

Test these for internal consistency in dealing with intentional action

Externalist morality, no MR

Ex 1: P often does something morally right (for example, saving a life, helping the poor, etc.)

Appropriate responses:

Praise the behavior.

Use it as an example to others.

Maybe reward it.

P feels good about what he has done.

Inappropriate responses:

Praise P, be proud of P.

Think of P as deserving a reward for being a good person.

Investigate P's motives before deciding how to think of P.

P feels moral pride in himself.

Ex 2: P hardly ever does morally right things and habitually does wrong things

Appropriate responses:

Inappropriate responses:

I think this approach is internally consistent. (Don't care right now whether this approach is the best one, or whether externalist moralities are adequate.)

So, if this approach is internally consistent, it is possible to adopt a morality without MR, so long as the morality is externalist.

Motivational morality, no MR

Since Version 1 motivational morality thinks that morality is only about intentions, ignore it, because Version 2 is more interesting and the arguments that it requires MR will carry over to Version 1.

Version 2 motivational morality:

Morally relevant intentional action descriptions always include the motivational structure of the action.

Examples:

Inadequate for moral purposes: "P donated toys to the Christmas drive".

More adequate: "P donated new plastic toys to the Christmas drive in an attempt to poison children because P hates children and he believed that plastic toys would poison them."

Inadequate: "P repeatedly stole his roommate's money while his roommate was sleeping".

More adequate: "P repeatedly took money from his roommate's wallet while the roommate was sleeping because P believed that he was merely recovering the money that his roommate had stolen from him."

I think this is what Kant was getting at when he claimed we need to look at the maxim a person is using in order to morally evaluate what is going on.

Suppose we agree that P's attempt to poison children is immoral. Can we nevertheless avoid evaluating P's moral standing on that occasion, now that P's intentions are an essential part of what we are evaluating? I say "no". Why?

The argument:

Either P's intentions are a genuine part of who P is at the time, or they are not.

If they are a genuine part of who P is at the time, then we are morally evaluating a part of P when we evaluate the action complex described above.

In that case, we are evaluating part of P's moral standing – the action complex automatically reflects on P's moral standing because part of P's identity is being evaluated.

On the other hand if P's intentions are not really part of who P is at the time, that implies that P's motivational structure at the time is seriously incoherent.

In that case, a motivational morality cannot morally assess P's action.

So, putting these results together, if P's action can be morally assessed from within a motivational morality, the relevant aspects of P's motivational structure are part of who P is at the time, and thus moral assessment of P's action implies that P's moral standing is also assessed.

Therefore, it is not possible to evaluate intentional action complexes from the point of view of motivational morality without thinking of agents as morally responsible.

Overall conclusions

Morality without MR is coherent, but only if morality is externalist.

So, if you favor a morality that takes motivational structure into account when evaluating what you and others do, you are committed to MR.