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This essay will attempt to give a full explanation of *motivational internalism* – the theory that moral judgements are inherently motivational. To begin I will lay out the groundwork for motivational internalism, describing the argument that reason (aka. beliefs) are not sufficient on their own for motivation. Here, I will need to introduce the concept of the *direction-of-fit* of mental states to argue that the relationship between beliefs and the world is purely representational, whereas passions seek to change the world. I will also need to introduce calm and violent passions, to counter the suggestion that it is possible for reason and passions to be motivated by different ends. This leads to the final argument that moral judgements are inherently motivational, as the reasoning for the judgements are motivated by the passions, and these passions are inherently motivational as they seek to change the world. Afterwards, I will analyse how motivational internalism has influenced non-cognitivism in aesthetics – specifically aesthetic internalism which uses a similar argument for aesthetic judgements being inherently motivational.

*It is important to briefly note that the motivational internalism discussed in this essay will focus solely on “normally” functioning moral agents. There is a real depth of discussion on the implications of certain mental health conditions and other potentially unmotivated actions on the validity of motivational internalism. However, this investigation is beyond the scope of this essay.*

The motivational internalist arguments for distinguishing reasoning and passions requires understanding of the connection between different mental states and the world and reality – which is described by the *direction of fit* of a mental state. There are two directions of fit motivational internalism discusses. The first being *mind-to-world*, which aim to form representations in the mind to fit the world. When there is a mismatch between the representation and reality, the mental state is wrong, and so is often dispensed of. The second mental states are *world-to-mind*, which attempt to fit the world to an imagined state of the world in the mind. Therefore, they do not attempt to represent reality and cannot be proven wrong with empirical evidence – when a mismatch exists between the representation and reality, they often remain. The ultimate argument following from this distinction is as follows:

∴ Reason alone can never motivate action.

1) When an agent acts, they do so in order to change the world

- 2) Motivation to change the world requires a mental state with a world-to-mind direction of fit
- 3) Reason has a mind-to-world direction of fit
- 4) Passions have a world-to-mind direction of fit

Premise (1) is made after a set of simple steps. Definitionally, motivated action is always done to make change. Next, because all human action is done in the world, the change is done in the world, and so all action done by an agent is done to change the world. Premise (2) is that only mental states with a *world-to-mind* direction of fit are capable of motivating action. Mind-to-world mental states do not aim at changing the world, but changing the mind, world-to-mind mental states seek to fit the world to an ideal, and so must therefore be the motivation for action.

To reach premise (3) and (4), some more explanatory work is required. Cognitivists and non-cognitivists both agree that the passions are motivational – they represent the individual desires and wishes, and so form an ideal representation of the world which doesn't necessarily match reality. Therefore, passions have a mind-to-world direction of fit <sup>1</sup>. The contention arises with the direction of fit for reason.

Motivational internalism argues reason has a purely world-to-mind direction of fit, and action typically associated with reasoning is in actual fact motivated by underlying passions. The argument can be put as follows:

- ∴ Reason has a mind-to-world direction of fit
- 1) Mind-to-world mental states are those which seek to fit the mind to the world, and aim to accurately represent the world accurately.
  - 2) Reason is responsible for: abstract relations between ideas and concepts; and prediction/deduction
  - 3) Neither abstract relationships or prediction/deduction seeks to fit the word to an imagined world, instead representing truth.
  - 4) The tools reason provides are used for the sake of passions motivated ends.

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<sup>1</sup>Hume, David. A Treatise of Human Nature. Clarendon Press, 1739, pp. 470-471.

Premise (1) is taken from the definition of direction of fit given above. Next, is a proposition about the role of reason, which takes it to be more of a toolset than a separate motivational agent. The two areas of thought reason is responsible for are commonly accepted: abstract relations between ideas and concepts; and predictions about the world using empirical facts and understanding about reality. Next, the link is made between these tools and the reality: predictions/deduction uses empirical facts about the world and change when proved wrong by reality, and abstract relationships do not form an idealized version of the world, but try to come to truth through relationships, and so are disprovable. Therefore, reason has a mind-to-world direction of fit <sup>2</sup>.

Without premise (4), a scenario can be constructed which appears to counter premise (2). Here, I will compare a traditional cognitivist interpretation to that of motivational internalism.

*Jesse is angry with Walt for making a joke at his expense. He badly wants to kill him. Walt is asleep and Jesse realizes that he could easily kill him, and knows he can get away with it. Nevertheless, he realizes it would be wrong, gets his anger under control, and doesn't kill Walt.*

A traditional cognitivist interpretation would argue Jesse's desire to kill Walt as motivated by his passions. Contrastingly, Jesse's realization that he could kill and get away with it, along with the decision not to kill as motivated by the moral knowledge that murder is wrong, which is realized by rationality. This puts passions and reasons in conflict.

Motivational internalism is in agreement that the desire to kill Walt as motivated by passion, as well as the realization that he could kill and get away with it as a function of reason, and even the realization that Jesse feels like killing is wrong would be a function of reason. However, argues that the traditional theory fails to explain the source of motivation to be moral in any real sense <sup>3</sup>. Instead, motivational internalism proposes that the belief that killing is wrong is motivated by another passion – such as the desire to be honest, or not harm other people. The passion which motivates Jesse to kill Walt and the passion motivating against doing so, for motivational internalism, are examples of two different kinds of

<sup>2</sup>Hume, David. A Treatise of Human Nature. Clarendon Press, 1739, pp. 457-459.

<sup>3</sup>Hume, David. A Treatise of Human Nature. Clarendon Press, 1739, pp. 457-458.

passions – violent and calm passions. This is a contentious point the theory makes, arguing that moral judgements are fundamentally just moral feelings, instead of a reflection of moral knowledge or even beliefs <sup>4</sup>– it is also vitally important to the final argument I will go onto make linking to moral judgements and motivation.

The concept of violent passions is much closer to the traditional view of passions – those which Hume describes as the “violent emotions” which are often clearly positive or negative. Calm passions, on the other hand, are those which emotions are less expressive. It is important to note that the violent/calm dynamic is not a reference to the strength of the motivation it imbues, but the form of expression on the individual – a calm passion can, and often is, stronger in its motivational force than violent passions. The assertion by motivational internalism is that personal morality are passions, but often calm passions which are mistaken by the cognitivists for reasoning <sup>5</sup>.

The impact of this concept is that reasoning then isn't attempting to change the world, but is being utilised in aid of the moral passions to determine the best course of action, as reasoning aims to represent the world, and so is useful for determining how the ideal and real differ. Therefore, we reach the conclusion that reason has an entirely mind-to-world direction of fit, as the drives to change the world are fundamentally passions.

With this conclusion, we can move back to the original argument that reasoning alone cannot motivate action, as reasoning has a mind-to-world direction of fit, and motivation for action always comes from mental states with a world-to-mind direction of fit. Passions, on the other hand, are capable of motivating action, as they are uncontroversially motivational, with a world-to-mind direction of fit.

This is all the groundwork required to form the final argument of motivational internalism:

- ∴ Moral judgements are inherently motivational
- 1) Reason alone is not capable of motivating action.
- 2) Passions are inherently motivational.

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<sup>4</sup>Hume, David. A Treatise of Human Nature. Clarendon Press, 1739, p. 469.

<sup>5</sup>Hume, David. A Treatise of Human Nature. Clarendon Press, 1739, pp. 417-19.

### 3) Moral judgements represent moral feelings, and so are made out of passion

This argument brings together the conclusions from all previous arguments. As reasoning alone is not capable of motivating action, passion is required for motivation. Then, as previously explained, moral judgements fundamentally derive from moral feelings, and so moral judgements are always made out of passion. As passions are inherently motivational, then all moral judgements must also be inherently motivational.

A final note on motivational internalism is that arguments have been made that it fails to explain how some people make seemingly sincere moral judgements, yet fail to act in accordance with them, despite being physically capable of doing so. A deep analysis of this is beyond the scope of this essay, but it brings up a note about motivational internalism which I feel is relevant to this explanatory essay.

Motivational internalism doesn't necessarily argue that the motivation inherently associated with moral judgements must be a strong one, just that there must be some level of motivation, in proportion to the level of weight put onto the particular passion associated. It is imaginable that contradicting passions overcome the motivation to act morally, and thus the judgement is made without living in accordance with it.

Next, I will shift into a discussion on motivational internalism's influence on aesthetic theory – in particular the unusual non-cognitivist theory of aesthetic internalism, which argues aesthetic judgements, in a very similar manner to moral judgements, are inherently motivational towards action.

Since the conception of motivational internalism, the non-cognitivist arguments used have appealed to many who seek non-cognitivist explanations in other areas of philosophy. The theory has been particularly influential to those who take a sceptical approach to morality, and consider aesthetic judgements and moral judgements to be more similar than traditionally thought. Alfred Archer lays out an interesting aesthetic theory which takes from the motivational internalist arguments – the theory of *aesthetic* internalism - which argues that aesthetic judgements are inherently motivational to action.

Aesthetic internalism argues that aesthetic judgements are fundamentally passionate responses to objects of aesthetic consideration. The argument that rationality is often

conflated with reasoning is repeated here, arguing that rationality alone cannot make aesthetic judgements, and the passions are inherently motivating and so aesthetic judgements are too.

Archer notes a difficulty with this adaptation. When moral judgements are made, they are almost always judgements about an action or inaction, and so it is clear that it is this action/inaction which is being motivated towards. For aesthetic judgements, it is less clear what exactly you are motivated to do, as judgements about aesthetic properties such as beauty are not judgements on action <sup>6</sup>.

One potential solution to this is to argue that the motivation is towards seeking out or avoiding similar aesthetic experiences. However, this connection is limited to the fact that one may not know what exactly their judgement entails, and so what they should do is far less obvious than with moral motivations <sup>7</sup>.

One could also argue that the motivation to act is just to experience more or less artworks. This again has issues, as to what degree do certain non-obviously positive or negative aesthetic judgements motivate in each direction, and there are examples where negative aesthetic experiences seem to motivate the individual to seek out similarly negative experiences – as a kind of morbid curiosity. It could also be argued that weakening aesthetic internalism through reducing it down to two contrasting motivations loses explanatory weight as individuals do appear to often seek out specific genres of artworks.

Overall, motivational internalism provides an interesting non-cognitivist interpretation of moral judgements, and helped drive the conversation of what the nature of moral judgements are. It also provided compelling arguments in aesthetics, especially to non-cognitivists, and even more so to those non-cognitivists who are sceptical of morality, and so see little difference between moral and aesthetic judgements.

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<sup>6</sup>Archer, Alfred. *Aesthetic Judgements and Motivation*. 2017, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup>Strandberg, Caj. *A Structural Disanalogy Between Aesthetic and Ethical Value Judgements*. *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 2011, pp. 51-67

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