

# *Evaluations and Autonomous Action*

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## **Abstract**

In the contemporary discussions of the requirement of rationality to autonomous action, there are two main accounts: reason-responsive conception of autonomy and reasoning-responsive conception of autonomy. The reason-responsive conception is grounded in an external interpretation of practical reason, while the internal interpretation of practical rationality grounds the reasoning-responsive conception. In this essay, by defending a reasoning-responsive conception of autonomy, I conclude that one of the necessary conditions for autonomy is the requirement of internal rationality: a sound reasoning process (consistent with logical rules and facts) starting from an agent's given beliefs and desires.

## **1. External Evaluations, Internal Evaluations and Desiring System**

The relation between practical reason, autonomy and freedom, as an important philosophical question, has been discussed by different philosophers. These discussions mainly focus on two questions: one is what the relation between practical reason and motivation is; the other is whether autonomy and freedom require rationality or not. The viewpoints that I am arguing for in this essay are: first, the conception of autonomy requires practical rationality; secondly, the rationality that autonomy requires is practical rationality in internal terms, which considers that autonomous action has to be responsive to a sound reasoning process with given desires and true beliefs.

The ancients distinguished between the rational and the irrational parts of the soul, between Reason and Appetite. An important and representative example is that of Plato. The Platonic conception of practical reasoning considers two different origins of action: Valuing and Desiring. In other words, when an agent

acts, it is either because the agent desires the action or because the agent thinks the action is good. And a rational being endeavors to do what is good and to avoid doing what is evil. Against this, the conception of motivation developed by Hume considers only the irrational part of the soul—Passion—as the origin of actions. Practical reasoning, on the other hand, is only the capacity of choosing the best means for realizing the dictates of Passion. As Hume claims, “reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will [. . .] Reason is Passion’s slave.”<sup>1</sup>

Putting the above dispute about “whether valuing consists in motivating actions or not” aside, however, the above two philosophical schools at least share the view that there are two possible systems which constitute the mechanism of human action: valuing and desiring. In order to explore whether these two systems are independent each other or are actually identical, let us first assume that they are identical.

There are two possible ways to identify “valuing” with “desiring”. One is to define “desiring” as “valuing”. The other one is to define “valuing” as “desiring”. The distinction between these two approaches is: in defining “desiring” as “valuing”, the connotation of “desiring” is prescribed by “valuing”; while in defining “valuing” as “desiring”, the connotation of “valuing” is prescribed by “desiring”. The former approach defines that all rational being desire is the greatest good. This approach “identifies the greatest good with one thing that is desired by all rational people. Analogously, this approach identifies the greatest evil with the thing that all rational people most desire to avoid. Anything else that can be considered either good or evil is so, on this view, in virtue of being a necessary means to either the former or the later.”<sup>2</sup> This approach is also termed “Summum Bonum” view.<sup>3</sup>

There are two assumptions in the “Summum Bonum” view: the first is the assumption that there is only one supreme good in the world, all other goods can be reduced to this supreme good; the second is the assumption that what rational beings desire is good and what rational beings are averse to is bad. As many philosophers (such as Isaiah Berlin) correctly pointed out, however, rational people not only differ with each other in their desiring preferences but also tend to change their outlooks over the courses of their lives. Even if we assumed that all rational beings act according to Kant’s imperative categorical, they might still disagree with each other about what this universal law is. Most philosophical debates, such as, “which one should be put more importance, equality or liberty”; “which one shall we give priority, individual freedom or national security”; “whether human rights are universal in the whole human world or not”; “whether we should extinct death penalty or not”, etc., are perfect examples of

<sup>1</sup> Hume (1896).

<sup>2</sup> Ladenson (1975), 37.

<sup>3</sup> The *Philosophical Lexicon* (Daniel Dennett, 1987) interprets: “Summum Bonum is a Latin phrase, meaning ‘highest good’. Hence, that which is intrinsically valuable, the ultimate goal or end of human life generally.”

permanent conflicts between rational beings' opinions. And it is not the fact that any rational being can maintain his rational principle in all different states of his life. From my perspective, it is very unlikely that there is a supreme good that all the rational beings desire, and a supreme evil that all the rational beings are averse to.

In the history of philosophy, different opinions on "Summum Bonum" come from the famous debate of "value monism vs. value pluralism". Isaiah Berlin, as the supporter of value pluralism, argues that only value pluralism can coincide with the reality of the human world.<sup>4</sup> In different circumstances, different people may desire different things. Value monism, which says all rational beings desire the same good, and are averse to the same evil<sup>5</sup> is illusory.

The second assumption of "Summum Bonum" also faces some difficulties. If we want to keep defining "desiring" as "valuing", with the presupposition of value pluralism, which states that different rational beings may desire different things, and in different circumstances the same rational person may desire different things, it is inevitable for us to consider capricious personal desires as the criterion on people's actions. The extreme result of this account is the complete subjective evaluation system. By defining "what I want to do" as "what is good (for everyone)", the subjective evaluation system actually considers that, no matter what the individual desires, she does not really need any reason for her action motivated by those desires, because the reason for her to act just consists in the motivation itself. Under the subjective evaluation system, an individual has been given the permission to do anything she desires to do. To prescribe individual actions, as the essential function of an evaluation system, partly consists in the reason for the evaluation to exist. In a word, without any objective criteria on what is "good" and what is "evil", the subjective evaluation system loses all the prescriptive functions on individual actions, which it is supposed to have, and even the reasons for existing.

In conclusion, defining "desiring" as "valuing", either requires value monism or turns human evaluation system into subjective. Since value monism doesn't coincide with the reality of human world, and the subjective evaluation system cannot have any prescriptive functions on individual actions, to define "desiring" as "valuing" is implausible.

The second way for "valuing" to be identical with "desiring" is to define "valuing" as "desiring". This leads to what Robert F. Ladenson calls "cool-moment" theory.<sup>6</sup> This view defines that valuing is whatever people desire, however the desires are formed. As Ladenson argued, something is good for a person if it is what he would desire in "a cool moment", and something is evil for him if it is what he would desire to avoid in a cool moment.<sup>7</sup> As we can see, without con-

<sup>4</sup> Berlin (1958), 52–7.

<sup>5</sup> This point that all rational beings are not necessarily averse to the same evil can be illustrated by the debate of "whether we should extinct death penalty".

<sup>6</sup> Ladenson (1975). See also Gert (1970).

<sup>7</sup> Ladenson (1975), 38.

sidering any objective criteria on human desires, either on the formation process of the desires or on the content of the desires, “cool moment theory” leads to the same theoretical result of “value pluralism” plus “defining desiring as valuing”. That is, “cool-moment” theory also turns human rational evaluation system into the complete subjective evaluation. As we have argued in the above paragraph, by defining “what I want to do” as “what is good for everyone”, the subjective evaluation doesn’t have any prescriptive functions on human actions, and loses reasons for existing.

Disagreeing with the above viewpoint, someone may consider that the “cool moment” theory imposes a filter on the content of “valuing”. For example, one might claim that no one in a cool moment can desire to be killed or enslaved for its own sake (i.e. without some payoff). However, from my perspective, the “cool moment” theory cannot function as a filter on the content of “valuing (desiring)”; unless some other objective criterion has been introduced into the evaluation. In the above example of “in a cool moment no one can desire to be killed or enslaved for its own sake”, we’ve actually assumed the evaluations, such as, “to be alive is always good” and “to have freedom is always good”, etc. Without considering these prior evaluations, we have no reason to rule out the possibility for a person to desire to be killed or enslaved in a cool moment.

To sum up the above two arguments: first, the approach of identifying “valuing” with “desiring” is implausible. If we define “desiring” as “valuing”, we either assume value monism, which is unlikely to be true, or have to admit to endorsing a “non-functional” evaluation system, which is pointless. On the other hand, if we define “valuing” as “desiring”, we still have to face a “non-functional” human evaluation system. For these reasons, in my discussion, I consider valuing system and desiring system as two independent systems, which are not identified with each other.

Secondly, we can distinguish at least two types of human evaluations: external evaluations and internal evaluations.<sup>8</sup> “External evaluations” originate from origins “outside” of the agent, and shape people’s actions from outside. On the other hand, the agent herself is the origin of “internal evaluations”, which directly affect a person’s thoughts and actions, sometimes even influences external evaluations with an inner originality (however, for sure, in most situations it is the other way around). External evaluations are value judgments which are dominant in a society. They usually consist in traditional customs, social conventions, local cultures, so on and so forth. Internal evaluations are simply what an individual thinks about her own actions, which is a person’s own evaluation to herself. Although these two valuing systems may affect each other and coincide with each other, external evaluations and internal evaluations originate at different “positions” (referring to the agent), and affect people’s actions and

<sup>8</sup> Undoubtedly, there are plenty of ways to distinguish different types of evaluations as well as the types of evaluations. Here, I just want to suggest one way to distinguish two types of evaluations: to distinguish evaluations as “external evaluations” and “internal evaluations” according to their different “positions” and the different ways for them to effect individual actions.

thoughts from different directions. Sometimes, individuals also use social norms and popular opinions to judge and regulate their own actions. This is the way for individuals to be influenced by external evaluations.

In order to help understanding the interactions of “external evaluations” and “internal evaluations”, consider the following examples:

**Case 1:** *A* is a student who studies very hard, not because she thinks to study hard is good, but because she wants to please her parents.

**Case 2:** Under the influence of her parents, *A* internalizes the external evaluation of “to study is good” and changes her own evaluations.

**Case 3:** Although *A*’s parents want *A* to study chemistry, she wants to be a singer, and practices singing everyday instead of studying hard.

**Case 4:** *A*’s determination of singing moves her parents and even changes the opinion of a wider community. *A* is accepted as a popular singer, and people are convinced that *A*’s choice of singing is good.

In case 1, “to study hard is good” is an evaluation “outside” of *A*, which originates from people around her or some divine sources. *A*’s action is affected by this “external evaluation” from outside. In case 2, which is even “worse” than case 1, it is not only *A*’s action has been affected by external evaluations, but also her internal evaluation changes. She became to think “to study is good” herself. In case 3, the external evaluation of “to study hard is good” still exists, but it hasn’t frustrated *A*’s wish of singing. *A*’s action is directed by the internal evaluation of “to sing is better than to study”. This evaluation originates from *A* herself and directly conducts her actions from inside. In case 4, instead of being frustrated by external evaluations, *A*’s internal evaluation changes the opinions of people around her, namely the external evaluations.

## 2. Evaluation as Necessary Condition to Autonomy

Before going further into a discussion of the relation between evaluations and autonomous actions, I would like to clarify the differences and relations between two terminologies: freedom and autonomy. Most theorists think that “freedom” and “autonomy” are two different concepts. For instance, Gerald Dworkin argues that “freedom is neither necessary nor sufficient for autonomy. Not only are they different concepts, their scope is different. Freedom is a local concept; autonomy a global one.”<sup>9</sup> By “Local vs. Global”, Dworkin means that a property “can be decided at a specific point in time” or “can only be assessed over the whole period of a person’s life”. He argues that “the question of freedom is decided at a specific point in time. Whereas the question of autonomy is one that can only be

<sup>9</sup> Dworkin (1989), 60.

assessed over extended portions of a person's life."<sup>10</sup> In "Autonomy and Personal History"<sup>11</sup>, John Christman argues that freedom and autonomy refer to separate properties of a person's life and actions. He states, "Freedom has been taken to refer essentially to the absence of various types of restraints (internal or external, positive or negative) that might stand between an agent's desires and the performance of her actions. But even if one utilizes a rich concept of a restraint, this characterization of freedom leaves something crucial out of account." And this leads to the question of the scope of the property of autonomy. He concludes that the relation between freedom and autonomy is: "autonomy—at the level of preferences—is an additional component of an account of free action, additional to the standard triadic account restraints."<sup>12</sup>

On the distinction between global and local concepts, which is raised by Dworkin, Christman gives reasonable criticism. Disagreeing with Dworkin's viewpoints that autonomy is a dimension of assessment that evaluates a whole way of living one's life, Christman correctly points out in some situations people make decisions autonomously, while in other situations, they are moved by external, heteronomous factors. Therefore, "construing autonomy as an all or nothing property of a person's whole life (or a whole person) obscures the need for an account of the autonomous formation of single (or "localized") desires."<sup>13</sup>

For the purpose of the discussion in this essay, I want to articulate the following points about the relation between freedom and autonomy: first, the concept of freedom which I'm considering in this essay is positive freedom as self-mastery. Therefore, the concept of freedom cannot be reduced into the triadic restraints account, as John Christman stated. Secondly, the concept of autonomy I discuss in this essay is based on Frankfurt's structure of higher-order desires and lower-order desires.<sup>14</sup> Since positive freedom as self-mastery is also based on second-order desire theory, autonomy and positive freedom as self-mastery have the same meaning in my discussion. They both mean a person's higher-order approval of his lower-order motivations. Thirdly, a small linguistic difference between positive freedom as self-mastery and autonomy is that the former describes a kind of capacity, while the latter describes a state. As Dworkin correctly describes, "autonomy is conceived as a second-order capacity of persons to reflect critically upon their first-order preferences, desires, wishes, and so forth and the capacity to accept or attempt to change these in light of higher-order preferences and values." On the other hand, positive freedom as self-mastery emphasizes that a person is in the state of using his second-order reflection to examine his first-

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Christman (1991a).

<sup>12</sup> Christman (1991a), 2-3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> In his (1971), Frankfurt discusses his influential theory of "second-order desire". He argues that the essential characteristic of a person is his ability of forming higher-order desires, which are desires about desires. And he agrees with Gerald Dworkin that the positive freedom of self-mastery consists in the higher order approval of the lower order desire.

order motivations, and chooses to do what she truly wants to do. However, this difference between “state” and “capacity” will not matter to my discussion about the structure of these two concepts. For these reasons, I use positive freedom as self-mastery and autonomy interchangeably in this essay.

Most positive freedom theorists consider that to be positively free requires an agent to be motivated not only by a desiring system but also by evaluation systems, either external evaluation or internal evaluation. Their disputes focus on whether external evaluation or internal evaluation or both external evaluation and internal evaluation should be considered as the necessary condition of positive freedom and autonomy. For example, John Stuart Mill in his master piece *On Liberty* emphasizes the importance of a person’s independent reasoning process, which plays a crucial role in human beings’ discovering of the truth.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, Charles Taylor is very skeptical about the competence of individuals as “final arbiters” of what they really want to do, and he considers the external criteria as necessary to freedom.<sup>16</sup>

The above two opinions represent two different philosophical conceptions of autonomy. The viewpoint that Charles Taylor expresses is so called “*reason-responsive* conception of autonomy”, which states that “an agent does not really govern himself unless his motives, or the mental processes that produce them, are responsive to a sufficiently wide range of reasons for and against behaving as she does.”<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, the idea that John Stuart Mill argues for is that of a “*reasoning-responsive* conception of autonomy”. This account claims that “the essence of self-government is the capacity to evaluate one’s motives on the basis of whatever else one believes and desires, and to adjust these motives in response to one’s evaluation.”<sup>18</sup> According to this view, what matters to freedom is the capacity to discern what “follows from” one’s beliefs and desires, and to act accordingly.

The difference between the above two accounts of autonomy is grounded on two different theses about “internal reasons” and “external reasons”. I shall now introduce Bernard Williams’ theory of internal reasons by discussing following two conflicting claims:

**Claim 1:** The robber has reason to rob the bank.

**Claim 2:** The robber has no reason to rob the bank.<sup>19</sup>

In his famous paper “Internal and External Reasons”, Williams points out that there are two possible ways to read the sentence “*A* has reason to  $\varphi$ ”. The first way is to read this sentence as “*A* has some motive which will be severed or furthered by his  $\varphi$ ”. This is the *internalist* interpretation of practical reasons.

<sup>15</sup> Mill (1859).

<sup>16</sup> Taylor (1991).

<sup>17</sup> Buss (2002).

<sup>18</sup> Buss (2002).

<sup>19</sup> These two conflicting claims are examples in Bernard Williams’ (1981).

According to the internal-reasons account, it is very likely that “the robber has reason to rob the bank”, because robbing the bank serves the robber’s motive of getting a huge amount of money. The internal-reasons thesis states that reasons to act are subjected to agent’s motivations. We cannot have genuine reasons to act that have no connection with anything that we care about.

The internal-reasons thesis grounds the reasoning-responsive conception of autonomy. The reasoning-responsive conception of autonomy requires practical rationality, which is the capacity of reasoning from the beliefs and motivations that an agent actually has. Therefore, whenever an agent believes, on the basis of a sound reasoning process, that the motives and beliefs are genuinely his, he is acting autonomously. This internal rationality is also interpreted as “minimal rationality” by John Christman. In the essay “Liberalism and Individual Positive Freedom”, Christman argues that the “self-reflection that autonomy necessitates must not involve manifest inconsistencies which bring into question the unity of the self. Hence, what is required of liberty is (only) minimal, internalist rationality.”<sup>20</sup>

The second way to read the sentence “*A* has reason to  $\varphi$ ”, however, consists in assuming that “*A* has reason to  $\varphi$  even if none of his motives will be served or furthered by his  $\varphi$ ”. This interpretation conceives practical reasons in an external way. According to the external-reasons thesis, practical reasons are not subject to agent’s motivations. Practical reasons are reasons on which all the rational beings will act. They are unconditional and universal. In these terms, “a robber has no reason to rob the bank”, simply because the action of robbing the bank cannot be universalized. The great ancients, such as Plato, Kant, and all other moral rationalists approve of the externalist interpretation of practical reasons. They hold that an action is rational when and only when the agent is acting on a universal and unconditional reason.

The reason-responsive conception of autonomy is grounded on the external-reasons thesis. The reason-responsive conception of autonomy says that a rational action is an action which is responsive to a wide range of reasons, regardless of whether these reasons are in any way connected with the agent’s own motivations. According to this view, when and only when a person is motivated by certain universal external reasons, he acts autonomously. This is exactly what is implied by Kant’s categorical imperative.

From the above analysis, we can see that the reason-responsive conception of autonomy considers an unconditional universal reason, which might not in any way connect with the agent’s motivations, as the only criterion of autonomous actions. This construct obviously conflicts with the essential characteristic of autonomous actions: “self-rule”.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, if we apply reason-responsive

<sup>20</sup> Christman (1991b).

<sup>21</sup> *Dictionary of Western Philosophy: English-Chinese* (Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, Beijing: People’s Publish House, 2001) interprets: “Autonomy [from Greek: *auto*, self + *nomos*, law, self-rule] ...”.

conception to positive freedom,<sup>22</sup> I think, Isaiah Berlin is in some way right to claim that “once I take this view (positive freedom view), I am in a position to ignore the actual wishes of men or societies, to bully, oppress, torture them in the name of their ‘real’ selves.”<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, the reasoning-responsive conception of autonomy fully considers the motivations of the agent and requires the agent to reason soundly given his genuine motives and beliefs. This prescription is consistent with the basic meaning of autonomy, so do the positive freedom as self-mastery. For the above reasons, I disagree with the reason-responsive conception of autonomy and agree with the reasoning-responsive conception of autonomy. To act according to a universal practical law or an unconditional reason, is too strong and too arbitrary a requirement for autonomous and free actions. In order to make people act according to the universal reason, it is inevitable for the government to put many constraints on individual actions. Agreeing with most negative theorists on this point, such as Berlin, I consider that these man-made constraints are the interferences to individual liberties, rather than the means to realize them.

### 3. Internal Reason as Sound Deliberation

The following case raises deeper problems of the internal account of autonomy:

*A* wants to drink gin and believes that the liquid before her is gin; she drinks it, but it is actually petrol.<sup>24</sup>

How shall we answer the question whether or not the agent in the above case is autonomous? On the one hand, according to the internal-reasons account, the property by reference to which an action is considered rational for an agent bears only on those beliefs and desires actually “internal” to the agent, not on the relation between those beliefs and the actual world. Hence, lacking the relevant information upon which the motivation of “drinking what is before me” is founded will not render that the actions in the above case irrational. On the other hand, to judge a person, who wanted to drink gin but has actually drunk petrol, to be autonomous, is somehow counter-intuitive.

In order to resolve the above puzzles that arise within the internal-reasons thesis, Williams introduces the notion of “sound deliberative routes” in describing the practical reasoning process. He holds that in the following two situations, and only in those situations, the agent has internal reason to act: one is that the agent actually has a given motivation *M* in his “subjective motivational set”; the other is that the agent could come to have *M* by following “a sound deliberative

<sup>22</sup> As I have argued, I use positive freedom as self-mastery and autonomy these two concepts interchangeably in this essay.

<sup>23</sup> Berlin (1958), 32.

<sup>24</sup> This example is discussed by Bernard Williams in his Williams (1981).

route” from the beliefs and desires that he actually has—that is, a way of reasoning that builds conservatively<sup>25</sup> on what he already believes and cares about.”<sup>26</sup> However, according to these viewpoints, the paradox in the above example still exists. As we can see, although *A*’s genuine motive is to drink the gin, rather than to drink the petrol, *A* would not come to have the motive of not to drink the liquid before her, even if she followed a “sound deliberative route” as Williams stated. Because what *A* actually believes is that “the liquid before her is gin” and her genuine desire is “to drink the gin”. Indeed, *A* wouldn’t come to have the desire of not to drink the petrol, unless she realized that the liquid before her was not gin. Therefore, I suggest revising the “sound deliberative route” as a way of reasoning that builds on true beliefs and the agent’s genuine desires. From my perspective, it is only the true belief plus the genuine desire that consists in an internal reason for the agent to act. A reasoning process based on the agent’s false beliefs will not lead to any autonomous actions, and cannot guarantee the realization of the agent’s freedom as self-mastery either. Both Bernard Williams’s “internal rationality” and John Christman’s “minimal rationality” have to include the condition of true beliefs.

By analyzing above cases, we can see that the condition of internal rationality serves as the condition to guarantee the realization of what the agent really wants to do. Given a genuine desire, only by following the sound deliberative route, which is continuous and consistent to logical rules and factual reality, the agent can realize what she really wants to do. Autonomy requires internal rationality, which consists in an agent’s true beliefs and genuine desires.

#### 4. Gary Watson Vs. Harry Frankfurt

In the influential essay “Free Agency”, Gary Watson distinguishes two systems that he considers to consist in the motivations of action: a valuing system and a desiring system. Watson argues that, “motivational system of an agent is that set of considerations which moves him to action.” And “the valuational system of an agent is that set of considerations which, when combined with his factual beliefs (and probability estimates), yields judgments of the form: the thing for me to do in these circumstances, all things considered, is *a*.” With these considerations, Watson concludes that free actions are actions that are motivated by the agent’s valuational system, which, in Watson’s words, implies that the “free agent has the capacity to translate his values into action”.<sup>27</sup>

Watson criticizes Harry Frankfurt’s hierarchical conception of motivation. He claims that “the structural feature to which Frankfurt appeals is not the fundamental feature for either free agency or personhood”, because Watson thinks

<sup>25</sup> In my understanding, by “conservatively” Bernard Williams means that the agent’s reasoning is built on what she already believes and cares about.

<sup>26</sup> Williams (1995), 35.

<sup>27</sup> Watson (1989).

that “second order volitions are themselves simply desires”, and “to add them to the context of conflict is just to increase the number of contenders.”<sup>28</sup>

From my perspective, Watson’s criticism of Frankfurt is questionable for two reasons: first, Watson’s criticism is based on a misunderstanding of Frankfurt’s account of second-order desires. Watson interprets Frankfurt’s theory as: an agent with a given set of desires (first-order desires) concerning which he then forms second-order volitions about. At the same time, Watson argues that it is evaluation that can have a special importance in partly constituting free actions, “but in general, evaluations are prior and of the first order”. However, Frankfurt defines second-order desires as “desires about desires”. It is not necessary that the agent has first-order desires before he forms second-order desires. This point is clearly shown in the example Frankfurt discusses in his essay: the person who desires to have the desire of taking drugs, doesn’t have the desire of taking drugs at all. Secondly, as Frankfurt correctly points out, highest-order desire does have certain particularity—they are decisive, which satisfies the authenticity requirement of autonomous motivations. Furthermore, Watson’s viewpoint that free action is the action that has been motivated by evaluations, which emphasizes that when a person acts freely, he is doing “good” things, is also improper. The condition of being perfect is irrelevant to our ordinary understanding of the concept of autonomy. To be autonomous doesn’t require a person to be “perfect” in any sense. For a person to be autonomous, it is even not necessary in the agent’s own eyes that she is always doing “good” things. In a word, to be “good” and to be “free” are two different things.

To conclude this essay, the conception of autonomy requires practical rationality. The rationality that autonomy requires is practical rationality in internal terms, which considers that autonomous action has to be responsive to a sound reasoning process with given desires and true beliefs. This criterion neither requires autonomous actions to be responsive to a wide range of external reasons, nor requires that autonomous actions to be “moral” or “good”. The criterion of rationality to autonomy is only the end-means rationality, which is the minimal rationality that helps the agent’s genuine end to be realized in proper ways.

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<sup>28</sup> Watson (1989), 118–9.

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