

# **The extended will**

or

why managerial control is a better account of  
willpower than evaluative control or direct  
intentional control

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# Plan of talk

- Karl: How voluntary is attitude control?
- Evaluative and managerial control?
- Is evaluative control at the heart of all attitude control?
- The problem with judgment sensitivity.
- Is intentional control different from managerial control?
- Why managerial control is what we were looking for.

# Karl

- Person of impeccable moral judgment and behaviour.
- Has one small character flaw. Enjoys watching the suffering of others.
- Can Karl control that attitude, a first stab (Smith)?
  - Compare to the voluntary control of actions.
  - Does he have control?
  - Tracking and the drunk driver analogy.
  - Disanalogy: control then seems same as control now.
- So is he off the hook, because he is passive with regard to his enjoyment?

# Active or passive

- To answer the question it is useful to see, whether the alleged passivity here is a special case or whether similar arguments could be made for more standard attitudes.
- Are mental processes that lead to the acquisition of attitudes like forming beliefs, making decisions, solving problems mainly active or passive?
- Some ordinary language suggests that they are active:
  - I made up my mind
  - I solved the problem

# Mental Ballistics (Galen Strawson 2003)

- But our language seems to support the passive picture as well:
  - It dawned on me...
  - It came to my mind...
  - It struck me...
- ...And when we take a closer look, the phenomenology seems to support the passive picture:
  - I cannot, in normal cases, decide what to believe in just the same way that Karl cannot decide what he enjoys.
- This seems to suggest that acquiring attitudes are never actions of mine.
- But perhaps there is an alternative to this voluntaristic picture of mental agency.

# Evaluative Control

- How do you go about checking whether or not you believe whether it is raining outside?
- Do you introspect to see whether you really have the belief?
- No, you check your evidence to answer the question of whether it is raining outside.
- **Acquiring a mental state is not about fumbling under the hood (attitude directed), but about evaluating the world (content directed).**

# Evaluative control as a form of mental agency

- Beliefs acquired in the deliberative stance are judgment sensitive. This means that we acquire these states not by chance, but as the result of our deliberations. As they are dependant on these deliberations it makes sense to say that we control them. This non voluntaristic control is what mental agency is about. Hieronymie (2006) calls this form of control evaluative.
- Judgment sensitivity might be the condition for being responsible for your attitudes (Smith (2005), McGeer (2007),
- Even better: Once we understand that judgment sensitivity is what matters, we can now see that we are never truly active with regard to our mental states if we acquire them voluntarily, because the way to that is to make your mental states object in the world and to manipulate them using the knowledge acquired in the theoretical stance.

# Managerial/manipulative control

- Examples of manipulative control:
  - Alex (Clockwork Orange) acquires a new attitude by conditioning
  - Pascal acquires a new belief by engaging in a practice.
- Beliefs acquired by the indirect means of the theoretical stance are the ones towards which we are truly passive.  
(Moran)



# Intermediate conclusion

- There are two quite distinct forms of mental agency.
- Managerial control: Implies using the theoretical stance. Fits the voluntaristic picture, but on Moran's view attitudes acquired in this way are truly passive, because they are not part of us.
- Evaluative control: Is about judgment sensitivity. Does not fit the voluntaristic picture, but can tell a strong story about why these processes should be called the heart of mental agency.
- Evaluative control might be what makes us responsible and free mental agents (Hieronymie, Smith, McGeer (with qualifications)).
- Is that true?

# Bodily actions (and managerial control) ultimately depend on evaluative control too

- Think about the drunk driver again:
  - According to standard story drunk driver has voluntary control at the time of drinking.
  - That is clearly true about the drinking, but is it true about the judgement that she should have another drink? (If indeed it is a judgment, which with Holton I think is plausible)
  - It seems not: this judgment seems an act of evaluative control.
- So on this picture there seems to be no difference between Karl and the drunk driver. Both cannot voluntarily control their judgements.
- So it seems that even in the case of physical actions what matters for whether the agent is in control is not the voluntary control of the action but the evaluative control of the attitude.
- Unintended consequence: There seems now no relevant difference between Karl and the drunk driver.

# Is evaluative control always a good thing?

- The drunk driver probably did not want to drive in a drunken state, when she was still at home, but in the pub it seemed like a very good idea.
- Her re-evaluation in the pub lets her do something that is bad for her in the long run.
- In other words it looks as if she is too judgment sensitive.
- Could she have done better?

# Could she have done better?

- Is there really no way to control this re-evaluation
  - Perhaps not in the pub. She judges what she thinks is right, not what she wants to judge (as you do with evaluative control).
  - But she could have formed the intention not to drink while still at home and she might have devised strategies that would have helped her to overcome the tendency to re-evaluate what the best course of action is once she is in the pub. She might e.g. have constantly reminded herself of her resolution and that might have stopped her from being swayed by the pub specific reasons for having another one.

# Intentional account of attitude control

- Voluntary attitude control is the opposite of judgment sensitivity.
- What it is about is making sure in a calm moment that you are not swayed by context specific reasons that you can foresee as endangering what you judge to be best now.
- **This shows that evaluative control is not always what the will is about.**
  - We can do something voluntarily to control attitudes.
  - Voluntary control might entail an evaluative component, but it is still relevantly different from pure evaluative control and it is the voluntary control that we think of as crucial for agent control.

# Intentional control and managerial control

- **If this is convincing so far then there are two options now:**
- **Either the will is about managerial control.**
- **Or**
- **There is a form of intentional control that is not managerial control either:**
  - Reminding yourself of the reasons for not driving is something that you can do voluntarily, but you do not think about the attitude here, but about content related reasons.
  - It is different from managerial control insofar as it is direct and requires effort. It is self-control rather than self manipulation.
  - This is why it has limited resources (ego depletion).

# The intentional account and Karl

- If the intentional account is right then Karl is off the hook again, because in contrast to the drunk driver all resolution forming hasn't made the slightest bit of a difference to his enjoyment of pain and cruelty.
- Should we let him off then?

# Is there a difference between intentional control and managerial control?

- Compare a thinker who is settled on doing x and who continues to think to herself : 'I will do x, because x is right', 'I will do x, because x is right' etc:
- To the thought of a thinker in the same situation: 'I intend to do x, but if I don't constantly remind myself of this fact then I probably won't , so I will keep reminding myself.' I will do x, 'I will do x'
- The second thought is clearly managerial. The thinker is using her psychological knowledge about herself to ensure that her intention will remain constant, but is that very different from the first case?



# Why intentional control and managerial control are not relevantly different

- By definition in the first case the thinker does not have to settle a question either, so it seems the thought is superfluous if it is not for the purpose of ensuring that the intention cannot change.
- It is true that that the thinker in the first scenario might not be aware of the fact that the thought is attitude directed, yet it controls the attitude in exactly the same way as in the second case.
- The thought influences the system, not by means of weighing evidence, but by stopping it from weighing again.
- It only looks content related, because the means of keeping the attitude constant, are by repetition of a content bearing phrase, but the work done by this repetition is not one of argument but of brute force.
- If this is right intentional control seems just a basic form of controlling psychology by force, rather than something of a different kind.

# Karl again

- If it is right that intentional control is a precursor of managerial control then Karl is different to the drunk driver, insofar as the basic attitude directed strategy does not work for him.
- But he is not off the hook , because he can control his attitude, even if the managerial control in his case has to be a bit more sophisticated. He cannot do it by forming a resolution, but he can learn to use psychological tricks like meditation or the local neuroscientist to get rid of the attitude.
- This gives us now a good reason why we should think that **managerial control is what the will (or self control) is all about.**

# More reasons why we should buy this message?

- It is a very powerful tool in the behavioural control repertoire of an agent.
- It explains why free will is a human thing. Using the theoretical stance requires metarepresentation, arguably something that only humans can do.
- It fits with much of the recent psychological data (Gollwitzer) that show that the influence of consciousness on behaviour might be by means of clever self management.
- It explains the feeling that willpower can be experienced as the very opposite of being open to reasons.
- It provides a strong account of what weakness of the will is.

# Why should we buy this message?

- It fits a popular and highly successful contemporary understanding of the will in self help literature (Maasen 2008).
- It makes sense in juridical practice: It is much easier to ask someone to acquire the right belief in this way than by judgment sensitive means.
- It explains why there is a way where there is a will: It allows us to bootstrap ourselves into becoming better people.
- If the will is all about manipulating your attitudes, then it seems of minor importance where the vehicles of the manipulation are. The local neuroscientist seems to be as good as internal strategies that prevent one from re-evaluating.
- The will naturally extends into the environment .

# Thank you!

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- Metacognition
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