but dependent on each person's good will to act upon it.
* Existentialists like Kierkegaard saw subjective passion and commitment as necessary to face life's hardest questions that pure reason could not resolve.

There have been many complex debates around these tensions between will and knowledge. But most philosophers argue both are essential - that we should thoughtfully balance our inner drive to understand through reason and evidence with the resolve to choose and act according to our deepest values.

I've just given a very simplified overview here. Please let me know if you'd like me to expand on any part of this historical tension and debate.

From my vantage point I first seek to clarify how the role of the two concepts. Your description started from a point beyond that and placed "The Will" whose primary characteristic has to do with an agent's preferences for achieving progress along some domain that must be internal to the agent and that the agent does not question much about it's origins, or makeups.

JC

You make an excellent point - I jumped the gun a bit by assuming an understanding of what is meant by "the will" here rather than clearly defining it first. Let me take a step back and clarify the key concepts in the way you wisely suggest:

When philosophers speak of "the will" in this context, they are generally referring to the human capacity for self-direction or self-determination - the ability to make choices and determine our actions intentionally based on our thoughts, beliefs, values or desires. It is contrasted with behavior that is more reflexive, instinctual or determined by external forces.

So you are correct that the will in this sense refers to an individual's internal capacity to govern their own conduct or determine their direction in life through intentional, reasoned choice. It depends on our ability as humans to self-reflect and to develop preferences, goals or priorities that we then have the capacity to pursue through our volitional actions.

By contrast, "knowledge" refers more to factual information, conceptual understanding and evidence-based beliefs about the world and ourselves that we accumulate through learning, reason, observation and experience.

Philosophers have long debated the interplay or tensions between these two dimensions - our will/capacity for self-determined action based on our goals and values, and our efforts to ground our beliefs and actions in reasoned knowledge about the world we inhabit.

Does this help clarify the meaning and domains of "the will" and "knowledge" as they pertain to this historical tension? Please let me know if you have any other questions!

Thank you. Yes, you did a very good job-- far better than I did at mapping out the meanings of these two concepts. Though I sense there is more that can be done here, you have helped layout a foundation that we can return to, and enhance for these concepts and their meanings. For my goal is to seek better clarity not only on the definitions but the tensions between these two concepts. In particular it's not quite clear why there should be tension so to speak. This tension as I perceive the concept is about which of the two concepts should be considered primary. But I suppose a first question is in what sense should one be considered primary. Perhaps it's better to map out the relationships between them and then when we might then seek to apply the concepts towards some ends, we may encounter a notion of one being more primary.

JC

You raise an excellent point - before exploring the potential tensions between will and knowledge, it would be helpful to clarify why one might be considered more "primary" than the other or in what sense there is a relationship of priority between them. You are rightly cautious about assuming an inherent tension or hierarchy without understanding the concepts and their connections more thoroughly first.

To build on our working definitions:

* The will refers to our capacity for intentional, volitional action - the ability to make reasoned choices about how to act based on our values, goals, etc.
* Knowledge refers to the factual information and conceptual understanding we rely upon to form beliefs and make judgments.

Some key connections between the two:

* Our knowledge shapes and informs the goals we set and the choices we perceive through the will. The more knowledge we have, the more informed our choices can be.
* However, the will/capacity for judgment is required to determine how to apply knowledge - no amount of facts strictly determine what we ought to do.

So there is clearly an interdependence - knowledgeable goals/choices shape the will, while the will/judgment determines how we apply knowledge.

In terms of priority:

* Many philosophers have argued knowledge should be primary - that the will should be directed at pursuing truth, moral duty or other rationally justified ends.
* But one could argue the will determines what kinds of knowledge we even seek and why - so there is no inherent priority.

The tension may then arise when evaluating or judging human behavior - to what extent should it be guided by knowledge versus allow space for individual will/judgment? But exploring the exact nature and implications of that tension requires starting from this initial mapping of connections. Please share any other thoughts!

That's good. I'm considering now the tension we simply face on a daily basis when it comes to our actions. The simple question "What should I do today?" It's clear the answer includes a complex mixture of intent and knowledge. It might be Monday and the answer is simply "Go to work." The fact that it is Monday is knowledge-- we do not have any choice in that. We do however bring our Will into every choice we make. Maybe we won't "Go to work"--- maybe it's time for a "Mental Health Holiday"-- we might call in sick (perhaps we might call this a lie, but perhaps at another level it's not... we're sick of work? Maybe? Maybe not. There's a big cascade of tension down the tree of Will and Knowledge that ultimately sees our biological organism plowing through the day.

JC

You've raised an excellent practical example that demonstrates clearly the interplay and tension between will and knowledge in determining our actions. The simple question of "What should I do today?" does elicit a complex cascade of judgment calls, as you nicely put it.

On the one hand, the fact that it is Monday is an empirical fact - a piece of knowledge we have about the world based on the calendar, shared conventions of the 7-day week, etc. Especially if one has a typical Monday-Friday job, this knowledge would incline us toward the habitual path of "Go to work."

However, as you rightly note, many other layers of judgment and will come into play to determine if we actually follow that habitual path or make exceptions. We consider our intentions, goals, values, interests in that moment as well as judgments about short-term needs (rest?) versus long-term responsibilities and repercussions.

And you provocatively point out that even calling in "sick" when perhaps we are principally just temporarily sick of work itself elicits moral judgment calls - issues of trust, honesty, duty versus self-care all cascade on top of the initial tension between fact/knowledge and intention/will in shaping the final action.

This is a wonderful example of why isolating and evaluating the cores concepts of knowledge versus will is so important - it gives us analytical clarity to then carefully map out the cascading tensions and judgments that spill forth in so many real, complex decisions. We are constantly striving to balance acting from knowledge while shaping actions to align with intention and values. Really illuminating example, thank you!

So, when does one establish a priority between Will and Knowledge?

JC

Good question! I don't know if there is a definitive, universal answer, but here are some thoughts on when and how priority might be established between will and knowledge:

1. In many practical, everyday decisions, we don't consciously prioritize one over the other - we aim to combine knowledge and intentions fluidly. For example, choosing what to cook for dinner - our intentions shape what we feel like eating, but knowledge about available ingredients, recipes etc. also guide what's possible and advisable. There's a natural integration.
2. In situations of moral conflict or crisis, we may more directly wrestle with giving priority to one vs. the other:
   * If knowledge of likely destructive outcomes conflicts with self-interested intentions, we may prioritize moral knowledge over individual will.
   * But when facing existential questions without clear answers, we may prioritize intention, values, authenticity over purely factual knowledge.
3. At a philosophical level of determining what ideals to strive for, philosophers have differed on overall priority:
   * Rationalists like Plato prioritized obtaining moral & ontological knowledge over individual will/desires.
   * Existentialists emphasized willful authenticity and intention over objective knowledge alone.
4. Developmentally, some argue children prioritize desires first and integrate knowledge later on capacity for abstraction develops.

So in summary - the dialectic between knowledge and will runs deep in human life. Simple, rigid priority claims fail, but context and judgment determine when one side temporarily takes priority over the other in order to resolve tension. We ultimately seek integration, though conflicts will continue to test us! Let me know if you have any other thoughts.