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Kant and Searle on the Motivational Force of Desire-Independent Reasons

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Abstract

Both Kant and Searle argue that firstly, we can act on desire-independent reasons, and secondly, we have freedom of will; the freedom of will is indispensably related to the motivational force of desire-independent reasons. However, they have different accounts on freedom of will. Consequently they have different perspectives on the

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relation between free will and the motivational force of desire-independent reasons such as duty. In his *Rationality in Action*, Searle compares his and Kant's accounts on duty and the motivation of dutiful actions, and he argues that his own theory is free from many problems that plague Kant's theory. In this article I will firstly discuss how we can act on desire-independent reasons according to Searle and Kant. I will also briefly examine Searle's criticisms of Kant. Then I will discuss some possible ways to defend Kant, and make a comparison between Searle and Kant on the issue of the relation between the notion of freedom and the motivational force of dutiful actions. Finally, I will argue that Searle has difficulties explaining the motivational force of desire-independent reasons within the framework of his theory of freedom. Therefore, in this respect, his theory is no better than Kant's.

Keywords: Kant, Searle, Freedom of Will , Duty, Motivation, Desire-independent Reasons

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I. Motivation of Pure Practical Reason in Kant's Theory

According to the Humean theory, 'motivation has its source in the presence of a relevant desire and means-end belief' (Smith 1987: 36). I believe that Kant knows the Humean theory of motivation well. However, he holds a totally different position on the source of motivation in his theory of moral action. In his moral philosophy, his main aim is to establish that pure reason alone can become practical (Kant 1996: 139, 5:3). This states that practical reason has the capacity to move our actions; it does not merely serve as a tool to calculate the best way to satisfy our desires. Pure practical reason can motivate our moral actions. More importantly, pure practical reason can be unconditionally practical. This means that reason alone has motivational force. In the *Analytic of the Second Critique*, Chapter I, Kant tries to convince us that practical reason itself, independent of any empirical conditions such as inclinations, feeling of pleasure, or sensuous impulses, has the capacity to yield practical laws that are sufficient to immediately determine our will. This is the core of Kant's moral philosophy. There are some notions to unpack here.

First of all, the motivational force of pure practical reason should be independent of any empirical conditions. Kant emphasises that '[a]ll practical principles that presuppose an object (matter) of the faculty of desire as the determining ground of the will are, without exception, empirical and can furnish no practical laws' (Kant 1996: 155, 5:21). The object of the faculty of desire is what I want. According to Beck's interpretation, there are two distinguishable factors of the act of will. One is a want appearing as one's inclination, impulse, drive, and propensity. The other is recognised as what I ought to do (Beck 1960: 76). For Kant, the former factor is empirical and is dependent on each person's private needs. It is impossible to discover a universal law (L) which is based on a desire (D), for there is no reason for a person who lacks D to perform any actions in accordance with L to satisfy D. For this reason Kant claims that '[e]mpirical grounds are not fit for any universal external legislation and are no more fit for internal lawgiving' (Kant 1996: 161, 5:28).

Since a practical law should not presuppose an object (matter), we should consider it only from the perspective of its form. Kant claims that

If a rational being is to think of his maxims¹ as practical universal laws, he can think of them only as principles that contain the determining ground of the will not by their matter but only by their form. (Kant 1996: 160, 5: 27)

But what is a law like when it only has a form? An empirical

¹ A maxim is a subjective principle of a voluntary action. It is opposed to the practical law which is objective to every rational being. See: Kant, 1996: 56, footnote.

(material) principle refers to a desired end. We take it as a guidance to help ourselves realise the end. In other words, a material principle is a general guidance of an action with a desired end as its motive. A material principle is valid for me, if I am interested in satisfying the very desire this principle presupposes. Now, a practical law is formal means that it is irrespective of any ends which are motivated by desires. As Paton points out,

[a]ll it (the formal law) would retain, as is indeed inevitable if it is a product of pure reason without reference to particular inclinations, would be its validity for every rational agent as such, validity no longer qualified by an 'if'. [...] It would in short be a universal law. (Paton 1971: 72)

It seems that a formal law is just a law which is abstracted from empirical conditions.

So far the practical law is formal, and thus universal. This implies the third notion of the law, namely the immediacy requirement: the practical law must determine our will immediately. This means that when we act in accordance with the law, the conformity of our will to the law must not indirectly motivated by other motives than the law itself. If I help my colleague in order to get a promotion, then it is the desire for getting a promotion that immediately determines my will. In this case, I acted merely indirectly according to the maxim of helping others. I acted with a consideration of an 'if' which makes my maxim conditional. However, according to Kant, we should obey the law for its own sake. We do not need any other motives to mediate between the law and our conformity of the law. Kant emphasises that the law alone can motivate. It is sufficient to determine our will immediately.

I have explained the practical law yielded by the pure practical reason mostly from the negative perspectives. It should not presuppose empirical conditions, hence it is not material; it does not refer to desired ends; it is not qualified by a condition, an 'if', this means that there is no means-end considerations involved in the law. It seems that the content of the formal universal law is rather empty. However, this does not mean that the law says nothing to us. From the positive perspective, Kant believes that if morality is not just our fantasy, and if the so called moral actions are not driven by desires which are regarded by Kant as some chemical reactions in our brain, then we can establish the categorical imperative from pure practical reason as the guidance of our will. The categorical imperative is a concrete expression of the formal universal law. It asserts that 'I ought to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law' (Kant 1996: 57, 4: 402). It is categorical because its command is absolute, unconditioned. It has no reference to motives other than itself. It is imperative because it is the law for human beings. Our will is not holy; it is influenced by sensuous conditions. As mentioned earlier, one factor of the act of will is a want appearing as one's inclination, impulse, drive, and propensity. There is nothing wrong with this factor. However, it sometimes conflicts with our good will. We never do moral actions automatically. Therefore the universal practical law appears to us as imperatives or duty which constrains our will.

Finally, the law determines our will. This sounds strange. A human being acts; a law does not act. So how could the law do anything to determine our will? Are we passively determined by the law, just like a falling object being determined by the law of gravity? No, this is not the case. Allison points out that when considering the practical spontaneity

(the freedom to initiate an action), we should notice that ‘an incentive can determine the will to an action only so far as the individual has incorporated it into his maxim’ (Kant 1960: 19). Allison calls this claim the Incorporation Thesis (Allison 1990: 40). He indicates that it is not inclinations themselves that cause the action; rather, they motivate by ‘being taken as reasons and incorporated into maxims’ (Allison 1990: 51). Similarly, when we think of practical law as the determining ground of our will, we should not literally regard it as having an efficient cause of our will. He claims that it is rather ‘the act of incorporation’ which makes the practical law effective. In other words, the practical law determines by means of the agent’s consideration and adoption of it.

The law determines in a unique way. Kant claims that if a maxim I am acting on is tested by practical reason, ‘I always consider what it would be if it were to hold as a universal law of nature’ (Kant 1996: 175, 5: 44). This is how the law determines our will. Actually this claim is the same as the content of the categorical imperative: it pushes us to think whether my maxim could be universal; whether I will it to be impartially valid for every individual. Moreover, it pushes us to think whether I will a nature which is in harmony with the universal law. Actually it is I who determines. It is me who decides whether I should adopt the maxim and act in accordance with it as if it were a universal law. But why does Kant say that the law determines my will? The answer is obvious if we remember that when discussing moral actions, Kant never suggests that we obey any conventional moral norms. Rather, he suggests that we think according to the command of the categorical imperative. And the categorical imperative is given by pure practical reason. Therefore, we give ourselves the law. We make the law for ourselves which constrains our will. Only when we connect the practical law with an autonomous self

who makes the law can we understand the meaning of the phrase ‘the law determines our will’.

By explaining the universal practical law, Kant shows that pure practical reason alone can motivate. Its motivation is expressed as a demand; it appears to us as categorical imperative and it demands us to think whether I will my maxim to be a universal law. We can act for the sake of the practical law, that is, we can think under the guidance of the law. Furthermore, since the practical law is abstracted from desired ends, when we act in accordance with the law, we are acting on a desire-independent reason. Now, what is the source of the motivational force of the practical law? Why can it motivate?

There is no simple and clear answer to this question. According to the *Analytic*, Kant tries to justify the motivational force of the practical law from two dimensions: the consciousness of the fundamental law and the freedom of will. He claims that the practical law and the freedom of will reciprocally imply each other (Kant 1996: 162, 5: 29). Let me explain this with the help of an imaginary example Kant illustrates.

Suppose someone asserts of his lustful inclination that, when the desired object and the opportunity are present, it is quite irresistible to him; ask him whether, if a gallows were erected in front of the house where he finds this opportunity and he would be hanged on it immediately after gratifying his lust, he would not then control his inclination. One need not conjecture very long what he would reply. But ask him whether, if his prince demanded, on pain of the same immediate execution, that he give false testimony against an honourable man whom the prince would like to destroy under

a plausible pretext, he would consider it possible to overcome his love of life, however great it may be. He would perhaps not venture to assert whether he would do it or not, but he must admit without hesitation that it would be possible for him. He judges, therefore, that he can do something because he is aware that he ought to do it and cognises freedom within him, which, without the moral law, would have remained unknown to him. (Kant 1996: 163-164, 5: 30)

In the former half of this example, Kant invites us to imagine a person who would refuse to satisfy his desire at the cost of sacrificing his life. We would admit that this is not a difficult decision for that person, for the love of life should be a much stronger desire than to get an object he wants. In the latter half of this example, Kant invites us to imagine what the same person who loves his life more than anything would do when he is threatened with execution should he not obey an immoral order from the prince. Kant claims that this person, even with a strong love of life, cannot easily decide to give false testimony against an honest man. It would even be possible for him to refuse an immoral action at the cost of his life.

In the former situation that person compares two desires, whereas in the latter one he faces a conflict between what he wants (saving his life) and what he ought to do (not giving false testimony against an honest man). What Kant tries to convince us is that the awareness of what he ought to do can influence his decision. One thing is worth noting. 'I am aware of what I ought to do' is different from 'I am aware of something there'. In the latter case, my sense is passively affected by the object. I know something is there, but I do not have to do anything to respond to this knowledge. However, according to the example, 'I am aware of what

I ought to do' means the consciousness of the subordination of my will to what I ought to do without the mediation of any inclinations. This consciousness is connected to my decision. I should do something to respond to the awareness of what I ought to do.

In light of the consciousness of the 'ought', the person judges that he can act in a way that goes against his desire. It is thus obvious that the 'ought' serves as a higher principle than his personal maxims. Actually Kant intends to use this example to show that this higher principle is fundamental, and can be common to all of us. It underlies our deliberation about possible actions. Why do I do it? Should I do it? Why do I act in this way? Why not the other way? We reflect on our maxims, choose between them, and try to justify the reason of our choice. At this moment, we touch the most fundamental law that derives from our reason. It is not any individual norm; rather, it just pushes us to think independent of our inclinations. From here the fundamental law is just the practical law or the categorical imperative given by pure practical reason. Kant also calls it the moral law (Kant 1996: 165, 5: 31).

From the discussion, we find that in the end, there is no further source of the motivational force of the practical law.² The consciousness

² In the third chapter of the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant discusses the incentives of pure practical reason. There he explains the moral feeling and the role it plays in our performing of moral actions. Some think that this part, i.e., Kant's moral psychology, should be the most important part in Kant's moral theory. For example, see Timmons, 1985. I do not explicate Kant's moral feeling in this paper. But I would like to point out that firstly, Kant makes a distinction between the pathological feeling which is elicited by empirical stimuli and the moral feeling. In the second Critique, the former is usually called the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, and the latter the respect of the moral law. Secondly, Kant emphasises that there is 'no antecedent feeling in the subject that would be attuned to morality' (Kant 1996: 201, 5: 75). Now the question is what the relation

of the practical law implies the subordination of the will to the law. To subordinate my will to the law means to let my will be determined by the law, that is, to act for the sake of duty. This reaffirms Kant's main point of his moral theory: the practical law alone motivates; it is sufficient to determine the will. However, I do not think that Kant is just repeating himself when he explains the consciousness of the fundamental law in terms of the example. From my point of view, he attempts to show us that there is nothing mysterious in the motivational force of the pure practical reason. He says that 'the moral law is given, as it were, as a fact of pure reason (*Factum der Vernunft*)' (Kant 1996: 177, 5: 47).³ We all have the capacity of morality. This is given as a fact. We cannot further explain the source of our moral capacity. However, we have reason to believe that we can perform moral actions which are independent of desires. This is not just an ideal or a fantasy, but something we can achieve.

In the end of the example Kant indicates the other crucial

between moral feeling and the moral law is. In what sense does Kant say that the moral feeling is the incentive of pure practical reason? We should note that the moral feeling is a unique kind of feeling. Kant indicates that 'the consciousness of a free submission of the will to the law [...] is respect for the law' (Kant 1996: 204-205, 5: 80). This means that the consciousness of the law originates the feeling for the respect of the law. As Allison points out, the feeling of respect is a complex phenomenon. It has an intellectual component, namely the consciousness of the law, and a sensible component, namely this feeling of respect affects our minds. Therefore, even we think of the sensible component of the respect as a feeling that can have moral motivation, we should not regard it as a motive that exists external and prior to the moral law. In this sense, I argue that for Kant, there is no further source of the motivational force of the practical law except the law itself.

³ The word 'Factum' refers both to 'fact' and 'deed'. It does not merely mean something which is known to exist, but also has a sense of our doing. See: Reath and Timmermann, 2010, Chapter three; Ware, 2014.

dimension of the motivational force of pure practical reason. The consciousness of the fundamental law reveals that the person is a free agent. Actually the notion of freedom is involved in Kant's explanation of the practical law. I have shown that only when we connect the practical law with an autonomous self who makes the law can we understand how the law determines our will.⁴ Kant argues that the freedom and the practical law reciprocally imply each other (Kant 1996: 162, 5: 290). He also says that the consciousness of moral law is just the consciousness of freedom (Kant 1996: 177, 5: 46).

Kant's argument of freedom creates a serious problem: how could free will be compatible with the phenomenal world which Kant believes to be causally deterministic? Kant's solution is to appeal to his notorious distinction between the phenomenal world and the noumenal world. He thinks that we can be transcendently free only as moral agents in the noumenal world, or in the noumenal perspective. And he thinks that the noumenal world as well as the intellectual causality of freedom does not contradict deterministic nature. We must assume that the world we experience is merely appearance. According to this view, all our actions are determined by antecedent causes. However, the natural causality is the

⁴ In the *Groundwork*, Kant asserts that '[r]eason must regard itself as the author of its principles independently of alien influences; consequently, as practical reason or as the will of a rational being it must be regarded of itself as free, that is, the will of such a being cannot be a will of his own except under the idea of freedom, and such a will must in a practical respect thus be attributed to every rational being' (Kant 1996: 94, 4: 448). Here the idea of freedom is not being independent of alien causes. For Kant, this is just a negative sense of freedom. In the discussion of morality, Kant emphasises the positive sense of freedom, namely, the law-giving. Our practical reason gives the moral law to itself. The moral law expresses the autonomy of practical reason. This is why Kant claims that the consciousness of the moral law is the consciousness of freedom.

attribute only of the phenomenal world. This leaves open the possibility of noumenal freedom. Kant thinks that we can defend the thought of the freely acting cause if we regard ourselves as belonging to the noumenal world (Kant 1996: 178-179, 5: 48). Thus we have two standpoints regarding ourselves: we can think of ourselves as belonging to the sensible world and subject to the laws of nature. In this respect we are determined. But we can also think of ourselves as belonging to the noumenal world and subject to laws which are not empirical but grounded merely in reason. In this respect we regard ourselves as moral agents; we are transcendently free (Kant 1996: 99, 4: 453). Accordingly there is no contradiction between deterministic physical causality and freedom. On this view, the same actions 'that we regard as naturally necessitated in the world of appearance can be regarded as transcendently free in reference to their noumenal cause' (Wood 2008: 135). By means of this 'two-standpoint-theory' Kant thinks that he can explain the possibility of the necessary presupposition of freedom.

II. Motivational Force of Desire-independent Reasons in Searle's Theory

In the beginning of *Rationality in Action*, Searle criticises that the classical model gives wrong accounts of the rationality of human actions.⁵ Searle does not make it explicit which philosophers are in his mind when

⁵ According to Searle, the most fundamental claim of the classical model is that actions are caused by beliefs and desires, which he takes to be causally sufficient. See: Searle 2001: chapter 1.

he refers to 'the classical model'. Nevertheless, according to the text in Searle's *Rationality in Action*, we can be sure that the classical model is based on the Humean theory of motivation. In this doctrine, reason serves as a tool to calculate the most efficient methods to satisfy the ends based on desires. Only desire-dependent reasons motivate our actions. Searle strongly disagrees with this viewpoint. He emphasises that we have the capacity to create, to recognise, and to act on desire-independent reasons for action (Searle 2001: 124). This is the main thesis of his *Rationality in Action*. There seem to be three different points in Searle's argument, namely that we create, recognise and act on desire-independent reasons. I will show that all of them are involved in any single rational action based on desire-independent reason.

From the context of *Rationality in Action*, it seems that Searle takes an external reason as a basic form of a desire-independent reason. So I will start my explanation from what an external reason is. This will help readers to understand the characteristic of a desire-independent reason. According to Searle, external reasons can come from facts in the world. There are external facts in the world such as that it is raining or that my body has a certain level of vitamin C. They are potentially external reasons for my action. But how could facts become the reasons of action? As Searle claims, 'the motivational force of an external reason is defined counterfactually: if the agent did have the appropriate knowledge, that is, if he knew about his health needs, and knew about how to satisfy them, then he would, if rational, recognise these as reasons for action (Searle 2001: 116). The essential element here is recognition. Once I recognise a fact, for example, once I recognise that my body has a low level of vitamin C, the fact 'that my body has a low level of vitamin C' is not merely a fact anymore. Now it potentially becomes a reason for me to

supply vitamin C for my body.

Reason is not a neutral term. Firstly, as Searle points out, it is always observer-relative, i.e., it is relative to human intentionality (Searle 2001: 120). A reason is connected to something we are planning to do, so to recognise a fact as a reason involves a possible action. Moreover, a reason is not a cause. The distinction between them is crucial in Searle's theory. Searle emphasizes that while causes are typically events such as an earthquake, reasons are never events but are factitive entities that are expressed in a propositional structure and correspond to a reason statement (Searle 2001: 103). In other words, a reason expresses a whole proposition. For an agent, a reason is a fact which is built into his or her language structure. Therefore, a reason is always known to the agent (Searle 2001: 99). This is an important point because for Searle, it is from an agent's awareness or recognition that he explains the motivational force of the external reasons.

Now we can say that an external reason is desire-independent in the following sense. External reasons are some factitive entities (facts that have propositional structure) in the world. For example, the fact that it is raining, the fact that one has an obligation, or the fact that my body has some health needs (Searle 2001: 114). They become reasons because they are related to human intentionality; however, they can be reasons in spite of the denial or ignorance of an agent. In this sense they are external. As Searle puts it, an external reason "is a factitive entity in the world that can be a reason for an agent, even if he does not know of that entity, or knows of it but refuses to acknowledge it as a reason" (Searle 2001: 114). Noting that an external reason is counterfactually defined. As the vitamin C case shows, the motivational force of an external reason is grounded in the

agent's recognition.

An external reason can become *my* reason under some cognitive conditions. And this reason is desire-independent, namely, it is not constituted by my private conditions such as my inclinations or my preferences. I have reason to supply for my body vitamin C because of my rational deliberation on the facts of my health needs rather than because I simply want to do so. This case shows that we can recognise some external facts as our reasons. They are desire-independent reasons. From there Searle further explicates how we create desire-independent reasons by a speech act for ourselves based on our recognition of some factitive entities. This is one major contribution Searle makes in his *Rationality in Action*.

According to Searle, when we make a statement with a propositional content, a commitment is built into the structure of that speech act. Now, a commitment is already a desire-independent reason for action. Therefore, speech acts involve the creation of desire-independent reasons for action (Searle 2001: 173-174). Since Searle claims that almost all speech acts have an element of promising (Searle 2001: 181), I will take promising as an example to show the process of the creation of desire-independent reasons.

There are two significant features of a speech act. Firstly, there is a close relation between the act of statement making and the commitment to the truth of the statement. Searle argues that 'commitment to truth is internal to statement making' (Searle 2001: 185). For example, if I assert that 'it is raining' and if I mean it, there is no possibility for me to be indifferent to the truth of my statement. So the commitment to the truth of 'it is raining' is internal to this statement. Moreover, I have the

commitment to the truth of my statement means that I ought to believe that my statement is true. From here, I create an 'ought' (I ought to believe that it is raining) from 'is' (it is raining) (Searle 2001: 148).⁶

When considering promising, Searle argues that promises are by definition creations of obligations (Searle 2001: 193, 197). This is so because 'the obligation to keep a promise is internal to the act of promising, just as the commitment to truth telling is internal to the act of statement making' (Searle 2001: 193). So when I sincerely say that 'I promise you to give your money back', I am not predicting what I am going to do, say, I might give your money back in the future. Rather, I immediately create an obligation for myself; I am committed to give your money back. Now giving your money back is what I ought to do, I therefore created for myself a desire-independent reason for action.

But there is a question: why is the desire-independent reason to keep my promise binding on me? What is the motivational force of the obligation to keep my promise? According to Searle, an obligation or a commitment has binding force simply because the agent has created it. Because it is *me* who made the promise and created a reason *for myself* to keep my promise, I cannot be indifferent to it. Here the recognition of the agent plays an important role. The recognition that I myself have promised you to give your money back makes my promise a valid reason to act. As Searle indicates, the recognition of the agent as subject, i.e., this commitment is freely and intentionally created by *me*, is indispensable for the motivational power of my commitments (Searle 2001: 176, 178, 188,

⁶ Searle gives a detailed explanation of 'how to derive 'ought' from 'is'. See: Searle, 1964.

198, 210). Searle even argues that my recognition of a valid reason together with an upward direction of fit can give rise to a secondary desire to act it.⁷ He claims that '[my] desire [...] to keep my promise is derived from the fact that I recognise that [...] I have made a promise, that [...] promises create [...] obligations, and that I am required to fulfil [...] my obligations'. Briefly speaking, to recognise the fact that I owe you money 'is a reason to pay it back, and therefore a reason for wanting to pay it back' (Searle 2001: 177).

Searle's account of the motivational force of desire-independent reasons shows that from recognising external facts ('it is raining' or 'I owe you money') I can immediately create a commitment to the truth or a future action for myself. And to recognise that I have freely created a commitment for myself motivates me to act. This is the reason why I said in the beginning that to recognise, to create, and to act are all involved in one rational action based on a desire-independent reason. Furthermore, Searle's explanation of the creation of the obligation implies a necessary condition for the motivational force of desire-independent reasons. This is the freedom of will.

Searle claims that the presupposition of freedom of the agent is crucial for his theory of motivation. As I have shown, the obligation to keep my promise has the binding force on my will because I have freely

⁷ The idea of the direction of fit was initially from Anscombe, although she did not use the term. Searle applies this idea in his own theory. He claims that when I create a reason for me to do something, my commitment to that reason has a world-to-mind (upward) direction of fit. This means that I am committed to a course of action which can help me to realise the action based on my reason. The very action should be done in the world. So I do something in the world to fit the commitment in my mind.

created it. But how could I be sure that I really have free will? How could I be sure that the creation of the obligation to keep my promise is not determined by an antecedent psychological event? Searle knows that there might be doubt about the agent's free will. His solution is to recognize our freedom of will under the first-person point of view.

Before discussing the first-person point of view of freedom, one notion has to be explained. Searle argues that all of us should have the experience of the gap when we are making decisions. The 'gap' is a fundamental conception which underlies Searle's theory of freedom. It is Searle's technical term. We can consider the gap from different timelines; one is forward and the other is backward. What follows is the definition of the gap given by Searle:

Forward: the gap is that feature of our conscious decision making and acting where we sense alternative future decisions and actions as causally open to us. Backward: the gap is that feature of conscious decision making and acting whereby the reasons preceding the decisions and the actions are not experienced by the agent as setting causally sufficient conditions for the decisions and actions. (Searle 2001: 62)

From Searle's definition of the gap we can see that there is no necessary relation between my reasons and my actions. In other words, the reasons has no sufficient causal power which can determine my actions. Then what functions between the reasons and the actions? What makes my reason effective? For Searle, the only answer is *I*. It is *me*, the spontaneous self, who operates in the gap. It is *me* who chooses which reason I will act on. As mentioned earlier, Searle emphasizes many times that the commitment is freely created by me. For this to be possible, the freedom of the agent's will should be presupposed. But how could I be

certain that I am a spontaneous self? Searle argues that we all have the gappy experience: we have ‘a sense of alternative possibilities’ when we perform voluntary actions (Searle 2001: 67). From the gappy experience we are convinced that our actions are not deterministic. In other words, under the first-person point of view, we are certain that we have options.

According to Searle, our free actions should be explained under the first-person point of view, because they have a first-person ontology (Searle 2001: 85).⁸ From this view, my actions did not just happen among a series of natural events. Rather, ‘they are done; they are, for example, undertaken, initiated, or performed’ by me as a free agent who operates in the gap (Searle 2001: 232).

The gappy experience manifests that we are free. We cannot be indifferent to this experience. One and the same action might have different explanations under different views. From the third-person point of view, it might seem deterministic. But from the first-person point of view, I have a real experience that I have freely created a reason to perform it, and it is me who acted on that reason. Searle believes that

⁸ The main idea of Searle’s first-person ontology is that consciousness is an irreducible feature of physical reality. He takes the feeling of pain for example. When I say ‘I am now in pain’, the pain exists only in my experience from the first-person point of view. Searle claims that it is the sensations from my subjective, first-person point of view that are constitutive of my present pain. If we try to reduce pain to the third-person physical mechanisms such as neuron firings, the pain ‘would be left out’. ‘No description of the third-person, objective, physiological facts would convey the subjective, first-person character of the pain, simply because the first-person features are different from the third-person features’ (Searle 1992: 117). Similarly, our experience of freedom has a first-person feature. It could not be reduced to be part of a natural event. Therefore he claims that when we are talking about the gappy experience, only the first-person point of view matters. From this view, the appearance occurring in our experience is just the reality.

once we see our actions from the first-person point of view, we will be convinced by our experience that our actions are not determined.

III. Searle's Criticism of Kant

Searle criticises Kant in many places in *Rationality in Action*. Here I discuss two criticisms that are relevant to the topic of this article.

Firstly, Searle is not satisfied with Kant's account of the motivation of the act of pure reason. His criticism is based on a sentence from Kant's *Groundwork*. In *Groundwork* section III Kant asks how a categorical imperative is possible. He declares that there is no explanation of why the moral law interests us.⁹ In his discussion of this issue he says that

[i]n order for a sensibly affected rational being to will that for which reason alone prescribes the 'ought', it is admittedly required that his reason have the capacity to *induce a feeling of pleasure* or of delight in the fulfilment of duty, and thus there is required a causality of reason to determine sensibility in conformity with its principle. (Kant 1996: 106, 4: 460)¹⁰

⁹ In light of Kant's explanation of the consciousness of the moral law, we already know that there is no further explanation of the motivational force of the moral law. We should regard it as a fact.

¹⁰ Searle's quotation is from Paton's translation. According to this version, the sentence is as follows: 'If we are to will actions for which reason by itself prescribes an 'ought' to a rational, yet sensuously effected, being, it is admittedly necessary that reason should have a power of *infusing a feeling of pleasure* or satisfaction in the fulfilment of duty, and consequently that it should possess a kind of causality by which it can determine sensibility in accordance with rational principles'.

Referring to this passage, Searle argues that Kant has a bad argument for the motivational force of rational actions, because Kant thinks that we cannot intentionally and freely perform dutiful actions unless we get a feeling of pleasure from doing so. Kant, according to Searle, wrongly thinks that every action is done for the purpose of satisfying a desire. Then he compares his own theory of the motivation of desire-independent reasons with Kant's claim and reiterates that we can perform many actions 'in which there is no "feeling of pleasure"'. The recognition of the validity of the reason is enough to motivate the action; therefore, the extra feeling of pleasure or desires are not necessary (Searle 2001: 191).

Secondly, Searle claims that Kant wrongly thinks that acting on first-order desires cannot be free and duty should always win. As is well known, Kant maintains that acting for the sake of duty is acting in accordance with the moral law. And acting in accordance with the moral law is acting autonomously. A free dutiful action must be determined by the law. But Searle wonders why do we need a law to act freely? He mentions Korsgaard's defence of this view. Korsgaard thinks that we need the law to distinguish my autonomous actions from those based on first-order impulses. Only through the law can I say that the action done according to the law is *my* action. In other words, only through the law can I justify the connection between the action and me as an autonomous agent (Searle 2001: 154). However, Searle is unsatisfied with this explanation. He argues that Kant is wrong in connecting law-obeying actions with free actions. And the fundamental reason for this improper connection is that Kant 'makes a false dichotomy between acting on impulses, which is supposed to be not free, and acting on a universal law, which is free' (Searle 2001: 156). Searle contends that from the first-person point of view, acting on impulses can be as much free as

acting on universal law, because the experience of the gap can be the same in both cases (Searle 2001: 156).

Moreover, Searle maintains that Kant holds an improper heavy-duty metaphysics. There are two points in his criticism. Firstly, to create obligations, '[n]o noumenal world or Kantian Categorical Imperative is necessary' (Searle 2001: 163). As mentioned before, Searle asserts that we can create commitments through speech acts. The bare representation of an '*is*' generates an '*ought*'. From this point of view, there is no escape from normativity when we are using language (Searle 2001: 183). Thus there is no need for the distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal. Furthermore, Searle argues that there is no reason why duty should always win when we can also act on a desire. He explains this with an example. Suppose I promise to come to your party next Wednesday night. This is a desire-independent reason I created for myself through my promising. But suppose I also have an interest, say, a business deal, which is in conflict with my interest to come to your party. Searle maintains that in such a case, often moral philosophers like Kant would say that duty should triumph. But Searle is against this view. He thinks that a duty could be minor and a selfish interest could be deep. It is ridiculous to contend that we should always act on duty (Searle 2001: 122).

IV. Defence of Kant

In this section I will defend Kant's accounts on motivation of reason as well as his conception of duty and freedom. I will show that some of Searle's criticisms are not justified. By doing so, I will also show the similarities and differences between their theories.

A. as to the Motivation of Reason

I think Searle simply misunderstood Kant when he says that Kant needs the feeling of pleasure as the motive for dutiful actions. In the sentence Searle quoted, Kant says that for a sensibly affected rational being to will an 'ought' produced by reason alone, 'it is admittedly required that his reason have the capacity to *induce a feeling of pleasure* or of delight in the fulfilment of duty'. It seems that Kant takes the feeling of pleasure as the motive for dutiful actions. Searle read this sentence in this way. But this is not the correct interpretation. According to the context of the text, here Kant tries to show that it is impossible to explain why the human being can take an interest in moral law from the empirical or psychological perspective. He admits that for us sensibly affected rational beings, a feeling of pleasure in the fulfilment of duty is special and important kind of feeling. However, this feeling is does not derive from our empirical interest of the moral law. Kant goes on saying that

it is not because the law interests us that it has validity for us (for that is heteronomy and dependent of practical reason upon sensibility, namely upon a feeling lying at its basis, in which case it could never be morally lawgiving); instead, the law interests because it is valid for us as human beings. (4: 460-461)

It is obvious that for Kant, in the fulfilment of duty we may have a feeling of delight. This means that our performing of dutiful actions can be accompanied by a feeling of satisfaction. However, this does not mean that we have to be motivated by the feeling of pleasure to fulfil our duty. Kant's position is just the opposite

Kant emphasises in many places in his *Groundwork* and the *Second Critique* that we can never explain the origin of the motivational force of the moral law by anything other than the law *per se*. Given what we have already seen, Kant insists that pure practical reason alone can motivate. This is the most essential claim in Kant's moral theory. Hence, as Paton points out, Kant is not concerned with other psychological accounts of the motivation of the categorical imperative. 'We are not asking how a categorical imperative can manifest itself in action by giving rise to some emotion which can act as a motive' (Paton 1971: 205). Searle claims that on Kant's view, we cannot act on desire-independent reasons unless we are motivated by a feeling of pleasure. This is a wrong interpretation of Kant.

My previous discussion of Kant's theory shows that he maintains that we can act in accordance with the law which is independent of any desires. So both Kant and Searle affirm that we can act on desire-independent reasons. Actually their theories are similar in this aspect. First of all, they regard the capacity to act on the desire-independent reasons as the hallmark of human beings. Animals can be driven by desires, human beings, too. If we only act on the desire-dependent reasons, for Searle, we are very clever chimpanzees except that we have more complicated desires and we develop more sophisticated methods to achieve our ends. Both Kant and Searle do not agree that we are clever chimpanzees. They claim that human reason is at least in one aspect different from chimpanzee reason. Searle asserts very clearly that the 'great gulf between humans and chimpanzees, as far as practical reason is concerned, is that we have the capacity to create, to recognise, and to act on desire-independent reasons for action' (Searle 2001: 124). Kant's moral theory expresses the similar thoughts. He says

that '[w]ill is a kind of causality of living beings insofar as they are rational, and freedom would be that property of such causality that it can be efficient independently of alien causes determining it' (Kant 1996: 94, 4:446). For Kant, our practical reason lies mainly in the capacity that we can subordinate our will to the desire-independent universal moral law. Having this capacity qualifies humans as rational beings.

Moreover, concerning the creation of the desire-independent reasons, Kant and Searle share similar spirits. Kant regards the moral law as the fundamental law underlying our deliberation of actions. For him, the fundamental law is not a mysterious or unconceivable thing. Rather, it is the most basic law underlying our reflections of daily deeds. Before performing an action, we ask ourselves 'should I do it'? Kant thinks that this kind of deliberation should be common and shared by all human beings who have reason. Likewise, Searle's theory of the creation of desire-independent reasons also shows a common or fundamental sense. He argues that anyone who has the ability to perform speech act has the potential for creating desire-independent reasons. This kind of potential is rooted in our ability to use language. As long as we speak, we create desire-independent reasons for ourselves. Therefore, the ability to create desire-independent reasons is shared by all rational beings who use language.

Finally, when it comes to acting on desire-independent reasons, both Kant and Searle do not appeal to conventional moral principles. They argue that once we recognise the moral law or a desire-independent reason, we immediately derive a willingness or a desire to act on that reason. Therefore we do not need the mediation of extra moral rules. From here, both of their accounts on desire-independent reasons demand

a sense of immediacy.

B. as to the First-order Desires and Duty

Let us start with considering the so-called heavy-duty metaphysics which claims that in a case of selfish interests versus duty, we should always act on duty, otherwise the action could be immoral (Searle 2001: 122). Searle claims that Kant holds such heavy-duty metaphysics. This is a strong claim. I think some things should be considered more carefully. If Kant really holds that we should always act on duty, then Kant's moral theory would not allow the freedom to reject the command of the categorical imperative. But given what we have seen, Kant does not make such an assertion. On the contrary, Kant takes it as a common situation that we often make a choice between acting on duty and acting on the subjective maxim based on personal interests. To see things clearer, let us go back to the example of that person being threatened with execution should he not give false testimony against an honest man. There Kant claims that facing an immoral demand, that person 'would consider it possible to overcome his love of life', and he 'would perhaps not venture to assert whether he would do it or not, but he must admit without hesitation that it would be possible for him'. Kant's description shows that that person has options. Kant's point is that the person must be aware of what he ought to do, rather than reject the immoral demand and sacrifice his life. It is true that the consciousness of the practical law implies the subordination of the will to the law. To subordinate my will to the law means to let my will be determined by the law, that is, to act for the sake of duty. Kant does believe that the moral law has a causal power over our will once we recognise it. But here we should make a distinction

between ‘the will under the moral law’ and ‘the will necessarily obeying the moral law’ (Paton 1971: 213). Kant focuses on the former rather than the latter. He does not expect us to always act according to the law.

Moreover, Kant does insist that an action has moral worth only if it is done for the sake of duty. But this does not imply that in a case where selfish interests are competing duty, duty should always triumph. In *Groundwork* section I Kant discusses actions that have different types of motives. According to his description, we can imagine one person who did something good to satisfy her personal desires. For example, one might be honest because one cares about good reputation very much. In this case, that person’s action is in conformity with duty (being honest). However, this action is not done from duty because it is based on an immediate inclination for earning a reputation as an honest person. Kant claims that such actions are ‘honourable, deserves praise and encouragement but not esteem’ because they have no true moral value (Kant 1996: 53, 4: 398). Indeed, Kant affirms that moral worth of an action can only come from duty. However, he does not express the thought that acting on duty is our only option, let alone that acting on selfish interests is always blameworthy.

Actually, Kant does not suggest that we should always exclude any inclinations and pleasure from our moral actions. And he does not deny the moral worth of an action that happens to be accompanied by desires (Paton 1971: 47-50). Although Kant demands that duty should be the determining factor if an action is a moral one, he does not ignore the fact that the motive of an action can be complicated. We should not oversimplify Kant’s theory as if the whole story is nothing but a battle between duty and desire and duty should always win.

Kant ascribes moral value only to actions done for the sake of duty because he believes that in obeying the moral commands, we are transformed to transcendental freedom. As mentioned before, the moral law is given by our own reason. Therefore, we are free so far as we act in accordance with the law instead of being driven by desires. As Paton explains, 'in obeying law for its own sake a good man is raised above the stream of events which we called nature: he is no longer at the mercy of his own natural instincts and desires' (Paton 1971: 77). This is why Kant connects the notion of duty deeply with the notion of freedom. He believes that acting for the sake of duty is the only way for us to prove that those rational moral actions are not in the end 'chemical things' subject to natural laws. In this sense Kant thinks that we should at least take 'acting for the sake of duty' as our duty and strive for it. So, if Kant raises duty above desires, this is based on his belief of freedom, the property we should presuppose for our will. There is thus a profound reason for Kant's veneration of duty. We miss the point if we simply take Kant's account of duty as the so-called heavy-duty metaphysics which claims that duty should always win.

Let us now consider Searle's criticism concerning first-order impulses. To begin with, we have to figure out what are the first-order impulses Searle has in mind. An impulse is a sudden strong craving for (doing) something. For example, a craving for chocolate. I can be driven by the craving for chocolate and eat a piece of it. In this situation, I just do it without a reflection on why I do it. Searle will not claim that I acted freely on first-order impulse in this sense because according to him, a free action must be based on a reason which is known by the agent. Searle makes a clear distinction between causes and reasons (Searle 2001: 107-108). He asserts that causes are typically events. If I am driven to eat

a piece of chocolate without any known reasons, that impulse to eat chocolate should be regarded as a physiological or psychological event which causally determined my action.

Searle says that we can freely act on a first-order impulse. If this is so, the impulse must occur to us as a reason. According to Searle, a reason is a factitive entity with a propositional structure (Searle 2001: 103). For the craving for chocolate to be a reason for my action, first I should be aware of a fact that I want to eat chocolate. Then, from this recognition, I form a reason for myself with a propositional structure, i.e., 'I have a craving for chocolate'. In this case, the first-order impulse is nothing else than a desire-dependent reason. Does Kant reject the idea that we can freely act on a desire-dependent reason? Not exactly. It depends on what kind of freedom we want to focus on.

I have briefly talked about Kant's notion of freedom. He makes a distinction between negative and positive sense of freedom. In *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant says that

[t]hat choice which can be determined by *pure reason* is called free choice. That which can be determined only by *inclination* (sensible impulse. *stimulus*) would be animal choice (*arbitrium brutum*). Human choice, however, is a choice that can indeed be affected but not determined by impulses.¹¹ [...] Freedom of choice is this independence from being determined by sensible impulses; this is the

¹¹ About the distinction between animal and human choice, see Kant's 1st *Critique*, A534/B562.

negative concept of freedom. The positive concept of freedom is that of the ability of pure reason to be of itself practical (Kant 1996: 375, 6: 214)

In *Groundwork* we can also find Kant's distinction between positive and negative sense of freedom. There he gives freedom a definition but takes it to be negative:

[w]ill is a kind of causality of living beings insofar as they are rational, and *freedom* would be that property of such causality that it can be efficient independently of alien causes *determining* it. [...] The preceding definition of freedom is *negative* and therefore unfruitful for insight into its essence (4:446)

The two quotations clearly show that Kant, despite of not being satisfied with the negative sense of freedom, admits that I have freedom in the sense that I could have done otherwise. I can freely act on a desire-dependent reason such as 'I have craving for chocolate', if I am not determined by that inclination.

What we should consider, then, is that why Kant insists that as a free agent, I should be able to act according to the moral law which is *independent* of sensuous impulses. If we focus on the positive sense of freedom (the ability of pure reason to be of itself practical), we will find that Kant, as Searle claims, rejects the idea that free actions can be grounded in desire-dependent reasons. He maintains that our free will should have the feature of absolute spontaneity. This means that a free will determines itself; its determining ground of actions should be on its own rather than on factors external to itself. In this regard, one might

argue that the craving for chocolate is *my* desire. However, if I inquire the origin of my craving for chocolate, I can only trace it back to some physiological or psychological causes that are unknown to me. This is way Kant calls the sensuous impulses or desires alien causes. They are parts of a series of events happening according to the natural order, and among them, every event is conditioned by the previous event. In this sense, Kant thinks that I am not justified in saying that the present craving for chocolate is *my* desire. This is the reason why he is not satisfied with the negative sense of freedom.

From here we can see the significant difference between Searle's and Kant's notion of freedom. For Searle, freedom is based on the alternative possibilities. The reasons can never fully determine my actions because I have options. As Searle says, the experience of free actions always contains within it the possibilities of performing other actions (Searle 2001: 233). Having a choice is the essential feature of our freedom of will. However, for Kant, things are different. Remember that, in Kant's view, if a man acts according to a priori moral laws, then his action is free even though there is no possibility for him that he could have done otherwise. This shows that it is the *source* of reasons rather than the choices between them that is at issue in his theory of freedom. This is why Kant emphasises the 'determining ground' of a free will. I can decide to respond or to ignore the craving for chocolate. But either way, I am not truly free because strictly speaking, I am not the author of the impulse to have some chocolate. Thus the impulse is not a proper determining ground for an autonomous action.

In addition, in Kant's moral theory, being free and acting according to the moral law are reciprocal. Duty and freedom are interwoven notions.

If we cannot justify that we have moral actions, we cannot justify that we have freedom, and vice versa. But for Searle the thing is different. His notion of freedom is much wider than Kant's. Above all, acting on desire-independent reasons is neither an only nor a necessary condition for the manifestation of free will. We can freely act on desire-dependent reasons for action. Searle claims that freedom and rationality imply each other, and rationality in deliberation about action is a matter of weighing up conflicting desires and finding ways to satisfy motivators (Searle 2001: 118, 132). The motivators can be either desire-independent or desire-dependent. This shows that duty, i.e. actions on desire-independent reasons, and freedom are somewhat separate notions from each other, although Searle ascribes more significance to desire-independent reasons concerning practical reason.

V. Discussion

Kant asserts that there is no explanation of why moral law interests us. But in order to explain that we do have moral actions, he appeals to the noumenal feature of agency, i.e., the intellectual causality of freedom. However, this explanation gives rise to seemingly unsolvable problems. Many commentators think that it is absurd to hold this two-world theory, especially when the noumenal world cannot be the object of our sensibility. We cannot imagine what it means that there exists a world 'outside' the world we are experiencing now. Responding to this kind of criticism, Wood indicates that the intellectual world is not 'real' in the metaphysical sense. It is not ontologically another world (Wood 1984, 74-75). Even though, it is not easy to understand how two totally different kinds of causality could coexist. Wood admits that there is no positive

demonstration of this theory. It is beyond our capacity to comprehend the noumenal realm (Wood 2008: 137-138). Paton also tries to defend the possibility of two coexisting causalities. His main argument is that we *must* presuppose freedom. We must think and act *as if* we were free; we must conceive ourselves as members of a non-sensible world (Paton 1971: 219, 272). But this explanation still leaves the conception of noumenal freedom unexplained. Paton points out that we cannot consider it to be in any sense real. It exists rather in the method of abstraction: ‘what should be noted is that the concept of a noumenon is attained by making complete abstraction from our sensuous intuitions under the form of time and space’. And ‘[w]hen we abstract from the temporal reference in the category of cause, we are left with the concept of *causa noumenon*’ (Paton 1971: 269-270). I think Paton’s solution does not help much. The main problem is that we still know nothing about what would be left after the abstraction. As Wenzel points out, ‘Kant talks about the good will and causality of will. But in the end, even Kant has little to say about the will understood as cause, because as free will it must be noumenal and not much can be said about the noumenal self’ (Wenzel 2016: 51). Since duty and freedom are interwoven notions for Kant, it is hard to justify the motivational force of duty if the conception of freedom remains unexplained. Kant might give a coherent theory on the relation between freedom and morality, but it is unclear that his theory really captures the way things are.

Searle does not have these problems. He does not make a distinction between empirical and pure practical reason, between natural and intellectual causality, or between phenomenal and noumenal world. Kant has a hard time in explaining why we take an interest in the moral law. For Searle, why we take an interest in acting on desire-independent

reasons seems to be no problem at all. As mentioned before, he gives a straightforward answer to this question: the recognition of a desire-independent reason derives a secondary desire to act on it. To recognise a valid reason for doing something is already to recognise a reason for wanting to do it. Searle is confident in this explanation of the motivation of desire-independent reasons, and he reiterates it in many places in his *Rationality in Action*.

However, a close examination reveals some problems of Searle's explanation. First of all, Searle seems to think that there is no gap between the recognition of a reason for performing an action and the desire to perform that action. According to him, 'I know what I should do' precisely means that I know what I want to do. But how can an 'ought' give rise to a 'desire'? We learn from our daily experience that Searle's explanation does not capture the way things are. For example, I find I feel unwell because of the lack of sleep. I am aware of the fact that my body need more sleep. I also know that I should go to bed earlier and I accept it as a valid reason for me because I know that this is good for my health. But at the same time I do not want to go to bed earlier because I enjoy the quiet hours at the deep night very much. Or I have a kind of disease. I know it, and I also know that I should take some medicines to control my disease. In spite of recognising it as a valid reason, I can feel a resistance to do it because I have no desire to take any medicines. We often experience conflicts between what I ought to do and what I want to do. How could Searle explain this if, as he maintains, there is no gap between our recognising a valid reason and our wanting to do it? I think it is not convincing that the recognition of an 'ought' will necessary motive a secondary desire to perform that action.

This is not the only problem. The most serious one is how we properly explain the motivation of reasons within the framework of Searle's theory of freedom. Suppose I recognise a reason A as a valid reason and thus derive a desire to act on A. And suppose I also recognise reasons B, C, D as valid reasons and thus derive desires to act on them. Now, according to Searle's notion of free will, I have choices between those reasons. For example, while I am thinking of acting on A, there is an alternative possibility for me to act on B, C, or D. Given this, what explains my decision of acting on A? What explains why I decided to act on this reason rather than other ones that also have motivating power?

Searle is fully aware of this problem. He points out that many philosophers, including Nagel, argue that if we accept the gap, namely, there are no sufficient causal relations between the reason and the action, we lack the proper explanation of an action. So the performance of free actions seems to be random. As Nagel has argued, we cannot explain 'why I did what I did rather than the alternative that was causally open to me' (Searle 2001: 81).¹² Searle's response to Nagel's worry is that Nagel, as well as many other philosophers, blurs the distinction between the cause of an event and the reason of an action. His defence is what follows. Suppose someone says that 'I raised my arm because I wanted to vote for the motion'. In order to explain the action, we have to ask 'why did you

¹² Searle's quotation is from Nagel *The View from Nowhere*, p. 116. There Nagel says that 'an autonomous intentional explanation cannot explain precisely what it is supposed to explain, namely *why I did what I did rather than the alternative that was causally open to me*. It says I did it for certain reasons, but does not explain why I didn't decide not to do it for other reasons. [...] it does not explain why this rather than another equally possible and comparably intelligible action was done.'

do it' rather than 'why did it happen' (Searle 2001: 85). This means that we have to accept the gap between the reason and the action. We should not apply the natural causal relation of events to this action. So when we ask 'why did you do that', we are not asking what causes determined your action. Rather, we are asking what reason you acted on. Moreover, we have to always look at this action from the first-person point of view. I acted on this reason because *I* made the reason for performing that action effective. It is me who made the decision. For Searle, I want to vote the motion is exactly the proper explanation for why I raised my arm.

According to Searle's defence, for Nagel's question 'why I did what I did', the answer is just that 'I did what I did for a reason, and I chose to make that reason effective'. Does this answer Nagel's worry? Actually no. Lucas maintains that

[i]f men have free will, then no complete explanation of their actions can be given, except by reference to themselves. We can give their reasons. But we cannot explain why their reasons were reasons for them. [...] Ask why I acted, I give my reasons; asked why I chose to accept them as reason, I can only say 'I just did' . (Lucas 1970: 171-172)

This is very similar to Searle's stance. Searle admits that giving a reason does not answer why I acted on it rather than other possible reasons. So he has no better way to respond to Nagel's worry. However, to save himself from this difficulty, Searle indicates that 'why did you do it' and 'why was that reason adequate for you' are two different questions. For the former one, the explanation 'has to come to an end somewhere' (Searle 2001: 86). And that very end is the *self*, that is to say, I did it because *I* did it.

However, there is a problem with Searle's reply. Just as he argues, by asking 'why did you do it', we are asking for a reason. But the reason I gave is not irrelevant to the adequacy of that reason. Suppose I say that 'I ate a lot of chocolate because I want to lose some weight.' A reason is given, indeed, but we probably will not think that it is a reason for a rational free action because the reason sounds not adequate. Sometimes when we ask 'why did you act on this reason', what we want to know is just 'why did you think that this reason is adequate', or 'why did you choose to make it effective.' The statement that 'I acted on it because I decided to act on it' does not really answer the question.

There might be another way to defend Searle's position. In terms of his account on the rationality in decision making, we could explain why I did this rather than the other actions. Remember that for Searle, rationality in decision making is involved in the appraisal of the weight of my motivators. I have shown this in the discussion of his party case. He maintains that a duty could be minor and a selfish interest could be deep. It is ridiculous to contend that we should always act on duty. Motivators are not all on the same level, as Searle claims. In that case, I chose not to go to the party because some factors made my promise to go to the party less important for me. For instance, I will lose a business deal if I go to the party, but on the other side, my absence from the party will not harm anyone or lead to bad consequences. By considering all these relevant factors, I decided not go to the party. So now it seems that Searle is able to answer Nagel's question. I did not go to the party because some relevant factors made my reason for 'not go to the party' more adequate or more attractive for me than other reasons.

This way of explanation is totally compatible with Searle's theory.

He says that we never act on an isolate motivator, because every motivator is related to other factors such as beliefs, desires, or facts in the world (Searle 2001: 115). If I am now considering to fulfil an obligation, say, a promise to give your money back, this desire-independent reason for action is part of a total reason which is constituted by at least one motivator (keep my promise) and other relevant factors. According to Searle's discussion of the party case, it then appears that these relevant factors explained why I did what I did. Unfortunately, this kind of explanation create new problems.

Suppose I promised to give your money back, and I give you the money back rather than not because some factors in the total reason reinforced my motivation to do it. For example, I decided to give you the money back because I believe that if I do not do it, I will lose you as a friend. I do not want to lose our friendship, therefore I decided to keep my promise. Or I decided to give you the money back because I am aware of the fact that you need it for an urgent medical treatment for your disease. I do not want you die. So I returned the money to you. Or I decided to give you the money back because I have a side desire to be a trustworthy person. In all the cases, I explained why I chose to keep my promise. Nevertheless, I get into difficulties by giving these explanations.

Firstly, it is hard to delimit the role these factors play in my decision making. Are they reasons which motivate me to keep my promise, or are they reasons I actually acted on independently of the promise? If they are the former, then Searle's theory of the motivation of desire-independent reasons will be damaged. He argues that the source of the motivational force of an obligation is that it is freely created by me. Only two elements are relevant. One is the freedom of my will, and the other is the

world-to-mind direction of fit of that commitment. The recognition of these two elements derives a desire for acting on that reason. And it is crucial that the secondary desire is based on reason, not the opposite way. Now if we accept that there are still other factors such as beliefs, desires, or facts that can become the source of the motivational force of my desire-independent reasons, then how could I make sure that my desire for performing the action is really based on reason rather than on other deeper desires? Consequently, this kind of explanation encounters the same problem as Kant's.¹³ Ideally the motivational force of moral actions is nothing but acting for the sake of duty. But empirically we can never know whether some self-interests are mingled in our motives. If Searle allows that the motivational force of a desire-independent reason can come from other factors, then despite a good theory of the creation of desire-independent reasons, Searle will have problems with the argument that we can also act on them.

On the other hand, if those factors are themselves the reasons which I acted on, then besides the problem I just mentioned, there is a further difficulty. I can state that I decided to return your money because I know you need the money. In this way, my keeping promise became a surface reason and your need of the money became the main reason for me to return you the money. Furthermore, since we have options, and as Searle puts it, at every choice point there are still infinitively many other

¹³ Kant admits that 'it is absolutely impossible by means of experience to make out with complete certainty a single case in which the maxim of an action otherwise in conformity with duty rested simply on moral grounds and on the representation of one's duty'. We can never be sure whether our will is determined by covert impulse or self-love. See: Kant 1996: 61, 4: 407.

possibilities opening to me (Searle 2001: 233), meeting your need was not my only choice. This draws our attention to the initial question: why did you choose to meet her needs rather than not? To answer this question, I can offer another reason to explain it, but as we shall expect, this leads to the infinite regress. No matter how many reasons I gave, one can still ask why you chose to act on this reason rather than on other possible ones. From here we can understand why Searle argues that the explanation of the actions should come to an end somewhere. But unfortunately, if we want an explanation of a free action, there is no such an end. Searle thinks that the end is the free agency. However, if he wants to explain a free, rational action within his theory of freedom, than 'why did you do it' becomes a question that is never avoidable.

Our discussion has shown that Searle's account on motivation of desire-independent theory has many problems. His theory cannot explain why an 'ought' can derive a desire to perform it. In addition, his theory is unclear in the aspect of the source of motivational force of desire-independent reasons. From the side of the creation of the obligations, Searle insists that the recognition of our free will and the direction of fit of the obligation is enough to motivate us to fulfil the obligation. However, from the side of the account on rationality involved in decision making, Searle allows other sources of motivation. As I have shown, I could trace my desire-independent reason back to another desire. This damages his most important claim that we can act on desire-independent reasons. The fundamental problem of Searle's theory is that he cannot well explain the motivational force of desire-independent reasons within the framework of his account on freedom. If we try to explain 'why did you act on this reason' according to Searle's account on rationality, we are led into an infinite regress. It seems we have no choice

but accept Searle's assertion that there is an end for the explanation. The answer to the question 'why did you act in this reason' is just that 'I acted on it because I freely decided to act on it'. But this is far from a satisfactory answer. Finally, Searle argues that this answer is meaningful only under the first-person point of view. However, the inner experience that 'I am free' might not be guaranteed by the reality. For this problem, Searle also does not have a satisfactory solution. Remember that Searle thinks that the heavy-duty metaphysics is unreasonable. He thinks that Kant's notions of duty and freedom are absurd. But now it follows that concerning the relation between the motivational force of the desire-independent reasons and our acting on them, Searle's theory is no less problematic.

VI. Conclusion

Searle makes a remarkable contribution in the theory of the creation of desire-independent reasons. He shows that the ability to create commitments to the dutiful actions is shared by all human beings who can use language. As Kant's claim that 'I will my maxim to be valid for every rational individual' is the fundamental law underlying our deliberation of actions, so Searle's claim also has a fundamental sense. The creating of desire-independent reasons is not something peculiar; it just grounds in our daily using of language. But on the other hand, Searle's theory of the motivation of desire-independent reasons is in many aspects problematic. Is the theory of free will applicable to our deeds? How desire-independent reasons motivate? How do we properly explain their motivational force within the theory of free will? How do we explain a free, rational action? Have we ever done actions that are based on desire-independent reasons?

These questions were not foreign to Kant. Kant's moral theory is devoted to these issues. Searle is not satisfied with Kant's arguments, and thinks that he can provide us with a better theory. However, my discussion shows that he does not succeed. These problems still remain.

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康德和瑟爾論 非慾望理由之推動力

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摘要

關於行動理性，康德和瑟爾都宣稱，首先，人能夠基於非慾望之理由而行動，非慾望之理由具有行動的推動力。再者，人有自由意志，並且自由意志是非慾望理由之推動力的必要因素。然而康德和瑟爾對自由意志的看法相當不同，這使得他們在自由意志與非慾望理由或責任之推動力的關係方面，發展出不同的理論。瑟爾在其《行動理性》一書中比較他和康德對責任以及從事義務行為之動機的說明。他指出，他的行動理性理論能夠避免康德理論中幾個重大缺失，並且更為可信。本文首先討論康德和瑟爾對非慾望理由之構成以及其推動力之解釋。其後檢視瑟爾對康德的批評。接著本文替康德理論作出可能的辯護，指出瑟爾和康德在自由意志方面不同的詮釋。最後，在瑟爾的自由意志理論架構下，本文討論其理論之困難，並指出瑟爾在基於非慾望理由而行動之理論方面，並未成功提出比康德理論更為可信的觀點。

關鍵詞：康德、瑟爾、非慾望之理由、自由意志、責任、推動力