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Considering the roles of values in practical reasoning argumentation evaluation

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ABSTRACT: Building upon the role values take in Walton's theory of practical reasoning, this paper will frame the question of how values should be evaluated into the broader question of what reasonable practical argumentation is. The thesis argued for is that if a positive evaluation of practical reasoning argumentation requires that the argument avoid a morally negative conclusion, then the role of values should be given a central, rather than supportive, position in practical argument evaluation.

KEYWORDS: deliberation, evaluation, morals, practical reasoning, values

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking of virtue, Aristotle explains that, "it is a mean between two vices, that which depends on excess and that which depends on defect; and again it is a mean because the vices respectively fall short of or exceed what is right in both passions and actions, while virtue both finds and chooses that which is intermediate." (1106b36-1107a8) Applying the notion of a virtuous mean to notions of human thinking, on one extreme, that of the defect, we have irrationality. In regards to practical reasoning, a prime example of irrationality occurs in "cases in which a person judges that considerations are reasons but then fails to take them into account in deciding what to do, or fails to give them the weight that he or she judges them to have." (Scanlon, 1998, p. 30) On the other extreme, that of excess, we have the rational or perhaps better, "ideally rational". The vision of the "rational person" Tindale (1999, p. 40) illustrates, "separates the reason from other human faculties, and inaugurates a being who functions as a machine, insensible to her or his humanity and to the reactions of others." Characterizing the ideally rational person Scanlon (1998) argues that "[a] full account of what an "ideally rational" agent would do could involve at least three possible dimensions of idealization, in the directions of (1) possession of full information about one's situation and the consequences of possible lines of action, (2) awareness of the full range of reasons that apply to someone in that situation, and (3) flawless reasoning about what these reasons support." (p. 32) In light of the conference theme this year, "The Virtues of Argumentation," in what follows, the discussion is meant to be situated not in the

context of rational, machine-like reasoning, and it is also hoped that it does not appear to be completely irrational. Rather, the aim is for the discussion to be situated in, and address, that place "[i]n between the minimum standards marked out by the idea of irrationality and the ideal of what it would be (most) rational to believe or do, [where we find] the notions of what is reasonable and unreasonable." (Scanlon, 1998, p. 32)

The second connection I hope to make to the conference theme is by discussing a topic commonly connected to moral and ethical philosophy; practical reasoning. More specifically, what follows will be a discussion of some of the ways that moral values participate in human practical reasoning while focusing on some of the (problems with) ways to evaluate it.[1] It is hoped that by the end of the paper I will have made the case that values need to play a central, rather than supportive, role in practical reasoning evaluation. Through this discussion, I also hope to contribute to thinking about how reasoning and argumentation relate to "doing the right thing," an expression which is often used as a characterization of what it means to live virtuously (Annas, 2004).

In light of these aims, I will next provide a brief characterization of practical reasoning by distinguishing between its instrumental and value forms. Following this characterization I will narrow in on proposals for the evaluation of value practical reasoning by focusing on Walton's (2007) essay "Evaluating Practical Reasoning". In the fourth section, I will provide an example of value practical reasoning used to draw an immoral conclusion which will be analyzed in section 5. Section 6 will provide a discussion of developments provided by Fariclough and Fairclough which are shown to be very useful, but ultimately still in need of further development. Section 7 will point to one proposal, developed by T.M. Scanlon, which might be used to fill an important gap between the reasonable and the moral. Finally, in section 8 I will provide the conclusions of the study as it has progressed thus far.

2. CHARACTERIZATIONS OF PRACTICAL REASONING

Practical reasoning is commonly contrasted with theoretical reasoning, wherein, broadly, the latter concerns reasoning about beliefs, and the former concerns reasoning about actions. Although characterizations of practical reasoning differ in their presentation, they all maintain roughly the same general form, even when originating from the differing Commitment Model and Belief-Desire-Intention (BDI) Model. For example, Walton (2007), from the commitment camp, provides the following basic scheme:

> I have a goal G.
> Bringing about A is necessary (or sufficient) for me to bring about G.
> Therefore, I should (practically ought to) bring about A. (p. 233)

John Broome (2004), a main proponent from the BDI camp, articulates a *description*

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[1] I will only focus on moral values, broadly construed.

of practical reasoning as the following;

> I(Chris will buy a boat)
> and B(For Chris to buy a boat, a necessary means is for Chris to borrow money)
> so I(Chris will borrow money).
>
> Where I stands for "you intend that" and B stands for "you believe that". (p. 2)

While there are interesting questions concerning the differences between these two presentations, the comparison here is only meant to illustrate that despite their differences, both approaches seem at heart to be after the same thing; an explanation of how people reason about what to do.

This basic outline of practical reasoning is commonly referred to as instrumental practical reasoning. In addition to instrumental reasoning, scholars from both camps have noted that practical reasoning often has a close and important connection with values.[2] Walton (2007) argues that, "[v]alues are often in the background in practical reasoning, or in some cases may not need to be taken into account at all. For these cases the basic scheme can be used to evaluate the practical reasoning. In other cases, like those typical in electronic democracy, values are important factors that need to be taken into account." (p. 234) In cases of value-based practical reasoning, Walton adds a value aspect to his basic scheme and presents it as;

> I have a goal G.
> G is supported by my set of values, V.
> Bringing about A is necessary (or sufficient) for me to bring about G.
> Therefore, I should (practically ought to) bring about A. (p. 234)

3. EVALUATION STRATEGIES

There is far more literature focused on describing and discussing the nature of practical reasoning than there is on suggesting ways to evaluate it.[3] Walton (2007), however, has suggested that there are three ways practical reasoning can be evaluated: "The first is to attack one of the premises of the argumentation scheme, arguing that the premise has not been adequately justified. The second is to attempt to undercut the argument by asking critical questions. The third is to mount a counter-argument designed to rebut (refute) the original argument from practical reasoning" (p. 223). He is clear, however, that "[t]he basic device to be used in all cases is the set of critical questions matching the practical reasoning." (p. 231)[4]

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[2] From the commitment camp, see: Walton (2007), Atkinson & Bench-Capon (2008), and Fairclough & Fairclough (2012). From the BDI camp, see: Bratman (1987) and Broome (2004). Some other important views, which do not explicitly align themselves with one camp or the other, are presented by Audi (2006) and Scanlon (1998).

[3] This is true especially for BDI articulations. Although, in addition to Walton (2007) see Audi (2004, 2006), Fairclough & Fairclough (2012), and Atkinson & Bench-Capon (2008) for some important exceptions from the commitment camp.

[4] As the basic device, in this paper, I will only focus on the critical questions.

Walton's critical questions for value-based practical reasoning are:

(CQ1) What other goals do I have that might conflict with G?

(CQ2) How well is G supported by (or at least consistent with) my values V?

(CQ3) What alternative actions[5] to my bringing about A that would also bring about G should be considered?

(CQ4) Among bringing about A and these alternative actions, which is arguably the best of the whole set, in light of considerations of efficiency in bringing about G?

(CQ5) Among bringing about A and these alternative actions, which is arguably the best of the whole set, in light of my values V?

(CQ6) What grounds are there for arguing that it is practically possible for me to bring about A?

(CQ7) What consequences of my bringing about A that might have even greater negative value than the positive value of G should be taken into account? (p. 234)

In part because, as Walton rightly points out, practical reasoning is most often (but not always)[5] a defeasible form of reasoning (p. 198) the idea behind the critical questions is that they can point to weakness(es) in the reasoning; the better the answers to the questions, the stronger the evaluation. These questions become even more important when considering a concern Walton raises, but does not fully provide an answer to: "But what if the agent's goal is antisocial, or represents something we would consider to be morally wrong? Can the action be positively evaluated as practically reasonable in such a case?" (p. 218) It seems as though the critical questions are designed in such a way as to safeguard against the agent reaching an "antisocial" or "morally wrong" conclusion. Indeed, Walton hints that this is the case when he describes value-based practical reasoning as an "ethical notion of practical reasoning, or at least a notion of practical reasoning that takes moral values into account." (p. 218) On this account, if practical reasoning concludes in the decision to do something morally bad, then it cannot be evaluated as reasonable. Assuming this idea (that the immoral is unreasonable), the rest of this paper is thus devoted to exploring some aspects of what is involved in safeguarding and evaluating reasoning about actions to ensure unreasonable, morally bad decisions, are not made.

To be clear, however, I do not wish to appear to be arguing that it is the case that immoral equals unreasonable. Rather I wish here to emphasise that the paper proceeds to attempt to answer the question *if* immoral equals unreasonable *then* to what extent do Walton's critical questions safeguard against immoral conclusions? Although I am avoiding taking a hard stance on the issue at this point, it should also be noted that such a position does have merit and is not an empty assumption. One might challenge the assumption that immoral equals unreasonable by citing an instance of an immoral act that remains reasonable, for example, the oft cited case of

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[5] Strictly speaking, if the means are necessary, there is no need to consider alternatives; one can be considered to be normatively required to take the means (see Broome, 1999). In such cases, critical questions 3-5 do not need to be asked. But as an average person reasoning, asking these question will help determine and/or confirm if the means are necessary, if such information is not already certain.

a person who needs to steal medicine in order to save their own (or a loved one's) life. Looking at this example from one view, stealing is immoral and thus this act is both reasonable and immoral. On another view, however, which will be addressed again below, stealing medicine in this case does not appear to be immoral. In short, if the action can be justified as reasonable then it can also be justified as moral. In this case then, stealing the medicine is not immoral in large part because it is reasonable and is based on a principle which could not be reasonably rejected. To be sure, stealing in other situations, which cannot be justified, can be considered immoral, but that does not make stealing immoral wholesale. Thus, although I am proceeding without taking a position on this issue, it seems plausible that what follows could be of value for those who have decided one way or the other.

With this background and qualification in mind, I now turn to an application of Walton's value-based practical reasoning scheme on a contemporary example of a clearly immoral decision to act. This is done in order to highlight some shortcomings and areas for further development, as well as to highlight the need for values to play a more central role in the evaluation of reasoning toward action.

4. OSLO MASSACRE

Anders Breivik's bombing of a building in Oslo, Norway which killed 8 people and which was followed shortly after by his massacre of 69 others, mostly teenagers, on the nearby island of Utøya, can be considered a clear example of practical reasoning leading to a morally bad conclusion. As such, pretending we are Breivik before he commits these actions, we can hypothesise his line of reasoning and see if he could have followed the scheme for value-based reasoning and how he might have answered Walton's critical questions. The strategy here is to show that if following the scheme and answering the critical questions means it is reasonable to accept the conclusion, then Breivik could be considered reasonable insofar as he is able to do so, but that there remains an importantly unreasonable aspect to his thinking. Applying this case to the scheme and questions will shed light on whether or not the critical questions are able to safeguard against immoral conclusions.

Let's suppose Breivik reasoned as follows:[6]

> I have a goal *G*.
> [*I have a goal to prevent Norway from becoming more multicultural.*]
> *G* is supported by my set of values, *V*.
> [*Preventing Norway from becoming more multicultural is supported by my far-right militant values.*]
> Bringing about *A* is necessary (or sufficient) for me to bring about *G*.

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[6] The above description and following hypothetical example of how Anders Breivik could have conducted his reasoning are based on a plethora of news reports and profiles found online. While it is acknowledged Breivik's declared main motive for the atrocities was to market his "manifesto", for simplicity, I have chosen to use what seems to be a main motivation for his creating the manifesto as his goal in this example.

[*Killing the members at the youth camp contributes to preventing multiculturalism in Norway.*]
Therefore, I should (practically ought to) bring about *A*.
[*Therefore, I should (practically ought to) kill the members at the youth camp.*]

Further, let us suppose Breivik asks himself Walton's critical questions:

(CQ1) What other goals do I have that might conflict with *G*?
[A: *None.*]

(CQ2) How well is *G* supported by (or at least consistent with) my values *V*?
[A: *Very well.*]

(CQ3) What alternative actions to my bringing about *A* that would also bring about *G* should be considered?
[A: *Joining politics, writing a book, killing foreigners.*]

(CQ4) Among bringing about *A* and these alternative actions, which is arguably the best of the whole set, in light of considerations of efficiency in bringing about *G*?
[A: *Joining politics and writing a book take time and waiting for these to convince people of the benefits of preventing Norway from becoming more multicultural take too long for such an urgent problem. Killing foreigners only provides a temporary solution since more will be allowed in and as such it is not as efficient as stopping their entry by eliminating those who would continue to let them in. So, killing the members of the youth camp is best (most efficient) to bring about the prevention of Norway from becoming more multicultural.*]

(CQ5) Among bringing about *A* and these alternative actions, which is arguably the best of the whole set, in light of my values *V*?
[A: *My far-right militant values consider the presence of foreigners to be a most serious problem thus deserving of the most thorough solution. Killing the next generation of liberal leaders removes competition against future far-right leaders and is more likely to create a non-multicultural state than writing a book, joining politics, or killing foreigners directly.*]

(CQ6) What grounds are there for arguing that it is practically possible for me to bring about *A*?
[A: *I have the courage and I am able to acquire a gun and police uniform.*]

(CQ7) What consequences of my bringing about *A* that might have even greater negative value than the positive value of *G* should be taken into account?
[A: *The death of the children and adults and the pain it brings to others might be considered to have a greater value than stopping multiculturalism, but from my point of view, many more people will suffer in the long run if Norway becomes more multicultural.*]

5. ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM: SOME DISTINCTIONS

There are, obviously, a number of problems with the thinking presented above, not all of which can be addressed in this paper. The main point to be illustrated through this example is that Breivik, using Walton's scheme and asking himself the accompanying critical questions, was still able to conclude to commit his heinous crimes. To make clearer sense of why this could happen, pointing to some specific problems and drawing some distinctions might help.

The first problem to be mentioned is that the scheme and critical questions, as formulated, are focused on "my values". But in this case, it seems "my values" are bad values. Importantly, there is no critical question that asks if my values are good values. So a first distinction could be made between good values and bad values and a second between my values and good values.

Echoing an idea from Searle,[7] some contemporary argumentation theorists stay away from evaluating values on the premise that it is reasonable that if "[c]onfronted with the same choice and even with exactly the same range of considerations, different people may arrive at different conclusions, depending on what they care about most, what hierarchies of goals and values they have, or what reasons matter comparatively more or *override* other reasons *for them*." (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 38) I am reminded here of an expression that a former professor of mine used to use, with which I tend to agree; "just because two people have an opinion, does not make them both right." Similarly, perhaps, just because two people both have differing values, does not make them both right. This is most obvious in cases where what can be considered bad values are being promoted. A suggestion for how to deal with this problem will be presented in section 7.

Perhaps the most obvious problem that stands out in the Breivik example is that he was not very critical of himself in his answers to the critical questions. In other words, there are more reasons against his proposed actions that could have been included in his answers. We might also argue that he did not give the appropriate weight to counter considerations that he should have, such as when he considered the deaths of his victims but outweighed them in his answer to CQ7.

In regards to Breivik's failure to come up with reasons against his proposed actions, if Breivik, *left to his own devices*, does not know of any objections to his

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[7] "Assume universally valid and accepted standards of rationality, assume perfectly rational agents operating with perfect information, and you will find that rational disagreement will still occur; because, for example, the rational agents are likely to have different and inconsistent values and interests, each of which may be rationally acceptable." (Searle, 2001, p. xv)

position and thus does not raise them in his thinking, is it fair to attribute the title of "unreasonable" to his critical creative failure to 1. think up counter considerations and 2. attribute them what others would consider the proper weight? It seems a certain amount of self-criticism is to be expected, but it also seems problematic to determine how much.

This point might be illustrated better through a comparison of two other examples. Pretend you are in a grocery store and see a box of cereal called Cocoa Krispies which has written on the front, "NOW HELPS SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNITY" and "25% DAILY VALUE OF ANTIOXIDANTS & NUTRIENTS VITAMINS A, B, C & E".[8] Looking at the box you see a picture of brown coloured rice and reason - the cereal is made out of rice, rice is healthy, the box says it is part of a healthy breakfast, so the cereal is healthy. Perhaps using your critical creativity you even think the chocolate might deter from the healthiness of the cereal, but consider this outweighed by the fact that it is rice and the box at least implies it is healthy. Having the goal of buying a healthy cereal, you chose this one and are on your way. When you bring the cereal home, however, your spouse is quick to point out that cereal is in fact quite unhealthy.

Compare this case with a case where you have recently moved to a big city after growing up on a farm in the country your whole life. To get to your new city job you take the bus every Monday to Friday. Although no schedule is posted at your bus stop, you notice through your travels that the bus passes every 15 minutes on the 15. One Saturday you are invited to a co-worker's party who lives near your workplace. You leave your house at 10:10 aiming for the 10:15 bus, but the bus does not arrive until 11:00 because it only operates once an hour on the weekend.

In the first case it seems intuitive (at least to me) to consider your conclusion that the cereal is healthy unreasonable. A little bit of critical thinking and investigation would surely point out that Chocoa Krispies are unhealthy. In the second example, however, it does not strike me as unreasonable to aim for the bus as though it departed every 15 minutes, even though the access to information is comparable with the cereal case (via a quick internet search).[9]

Context here plays an important role. If, for example, part of the intuition of calling the cereal case unreasonable is the assumption that the reasoner has been a part of the culture (say Western) long enough that he should be sceptical of the writing on the front of the cereal box, then the absence of the scepticism seems unreasonable. What if, however, a non-Westerner (say, a tribal raised African) was in the same position? Pretend that she thinks "they have procedures and organizations here (in Europe/North America) ensuring the truth of the writing on these boxes, so it must true." In such a case it seems that it would not be unreasonable to conclude the Chocoa Krispies are healthy. It is also, in part, because

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[8] This is a real cereal box. Taken from: http://trendsupdates.com/kelloggs-cereal-h1n1-immunity-claim-misleading-advertisement-cashing-in-on-the-pandemic-paranoia-of-swine-flu/

[9] These concerns also apply to theoretical or belief reasoning. Compare forming the belief that Chocoa Krispies are healthy with forming the belief that the universe is expanding at a constant rate. Both are false and would only take a quick internet search to confirm. For the latter, for example, a Google search of "universe expansion" reveals enough to rebut the initial belief.

the former farmer was out of their element, having never been around a public transit system, which makes it seem unfair to call her 'unreasonable'. Simply requiring that one consider the context, however, is vague and requires refinement.[10]

As was mentioned in the introduction, if we had an infinite knowledge base and flawless reasoning, then both mistakes would have been avoided. Humans, however, are not perfectly rational and thus when determining what can be reasonably expected of us, it is important to find a way to gauge what average people should be expected to know, what a reasonable level of research is, and how they should be expected to apply their knowledge to their reasoning.

In short, there is a tension that needs to be worked out. On the one hand, if you don't know of any objection to your reasoning, it does not seem right to call your lack of including the objection unreasonable. On the other hand, a lack of knowledge does not always eliminate what seems to be an appropriate charge of being unreasonable. If, however, there is no way for the individual making the decision to have seen he was not considering something (perhaps due to an understandable lack of information) is it appropriate for him, or an external evaluator, to call the decision unreasonable? I refer to this as the problem of individual critical creativity.

The problem of critical creativity might be handled by appeal to an outside evaluator. When it comes to practical reasoning, however, there seems to be a significant difference between an outside evaluator posing the critical questions, who has a second knowledge and value base to work from, and the reasoner attempting to answer the questions herself. Insofar as reasoning is personal and internal and argumentation is inter-subjective and external, Walton's strategy is aimed at evaluating practical argumentation rather than practical reasoning. Further, if his goal is to protect against coming to a morally negative conclusion, it seems this is much more likely (but still not certain) to happen in an instance of inter-subjective communication between two or more interlocutors with differing value sets and knowledge bases. Left to reason, by oneself, however, it does not seem the critical questions force an independent reasoner to question the goodness of his or her values, goals, or means of achieving those goals forcefully enough to prevent morally bad conclusions.

While ideally, it may be best to have another interlocutor to help evaluate your reasoning, there are many instances where we employ practical reasoning without such assistance. The suggestion that has been offered in such instances is to imagine another posing the critical questions. My concerns here is that I am not sure to what extent an individual reasoner (who most likely suffers from cognitive biases like the confirmation bias) would be able to imagine the knowledge base and critical creativity of another individual which is required to point out the flaws in their own reasoning. Thus, there is an important difference between attributing the title of reasonable to an individual's practical reasoning without outside assistance and an individual's reasoning that has been presented to another for scrutiny.

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[10] Work in this area is being developed. See Tindale (1999, p. 75-93) and van Eemeren (2011) for some important contributions.

The next important issue is that there seems to be two distinct points where Breivik is deserving of negative moral criticism, and thus also to the charge of being unreasonable. First, and most obviously, killing people (in this instance) is clearly morally wrong. Second, his goal in itself seems to me to be morally wrong.

It is not always the case, however, that both the goal and means be morally wrong. There are some cases wherein one might have a morally good goal and morally bad means for achieving it. Consider for example, if I am on a tight budget but still want to give my partner a bouquet of flowers for our anniversary. In itself, the goal of giving flowers does not seem morally criticisable. If, however, in order to get enough money for the flowers I mug someone on the street, clearly the means are morally criticisable. Calling this whole line of thinking immoral or unreasonable without qualification seems incorrect.

Making a clear distinction between the choosing of a goal and choosing the means to achieve the goal, we are able to be more precise regarding where the weakness in this reasoning lay.[11] In this way, moral goodness, or at least neutrality, is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for being reasonable. For the goal and/or the means, moral goodness is necessary because if one or the other is not good we cannot call this whole line of reasoning taken together, reasonable. But if the goal and the means are both good, it might still be unreasonable. Returning to the flower example, if I am on a tight budget and but still choose to buy my partner a $200 dollar bouquet of flowers for our anniversary, when I know of a place to get the same bouquet for $100, although the action is good, and even the means do not seem morally objectionable, it still strikes me as unreasonable to pay the higher price.

To summarize, analyzing how Breivik might have been able to reason to an immoral conclusion has revealed tensions regarding 1) good values and bad values, 2) acceptable and unacceptable levels of an individual's critical creative capacity, 3) self-reasoning evaluation and the external evaluation of reasoning, and 4) goal selection and means reasoning.

6. FAIRCLOUGH AND FAIRCLOUGH

Isabela and Norman Fairclough have very recently (2012) made significant advancements regarding the characterization and evaluation of practical reasoning. In their proposal for analysing the structure of practical reasoning they generally share many of the concerns I have raised above. For each agreement, however, we also have some aspects of disagreement.

The first point of agreement is that we are both concerned with the reasonable rather than the ideal. Our disagreement here, which frames the rest of our disagreements, is that for them a dialectical method (predominantly the pragma dialectical method) is the test of reasoning's reasonableness; regardless of the conclusion, if the reasoner has followed a reasonable procedure, they have come to as reasonable a conclusion as can be had. For reasons mentioned above and that will

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[11] Walton describes the two as intertwined. See: (Walton, 2007 p. 201).

become clearer below, I find this method incomplete for evaluating independent reasoning. It is much more effective applied to situations with two interlocutors but is fundamentally lacking when transcribed on to independent reasoning.

Our second point of agreement concerns the observation that the quality of practical reasoning depends on a critical creative capacity. Fairclough and Fairclough explain that, "practical reasoning involves an imaginative effort to think of as many considerations that might have a bearing on the situation as possible." (p. 35) Elaborating on this idea they argue,

> How well this claim for action is supported will depend on how a certain person will weigh these reasons together and how *thoroughly and imaginatively* she will explore as many relevant considerations as possible, including different and possibly conflicting goals, likely consequences, *moral implications,* different conceptualizations of the context of action, coherence with an overall plan of action, including a broad life plan, and so on. (p. 38: Italics mine)

However, the "and so on" here is telling. This phrase is required because of the difficulty of determining which considerations should be taken into account and to what extent. But importantly, as Fairclough and Fairclough mention, how well the claim in practical reasoning is supported depends on just these considerations. In other words, an answer to the question, "when is it clear that a person has been as creatively critical in evaluating their practical reasoning as is reasonable" seems necessary for any sufficient evaluation of reasoning.[12] Despite this acknowledgement, however, they do not explicitly offer a suggestion for how to evaluate the thoroughness of the use of imagination or highlight the need for one.

The third general point of agreement is that there is a difference between independent practical reasoning and reasoning with another. They frame the difference in terms of deliberation:

> Deliberation involves therefore considering *alternative practical arguments* supporting *different claims* and examining and weighing considerations that support these alternative claims. This is what agents deliberating together are doing. But this is what agents reasoning practically on their own are often doing, when they are trying to make a reasonable decision by considering reasons that support various possible courses of action, or count *against* the proposal they originally thought of. (p. 50)

To come to a reasonable conclusion, what an individual practical reasoner "can do is subject these alternatives to thorough criticism in an attempt to find reasons *against* the proposed course of action (*not reasons in favour*), and thus eliminate the worst alternatives." (p. 49) In order to perform this self-directed criticism they suggest that "...the agent will examine these proposals critically by using the relevant theoretical (e.g. scientific, empirical) knowledge at his disposal."(p. 49) As has been

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[12] One way to approach this problem might be to come up with a list of requirements or steps that a reasoner must have gone through in order to have been said to have used their critical creativity thoroughly. Such a list, however, would still not address how to evaluate how well the steps have been completed.

shown above, however, evaluating how well he has done so, is far from straightforward. First, it is not at all clear what can be considered knowledge at his disposal. Second, it is unclear how he can evaluate whether or not he has attributed the appropriate weight to the knowledge that he has. Third, there is no clear indication pointing to when he has been reasonably critically creative, i.e., what constitutes having been thoroughly imaginative. With a second interlocutor with a separate knowledge and value base, these problems are easier to resolve. In such an instance, however, I suggest we are dealing with practical argumentation rather than practical reasoning. An evaluation of practical reasoning, then, can be related to, but must also differ in important respects from, a dialectical evaluation of practical argumentation.

This importance is highlighted when considering an individual reasoner dealing with bad moral values. For Fairclough & Fairclough (2012), "any moral value (or institutional fact, such as promises) has to be *internalized* by the agent as a *concern* in order to actually motivate his action (in order for the agent to actually *do* the action). But even when the agent is not concerned to act morally (or fulfil his promises), moral values, duties, commitments, norms and other such reasons are still there, as *external* reasons which the agent *has*, even if he chooses not to be concerned with their realization." (p. 48) This distinction characterises their observation that values often move us to act even if they are not values we desire to stick to, that is, hold internally. For example, if we make a promise, but later determine it is to our advantage not to keep it, the fact that a promise has been made, and keeping one's promise is a socially recognized value, means it is an external reason to keep the promise anyway. They account for such external reasons as institutional facts although also note that acting on external reasons means that to some degree the reasoner accepts their force, that is, internalizes it to whatever minor degree. Making such a distinction could appear to be coming close to moral relativism insofar as only one's own values can motivate one to act and there are multitudes of seemingly equally reasonable values.

They are careful, however, to distance themselves from moral relativism. They state, "not all value pluralism is reasonable: a racist argument about how to deal politically with an ethnic minority can be conclusively rejected by questioning its various premises, and its proponent cannot defend himself by invoking value pluralism or his legitimate right to differ." (p. 59) Again, however, given the tools on offer, this conclusive rejection is not guaranteed for an independent resoner. This points to the idea that practical reasoning is not conclusively rejected by "*questioning* its various premises" but more importantly by appreciating the weight of the critical *answers* to the questions. Of course, without questions it is tough to come up with answers, but questions themselves are not sufficient to counter practical reasoning, the answers are at least equally as important. Also, what those important answers consist of will differ dramatically between an independent reasoner and an external evaluator especially in matters where there is a difference regarding their views on moral goodness.

Turning to their strategy for evaluation, the fourth point of general agreement is that we share the view that "being able to *defeat an argument* is much less significant than being able to *rebut its claim*, given that *a claim can be true or*

false independently of the quality of the argument that allegedly supports it." (p. 48) The point of agreement here is that, as was mentioned above, when evaluating practical reasoning, we can look at the moral quality of the goal and means separately. In many cases, but not all, if the goal can be determined to be morally bad, then there is no need to evaluate the means. For example, if it can be shown that I ought not to kill some specific person, then there is no need to further evaluate my proposed means for how I planned to kill them.

Expanding on this view, the most unique part of Fairclough and Fairclough's position is in their suggestion that, "whether the argument itself is valid or not does not ultimately matter. The one thing that matters is whether the conclusion is true or not, and it is only examination of the consequences of action and their impact on goals that agents are otherwise committed to that can rebut the conclusion." (p. 65) To assess the truth of the conclusion they suggest that, "questioning whether the action being proposed will have *negative consequences* that will undermine the stated goal (or other goals the agent wants to pursue, or other agents' goals) is the only really interesting critical question, as it is the only one that can rebut the argument's claim (and also defeat the argument's validity)." (pp. 63-64)

I have some reservations regarding this further elaboration. While it seems that in most cases a goal can be assessed independently, and takes priority, in some cases, it ought to be assessed while also considering the argument. For example, if Breivik reasoned, "*I have a goal to prevent Norway from becoming more multicultural. To prevent multiculturalism I am going to donate and volunteer in poor countries so that foreigners will feel more comfortable at home and not want to move to Norway*", it is not clear that the consequences of the claim can be assessed separately from the argument. Following Fairclough and Fairclough, it seems as though they are suggesting that once we have determined that preventing Norway from becoming more multicultural is bad, we do not have to evaluate any further. Thus, as was mentioned above, it is important to assess the moral quality of both the goal and the means separately rather than just the goal or the entire argument taken together.

Regardless, following this line of thought they suggest three further critical questions: 1. "Are the values that underlie the action rationally acceptable (Acceptable Value Question)", 2. "Should the agent consider other values? (Other Values Question)", and 3. "Do the stated values conflict with other values of the agent (Agent's Multiple Values Question)." (p. 67) Taken together, these questions put values in the limelight of practical reasoning evaluation. We are left to consider then if using these questions would force an independent reasoner to avoid a morally bad conclusion. It does not seem so. Breivik could understandably answer the first question with a "Yes", insofar as he does not think he is irrational for holding the values he does. The second question could be answered with a "Perhaps", but it is not clear which other values he would consider or what weight he would attribute to them. The third question, especially because it does not mention other agents (although other agents were mentioned elsewhere), could also be answered with a "No".

While these specific questions do not solve the problem, Fairclough and Fairclough seem to be on the right track in their ideas more generally. For example,

following their advice that, "if an action undermines the goal of action, then it should not be performed. Similarly, if an action leads to the goal stated in the goal premise (is sufficient) but has negative consequences on *other* goals that are important to the agent or to other agents, then again it might be wise not to go ahead with the action"(p. 66). Breivik might have been forced to conclude that his goal, or at least his means, have negative consequences on other agents' goals (insofar as he recognizes them as agents) and thus stop himself from reaching the conclusion to perform the actions he concluded to perform.

Considering the negative consequences on other agent's goals does not seem to work, however, for a more general form of practical reasoning evaluation. Consider the common case of wanting to criminalise gun use. On one hand the positive consequence of fewer deaths as a result of gun violence is reasonable, but insofar as it has the negative consequence of preventing other agents from achieving their legitimate goal of protecting themselves, "it might not be wise to go ahead with the action."

If their position is taken to address a more explicit moral requirement, rather than an ability to undermine, then I do not agree, however, that the only test of moral goodness is consequentialist. Say for example that my goal is to steal $100 dollars from a very rich person whom I know will not even notice it is gone. Just because the consequences of stealing the money benefit me and do not harm the person I am stealing from, does not, to me, indicate that stealing this money is a morally good or reasonable thing to do.

Finally, returning to the additional critical questions they propose, (Are the values that underlie the action rationally acceptable?, Should the agent consider other values?, Do the stated values conflict with other values of the agent?), when "rationally acceptable" means avoiding "*negative consequences* that will undermine the stated goal (or other goals the agent wants to pursue, or other agents' goals)", it is unclear why the moral language of negative consequences is being evaluated with the logical language of rationality and acceptability. A more consistent and to the point question would be "Are the values that underlie the action good?" Asking a question about the moral goodness of a line of reasoning or an argument might appear to be outside the job of a reasoning and/or argumentation scholar. This could be in part because it is not their specialty to define what is morally good. There is, however, one view offered by T.M. Scanlon that could be seen as a way to shrink the gulf between these two disciplines. This suggestion is the topic of the following section. Before turning to that discussion, however, a summary of the observations from this section is in order.

In sum, Fairclough and Fairclough provide important observations and developments for the evaluation of practical reasoning especially by 1. focusing on the reasonable, 2. taking critical creativity into account, 3. addressing differences concerning independent practical reasoning and practical reasoning with another, 4. noting that defeating the conclusion of practical reasoning carries more weight than defeating the argument, 5. arguing that additional critical questions are required and that these question need to highlight the role of values in the evaluation of practical reasoning. The main problem, it seems to me, is that the observations they make when discussing the structure and analysis of practical reasoning are not fully

accounted for in their suggestions for how to evaluate it. A future paper contributing to this development would be highly beneficial. For now, however, I would like to return to topic of evaluating the moral as a part of the reasonable.

7. DOING THE RIGHT THING

I hope to have shown that practical reasoning evaluation strategies that highlight moral quality are thus needed, especially for independent instances of practical reasoning, if we are to reserve the title of "reasonable" for only those instances that conclude in morally neutral or positive conclusions. One remaining problem is to determine which moral theory is best able to demarcate instances of right and wrong.

One approach comes from T.M Scanlon (1998). Understanding "a reason for something" as "a consideration that counts in favor of it," (p. 17) Scanlon asserts that an action is morally right if it is "permitted by principles that could not reasonably be rejected, by people who were moved to find principles for the general regulation of behavior that others, similarly motivated, could not reasonably reject." (p. 4) Put more simply, an action is right if it is based on a principle which cannot be reasonably rejected. Speaking of right and wrong actions in this way ties the reasonable together with the moral.

Using this guideline we can form a new critical question and sub-question for independent practical reasoning: "is my goal permitted by a principle that could not reasonably be rejected?" and if so "are the means to achieving my goal based on a principle that could not reasonably be rejected?" Applied to Breivik, he could ask himself, 1. "is preventing Norway from becoming more multicultural permitted by principles that could not be reasonably rejected, by people who were moved to find principles for the general regulation of behaviour that others, similarly motivated, could not reasonably reject?" If he came to a "No" answer he might conclude his potential act is immoral and unreasonable and stop there. If somehow he came to a "Yes" answer, he could still ask himself the sub-question, "are the actions, the bombing of a building and execution of campers on Utøya island, justifiable based on principles that others could not reasonably reject given that they want to find principles for the general regulation of behavior?" Even if Breivik found a way to answer the first question positively, I do not think he could find a way to answer the second question positively**.**

This is only one approach and others may fair better than Scanlon's. The main point here is that there are theories on offer which attempt to merge reasoning and morals that argumentation and reasoning scholars might benefit from. In other words, perhaps addressing morals in what is expected of someone who can be considered "reasonable" might not be entirely out of the scope or responsibility of reasoning and argumentation scholars and experts.

8. CONCLUSION

This paper has focused on the evaluation of practical reasoning in light of the goal of coming to a reasonable conclusion. Picking up on a concern raised by Walton, that

there seems to be something unreasonable about immoral practical reasoning conclusions, I have tried to argue that the critical questions offered thus far, meant to safeguard practical reasoning from reaching immoral conclusions, do not seem sufficient to do so. Using an example of how Anders Breivik could have conducted his reasoning, I have tried to show that immoral reasoning can still occur in spite of the current critical questions on offer.

Building on the idea that immoral conclusions are unreasonable, I have argued that part of evaluating practical reasoning requires determining to what extent an individual is expected to be creatively critical. I have also argued that centralizing the role of values in the evaluation of practical reasoning is integral to protecting against immoral conclusions and preserving reasonableness. One way to do so is to ask about the moral status of both the goal, and means to achieve the goal, by directly asking if they are good; in other words, to highlight the role of values in the evaluation of practical reasoning. Importantly, I have suggested that an adequate answer to the question must consider the goodness of the action beyond the values of the agent doing the reasoning so that if my values are bad values this weakness is pointed out. As a suggestion for how to determine if an action is morally good, I have pointed to Scanlon's suggestion that an action is good if it is based on a principle which cannot be reasonably rejected. One problem that would remain to be resolved if Scanlon's approach were employed, however, would be that his suggestion still leaves questions pertaining to an individual's critical creative capacity unresolved and in need of further investigation. In other words, even if Scanlon is right, we still have to determine to what extent we should expect someone to be able to creatively come up with what others could reasonably reject. A further study leaning on literature from critical thinking might try to fill this gap.

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