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Is moral responsibility the 'skill' we need to learn in order to maximise the value of nature?

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Abstract

Public policy in the UK regarding nature protection is currently based on 'monetising' nature – regarding it as a form of capital. Likewise, individuals are not informed, but incentivised to act pro-environmentally via a series of price signals that encourage them to modify their behaviour. This paper proposes a methodological innovation that explores an alternative form of motivation for pro-environmental behaviour: moral motivation. We are interested to test the capacity of morality to be an 'information skill'. If we think of morality as a skill that can be trained and learned, then we will have a starting framework for moral education. In order to develop this framework, we argue that we need to adopt an externalist position in moral theory. To that end we will develop the notion of a 'shared morality', or a form of considered 'common sense', which has the potential to inform and motivate individuals morally, irrespective of any particular normative theory they happen to have and, hence, to maximise the impact needed for environmental protection. In the cultivation of moral behaviour, we will take advantage of the practical character of moral judgments, because they imply a strong belief, which can only be ignored at the cost of cognitive dissonance, and also of the possibility of using factors external to moral judgements to generate sufficient motivation for action. In conclusion, we hope that this exercise in applied moral theory will offer activists and policy makers alike grounds for an alternative teaching pedagogy to encouraging information sharing and pro-environmental behaviour.

Uncovering the meanings of human action.

Predictive social sciences have taken upon themselves the task of uncovering the meanings of human actions in order to help scientists gain the necessary knowledge that might guarantee people's future wellbeing. No strong laws were yet found, and social researchers are in need of a more efficient methodology for the understanding human behaviour.

Researchers argue that the human being, a 'fiercely complicated system' (Rosenberg 2008 : 7), is unpredictable and, due to his personal experience, suffers constant changes of character and personality. People seem to be influenced by many internal and external factors that motivate them to act and react differently to similar situations.

We emphasize the fact that social scientists are interested to interpret the nature of actions and not to observe the physical processes of the human body. For this reason, they are eager to analyse the way human beings act in different contexts and understand what the factors that influence their actions are.

To illustrate how agent's reasons change and adapt to personal contexts, I will provide the following example:

1. Johannes is German and has learned to be very respectful of the environment therefore; *he recycles*.

2. Johannes is visiting a foreign country for two weeks. He observes that foreigners don't recycle and don't have recycling bins therefore; *he decides not to recycle*.

In the first situation, Johaness finds the reason, desire and motivation to recycle. But in the second case, it is difficult for Johannes to access the same reasons to recycle in the foreign country therefore; he does not have the desire and motivation to recycle.

In order to be able to talk about environmental behaviour, we will ascribe mental states to human beings that will help us explain the factors that influence a person to take action. We will analyse and interpret people's inclination to act similarly in common situations and the links that exist between human mental states.

I will call reasons, the human mental states of connecting facts to personal knowledge, emotions and context. A reason is the result of a person thinking about her attitudes in relation to the exterior world. Theories of motivation try to reveal the reasons that influence people to take action. Through the process of reasoning, people are taking into consideration their personal situation in relation to the specific context in which they find themselves.

We can think of many situations when the person decides to act contrary to her reasons: she finds that the costs of taking an action are higher than she expects and consequently, she decides not to act, or maybe there are too many detrimental implications in doing it, or the person does not find enough resources to take action, etc. From Max Weber's point of view, every person takes action on the basis of the meaningful understanding of the world that surrounds her (Weber 1949). Therefore, he believes that the human behaviour investigation has to start from the concept of meaning that creates motivation for action.

Weber's influence on this enquiry is to try to perfect our argumentation in order to create methods that can help us understand better why a person acts in a specific way, and not to come up with a generalization that will expand further the horizons of our predictions. Consequently, I argue for a particularized interpretation of human behaviour because every person has personal beliefs and motivational factors, the power to determinate her own environment and

specific past experiences, which influence her to take specific actions. In addition, it is necessary to be as flexible as we can in our argumentation and accept our incapacity to predict human actions in order to discover new ways of improving our interpretation of human behaviour.

At this point, my contention is that there is an important discussion in the environmental ethics field that does not receive enough attention: the cultivation of humans' moral motivation. In the context of environmental action and sustainability, social scientists seem not to consider the positive implications (improving self-esteem, emotional well-being, respect by/of others, problem solving) of adopting a moral behaviour (Bell and Dobson 2006 : 2). If we are interested in finding ways of adopting a pro-environmental behaviour and stopping the harmful consequences of unsustainable actions we must take into consideration discussing the moral motivation concept and how this factor/disposition can influence positively our environmental attitudes.

The process of human action

When talking about the concept of human motivation, we will refer to the externalist argument, which states that besides beliefs, and moral judgements that motivate us to act, human behaviour is also influenced by external factors. Hence, in our daily life we can be exposed to external factors that might stop us from acting in accordance to our morality. Therefore, a person will be ready to take action if she finds her motivation in a set of beliefs that is based on moral judgements.

Jonathan Dancy's 'pure' cognitive theory recognizes the motivational power of morality that is represented in a set of moral reasons that motivates us to act morally, without the need of an additional desire. However, he admits the untypical tendency of humans to act against their moral judgements and states that his theory covers the situations when people cannot follow their moral reasons.

Fuhermore, we must define two perspectives that exist in the philosophical literature of theory of motivation. Motivational internalism/externalism in moral theory can be defined in various ways; a standard way of looking at the distinction is that internalists think that moral judgement is a sufficient incentive to motivate a person to act in accordance with her judgement. Some externalists deny that moral judgement on its own is a sufficient incentive for taking moral action, others might accept that it can be a sufficient incentive (but it is not always), and other additional alternative positions exist (Frankena 1976, 49-52).

Whether one is an internalist or externalist does not imply that a particular normative theory is excluded - whether consequentialism, virtue ethics or deontology. But, if one wants to

look at moral judgement as a possible motivation for action, then one 'cannot' be an externalist in the standard definition above - one needs to be either an internalist (as in the standard definition above) or an externalist who believes that moral judgement has some motivational role (even if moral judgement is not sufficient to motivate one to act). This latter position is the one that I take in my research on cultivation of moral motivation.

Since my focus is on moral motivation, the externalist position that allows for a significant role for moral motivation is relevant for this argumentation, because it allows for this role. Still, the claim that motivation has such a role is specific for internalism; so, our externalist position that is relevant for the thesis is relevant because of the internalist component.

Now, I will provide a step-by-step guide and explain how I decided to take this specific approach in the present paper.

Dancy argues that 'cognitivists hold that moral judgements express beliefs, and internalists hold that moral judgements necessarily motivate' (Dancy 1993 : 7). Hence, internalism states that there is a *prima facie motivation* (Dancy 1993 : 1) that influences a person to act morally; therefore, moral reasons are the ones that determine human actions. Accordingly, David Hume's theory of motivation affirms that a person will take action only if she can find a reason that will provide her with the motivation to act. As a result, a person will reach a motivational state by addressing her beliefs and desires.

Consequently, we need to discuss the internalist and externalist positions in order to emphasise the connection between moral judgements and the motivation factors when referring to human actions. Internalism argues moral judgements necessarily motivate and human beings will take a rational action depending on the existence of these mental states. Humean beliefs are the products of the influences the world has upon us, and therefore they are contingent. Beliefs can also motivate but in the presence of a designated desire by acquiring its motivational capacity.

Hume talks about human action as being motivated by our beliefs and desires, which are mental states that influence us to act. In order to say that a belief motivates, we assume that the agent has the disposition to be motivated. Dancy explains the roles of Humean beliefs, here:

'Beliefs are supposed to fit the world; they have the mind-to-world direction of fit.'(Dancy 1993 : 3)

However, Hume's desire has a well-defined role to essentially and internally motivate a person to take action. In our case, the correspondents of Humean desire are exterior and interior motivational factors that are seen as the main influence that motivates people to act. These factors determine our behaviour and influence our decisions.

On the contrary, Dancy emphasizes that beliefs are the ones that motivate. He states that it is not the action of believing that motivates the person, but her personal reason that she believes

is true. Our motivating beliefs are developed on the basis of our experiences and specific factors that influence our way of living. As a result, our beliefs either true or false will motivate us to act in the sense of realizing our objectives. However, Dancy agrees with Hume when it comes to the concept of belief, which is inactive and argues that we have to analyse its determinants in order to find out the origin of human motivation.

Dancy's externalist argumentation states that desires can motivate in some cases the person to take action, but at the same time, may not have enough force to influence a person to react in conformity with her beliefs or moral judgments because of her weakness of will. A person who manifests weaknesses of will is able to share the same beliefs with a moral or active person, but doesn't find the motivation to act. Dancy's account of moral behaviour is that it can happen for a person to be determined by enough motivational factors to take action, but other times she may not.

Let us consider Dancy's process of intentional action in order to interpret the main representations that take place in a person's mind:

Figure 1.
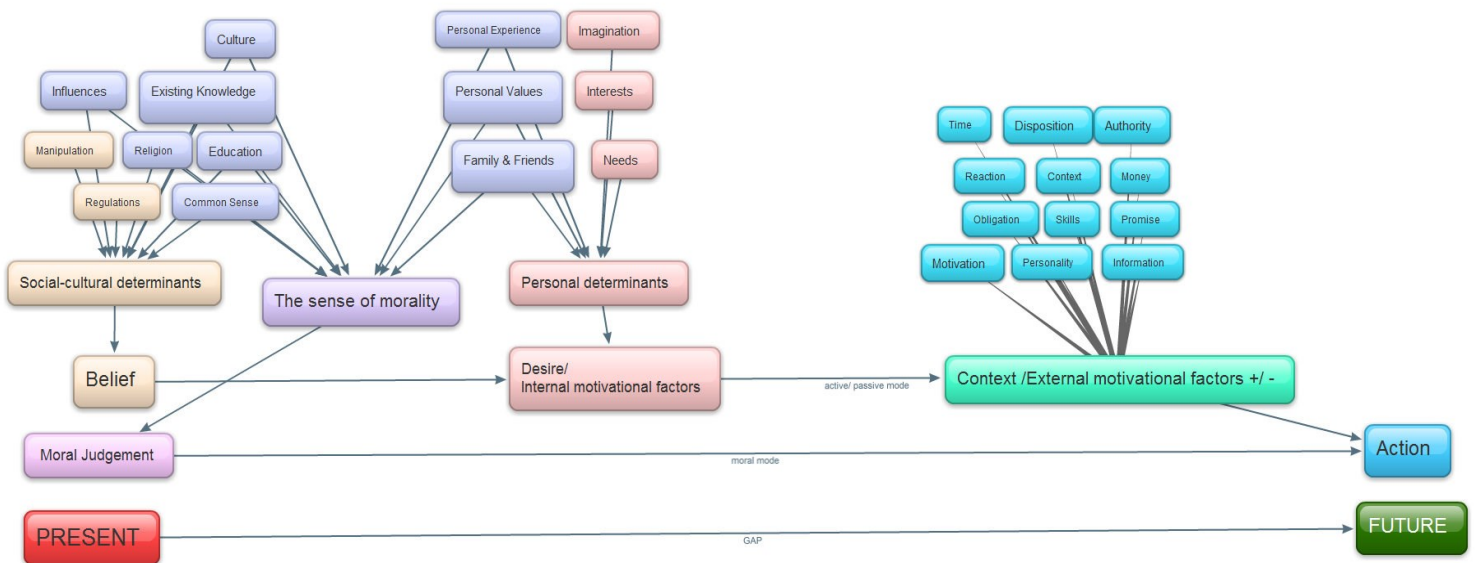
At first, we analyse the image of the present as we understand it and, secondly, we create a representation of the future time as we think it will look like after we obtain the results of our action. A person needs these two representations of present and future time, in order to choose her optimal circumstances in which she decides to take action. Moreover, this process of representation will help her understand her standing in relation to the world and the future steps that she has to take in achieving her objectives.

In the context of an intentional action, we will find a *gap* between a present representation that describes the world as it is and the future representation that shows us how the context will be influenced by our action. In this paper, I am arguing that this gap is meant to be filled by the internal and external motivational factors that influence the person to be in a moral, active or passive mode. In particular, I am interested to discover the motivational factors that can, in the majority of cases lead to moral action towards environmental protection.

Dancy's representations of present and future time will help us find a simpler way of explaining the process of human action. Therefore, in a specific context, the action will represent the transition of a person from the present time into the future. In this transition the person might act in a specific way or not act at all, but, regardless of her choices, she will still find herself into the future.[1] In this transition the person can enter an active mode or a passive mode. The **active mode** is defined by a person's choice to take action – the person is concerned to change her present representations of the world, being ready to suffer or enjoy the consequences of her actions. In addition to this, an active mode is positively influenced by internal and external motivational factors that make that specific action happen. On the other hand, **a passive mode** is characterized by negative motivational factors that stop a person from acting. Even if the person will decide not to act, we will consider her inaction a way of moving from the present into the future time.

The internal and external motivational factors that influence human action can be positive or negative depending on human beliefs, moral judgements and contexts. We can happen to be motivated by money to take a specific action, but the next day money might not be enough to motivate us to act in another situation. Therefore, these motivational factors are responsible for the practical representation of our beliefs and moral judgments.

A person who follows her moral judgment will take into consideration the standard of morality that dictates a common sense way of acting that guarantees favourable outcomes into the future. In this case, a moral judgment can be sufficient for our set of beliefs to motivate; this becomes a self-sufficient impulse for action.

Our beliefs and moral judgments describe the meanings and our understanding of the world. In order to avoid confusion, I state the difference between beliefs and moral judgments. These two concepts resemble each other: they describe facts and opinions that a person has about the world. The only difference is that moral judgments are determined by a moral sense that people acquire through their life. Moral judgments are more objective than simple beliefs

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[1.] This transition is independent from any human involvement. Human actions happen inside of time frames and it should be a matter of interest to act on personal beliefs and make them become a real representation of the world.

and can be shared by other persons who consider as common sense to pursuit the good and have a moral behaviour.

As shown in Figure 1[2], we have designed the process of human action that starts with a belief or moral judgment. Our beliefs are developed on the basis of social-cultural and personal determinants that influence us through life. When facing a situation, a human being will access a personal system of beliefs and will take into consideration what motivation she has to take action. Depending on the motivational power of the internal and external factors that relate to the context, the person will find herself in an active or passive mode. On the other hand, moral judgments concern our sense of morality, which depends on specific determinants that influence our views about the world. A moral judgment is capable of motivating moral behaviour without accessing any motivational factors in comparison to a daily action that will only take place being influenced by additional motivational factors (and this is the externalist claim). In the moral mode, a person will take action on the basis of her morality and the feeling that she follows a common sense way of action.

In this case, the Humean concept of desire seems to be too narrow to include all the motivational factors that influence people to act. Therefore, we will rethink this mental state and talk about internal and external motivational factors that influence active and passive modes. The active mode describes a state in which people find motivation to act according to their beliefs. On the other hand, the passive mode expresses lack of motivation due to a set of negative factors that stop the person from realizing their beliefs. These motivational factors that influence action are specific to each context in which a person finds herself.

We talk about people's motivation for action by referring to three human modes that seem to characterize human behaviour in particular situations:

- The **moral mode** describes the human mode which is motivated by a moral judgment.
  Moral judgement -> Moral Action

- The **active mode** is the mental state which provides motivation to the person to act in accordance with her beliefs and her future representation.
  Belief + Desire (internal motivational factors) + Contextual motivational factors -> Action.

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2. Figure 1 is a possible representation of the process of human action build upon the theories of social sciences, which discuss the mental states that influence and guide a person's behaviour. At present, I am still working to perfect this representation.

- The **passive mode** is the mental state which describes a person's weakness of will: she thinks it will be better to change her current context, but her lack of action contradicts her beliefs/ moral judgments. This situation happens due to one or more negative motivational factors that don't provide the person with the necessary motivation to take action.

Belief + No Desire (internal motivational factors) + No Contextual motivational factors -> No Action

We argue that human beliefs are mental states that make actions happen only when people find the right motivational factors that induce a human active behavioural mode. Therefore, we are keen on finding those positive motivational factors that can in the majority of cases lead to moral action and discovering ways of turning negative factors into positive factors that motivates people to act in particular contexts.

Why not think about morality as an instrument that can boost our motivation in order to take the 'right' actions and reduce our ecological footprint? If we are able to promote morality as an intrinsic factor that can influence positively our way of behaving, then we will have a framework for the education of moral responsible human beings.

Therefore, we agree on the existence of intrinsically motivating judgments that don't need additional factors to influence human behaviour because of their moral character, which motivates intrinsically. A moral judgment will not need to refer to motivational factors due to its vital importance and objective character. Hence, an intrinsically motivating judgment will be determined by common sense and it is easy to be recognized by the majority of people due to the general acceptance that this judgment is good in itself. In addition, we should mention that, although intrinsically motivating and, hence, offering some motivational force, moral judgements are not sufficient on their own to make action happen. The person needs to have the disposition to be motivated to take moral action.

In the cultivation of moral responsibility, we will take advantage of the practical character of moral judgments because they imply a strong belief that cannot be ignored and so, it forces us to act in any situation in accordance with our common sense. Once we have established that moral judgement is a reason for action, we can start thinking about ways of coming up with a system that will turn negative motivational factors into positive motivational factors. As a consequence, our research will define a line of argumentation for a practical methodology of educating people to act morally in the context of environmental protection.

Moral Mode					
Moral Judgement		+	+	+	+
Internal motivational factors	**Moral** desire (gets the world to fit them)	+	+	-	-
External motivational factors	Contextual motivation	+	-	-	+
Moral Action/ Result		+	+	+	+

Figure 2

In Figure 2, we consider moral judgments as intrinsically motivating beliefs that find their origin in a standard of morality. This type of judgment will dictate us every time to take the moral action that will bring positive outcomes into the future. A moral judgment is concerned with what a person ought to do and is connected to a sense of moral responsibility.

When talking about moral education, we will be interested to cultivate a sense of responsibility towards environmental issues using positive motivational factors that can influence a person to take a moral action. In order to make sure that people develop moral judgments and learn how to use their power of motivation, we will have to understand first how this type of mental states influences us. After that, we will have the knowledge to build proper contexts for people to learn how to be morally responsible.

In the context of intrinsically motivating judgments, we will also refer to the akratic behaviour. We argue that people cannot lack motivation to act morally and ignore to follow their moral judgments. Nevertheless, there are situations when a person acts contrary to her moral judgments, and we might find a possible explanation to her decision in Donald Davidson's account of akratic behaviour. He argues that a person that does not follow her moral judgments believes that she takes the best decision when following another course of action, but actually she has not considered all the implications that her actions have in the future and she is only aware of short-term possible results.

As a result, by analysing and understanding the motivational power of moral judgements we will gain the necessary knowledge to teach people how to become morally responsible and at the same time, help them discover internal and external motivation factors to protect the natural environment. In this way, people will be encouraged to follow their moral reasons that dictate them to take responsibility for their actions.

Drawing a comparison between John McDowell's and Thomas Nagel's theories of motivation and Dancy's 'pure' cognitive theory, we discover a type of desire that is not an effect

of a causal determination in the human action process, but an independent state. It is the product of a series of thoughts that fill the gap between the present and future representations. In the context of our research, we will "allow the possibility of a cognitive state being sufficient for action without supposing that wherever it occurs the action must follow" (Dancy 1993: 22).

At the same time, the 'values-action gap' also states that the cultivation and possession of values does not necessarily lead to appropriate action. Hence, values might be a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for the 'right' behavior.

It might be argued that one of the reasons why people harm the environment is the lack of environmental information and understanding of the unique role that every person plays in ecosystems (Dobson 1999). Human beings do not have any trained skill for translating environmental knowledge into specific actions and managing their natural resources in a responsible manner. As a result, people take less into account the consequences of their actions that do not guarantee a sustainable environment for present and future beings of this world.

The gap that my argumentation is intended to fill concerns the fact that cultivating moral responsibility towards nature is largely neglected when referring to human wellbeing (Booth 2009: 56). In our daily life, we do not receive specific information about how to be responsible global citizens, moreover there are not any guidelines available for this kind of pro-environmental behavior.

Consequently, I will discuss further a 'shared morality' that gives us the possibility to create a framework for people to talk about their intrinsic values and environmental issues specific to their community. Moreover, as part of my current research, I am proposing an educational strategy based on the 'shared morality' concept that will be tested in environmental ethics workshops and is meant to make a practical contribution to environmental protection.

A shared morality that people would take into consideration.

In everyday life people make appeal to common sense to understand and find plausible explanations for their actions. In this research, common sense is people's capacity to judge the character of the moral actions. Any person can train her common sense by gaining knowledge of and sharing common experiences with other people.

My research connects the concept of common sense with moral judgments because this has the potential to motivate individuals morally irrespective of the particular normative theory they adopt and, hence, to maximise the impact needed for environmental protection.

Therefore, we are interested to find out what common sense means for the majority of people, to observe human behaviour in environmental ethics workshops and to formulate the main principle of moral common sense that can help us motivate as many individuals as possible.

At present, we need to find effective ways to motivate human beings to protect the environment especially in the context where people live their life away from nature. This alienation forces people not have enough contact with the natural world and loose their sense of responsibility towards environmental protection.

How are we supposed to cultivate human beliefs and moral judgments that are to be aligned to a common sense that every person can take into consideration? An answer to the question is to start promoting ethical actions as common sense behaviour in fighting for environmental protection. We are not interested in controlling people's action, but in educating them to see moral actions as common sense actions. Hence, by cultivating a moral responsible behaviour, people may come to understand the true meaning of modern citizenship and comply with it.

Consequently, I am taking a moral approach to educating people' sense of responsibility towards nature and arguing that this can be an effective solution to solving our current environmental problems.

In order for people to acquire the moral responsibility skill, we need to think about the profile of a virtuous person (Brink 1997 : 14). David Brink describes this type of person as having an advanced experience of reflecting about morality and a good understanding of the concepts of good, respect, protection, wellbeing, empathy, relationship etc. In addition, the virtuous person manifests an inclination towards taking into consideration all the concepts enumerated above, when she decides the best way to act. Therefore, from Brink's point of view, the virtuous person will be motivated to take a moral action depending on her beliefs and past experiences, not because of her moral training.

In addition, we must find a way of making people aware of the authority of morality in order to get people to open up towards the acquisition and development of the moral responsibility skill. It seems that people do not find their motivation to act morally mainly because they do not perceive morality as an institution that gives us strong reasons to take a moral decision or makes us aware of the duties that we have towards a common good.

The worldwide institution of morality

In the previous section, I argued that people would be more likely to act in the 'right' way if they find their motivation in a set of moral judgments that are based on common sense.

An institution of morality is necessary in the context of environmental protection because it can provide the framework for people to work together to achieve a common moral objective. In this case, morality will be the communication facilitator and mediator of the conflicts that exist

between people that are part of different cultures to find common grounds for environmental action.

I argue that morality can bring people together and help them get the motivation to act morally. In addition, a moral group can protect its members and keep them motivated in order to take moral actions, even when they lose their sense of moral responsibility.

The ways we act in different situations reflect our beliefs and the set of moral judgements that govern our existence. Dancy's analysis of human motivation concludes that beliefs, not desires, are the motivating factors. In his 'pure' theory of motivation, Dancy holds that our beliefs "stand both as representations of the world and as reasons to change that world" (Dancy 1993: 33). Moreover, an intrinsically motivating belief will contain these two directions of fit that will describe the fact asserted by the belief as being true, coming from the world and, at the same time, a reason to follow the intention to see the positive consequences of our actions in the world.

In this sense, we will talk about human actions and determinants of human beliefs and moral judgments, which define the relation between a person and her external world:

World _____influences_____> Human being. (social-cultural determinants)
Human being ___influences_____> World.   (personal determinants)

From Dancy's point of view, this relation helps us understand our place in the world and how we relate to it when we take action. For instance, a person will take into consideration her present situation and the outcomes of her action, and will decide to act only if the possible results correspond to her personal relation to the world.

Hence, we state that Dancy's mental state tries to predict the future (to fit the world in our desires), and are influenced by our actions and its consequences. For example, Linda desires to save all the whales of the planet, but she realizes that at first she needs to become a volunteer of an Environmental NGO that fights to save whales from extinction (Linda's belief). This means that the person thinks about justified reasons to take action and analyses the implications of her behaviour.

It seems that the social-cultural and personal determinants[3] have a powerful impact on our personality, and even if we would be inclined to argue that morality comes from within us, we cannot ignore these determinants that shape our individual character.

[3.] In Figure 1, I mentioned social-cultural determinants like: culture, education, religion, regulations, existing knowledge, common sense, manipulation and influence. In addition, I also included personal determinants: needs, personal experience, family and friends, personal values, imagination and interest. These

In this sense, Dancy makes us understand that we need to be more flexible when dealing with human motivation. He observes that there is an inclination for Humeans to argue that human actions are mainly influenced by our desires, but in our case internal and external motivational factors will convince the person to take action. At the same time, it can happen for a moral judgement to motivate through its representation that helps us 'see' the positive outcomes that we can bring into the future.

Morality can offer us an objective picture of the world as it is, and ethics calibrate personal ideas of morality and motivate people to share a common sense that concern environmental protection and the well-being of future generations.

The difficulty that arises here concerns the following question: how do we analyse the beliefs and moral judgements of a person? If human motivation is closely related to social-cultural and personal determinants, we should think about strategies to evaluate the truth of our own beliefs and moral judgments. In this way, we can make sure that we don't facilitate the formation of wrong beliefs that can negatively influence our behaviour.

Hence, I am arguing that we need an effective strategy to educate human beings to become aware of their moral judgments and provide them with the information necessarily to acquire specific moral values that concern environmental protection. Carol Booth states that people need to develop activist identities and become 'responsible stewards of the earth' (Booth 2009 : 64). In this sense, I am interested to promote a shared morality that can motivate people to acquire moral values to be internalized as moral judgments that can influence people to act morally in the majority of the situations, no matter what motivational factors they have[4].

Moral judgments, as universal opinions applicable to every human being, describe a moral action, which is meant to generate positive outcomes in the future. In addition to this, moral judgments are characterized by objectivity and can help people access a sense of responsibility towards environment protection.

As a result, our interest for the study of moral judgments comes from their tendency to attract expected actions, because the person is likely to behave in a certain manner due to her moral reasons. However, we cannot assume that the same thing will happen in the case of human beliefs that influence our overall behaviour (Dancy 1993 : 26). In comparison to moral judgments, beliefs do not guarantee us that our response will reoccur precisely the second time we take action in the same context.

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determinants are interior and exterior influences, which are responsible for the way we acquire our beliefs and moral judgments.

[4.] Negative motivational factors will become positive (see Figure 2) or will not be taken into consideration because moral judgments are intrinsically motivating states.

Hence, we are keen to demonstrate that there is a way of cultivating moral responsibility without the need of manipulation or other incentives like money or fees. In this sense, Alexander Rosenberg suggests us to plan a method for revealing human's beliefs and moral judgments by asking, experimenting and observing. Therefore, we will be interested to observe the personal beliefs and moral judgments that someone has in particular contexts and then analyse the common aspects that correspond to other peoples' actions in order to discover the most common internal and external motivational factors which influence human behaviour and use them in the cultivation of moral responsibility. As a result, this approach will help us discover the common instances that predict human behaviour, become aware of the exceptions of human actions and discover new ways to measure the unpredictability that characterize human actions. In this way, we want to make people aware of the fact that their actions are important and therefore, they can positively or negatively affect the world they live in.

Public policy in the UK on nature protection is currently based on 'monetising' nature – regarding it as a form of capital (Rawles 2011). Likewise, individuals are incentivised to act pro-environmentally via a series of price signals that encourage them to modify their behaviour. For example, the current environmental policies, which promote sustainable consumption, use marketing tools and financial incentives to manipulate human behaviour to take the 'right' actions. These strategies are very effective in the short term, when people are promised financial rewards in exchange for their pro-environmental actions, but do not motivate human behaviour in the long term.

Environmental leaders state that there is a need to learn how to show respect for nature and become aware of the fact that we are all dependent on Earth's natural resources. If we start working with environmental values, we will help people get new environmental attitudes that can influence them to take pro-environmental actions in the long term.

It seems that in the process of addressing the current environmental problems through environmental policies, we forgot to discuss the moral aspect of environmental protection. Moreover, we need to provide people with relevant information in order to understand that environmental issues are affecting everybody because of the shared environmental context in which all of us live.

In this context, I decided to use moral education as a framework for the environmental ethics workshops that I plan to organize as part of my research work. When talking about morality, we need to bring into discussion the moral values that determine our environmental attitudes. This means that in order to fight for environmental protection and adopt a pro-environmental behaviour, people need to be provided with an open space where they can share, talk and debate on what attitudes and behaviours affect their shared environmental community.

Consequently, I am interested to test the capacity of morality to be 'skill knowledge'. If we think of morality as a skill that can be trained and learned, then we will have a starting framework for moral education.

In order to develop this framework, we argue that we need to adopt an externalist position in moral theory. To that end we will develop the notion of a 'shared morality', or a form of considered 'common sense', which has the potential to motivate individuals morally, irrespective of any particular normative theory they happen to have and, hence, to maximise the impact needed by environmental protection.

I consider framing my research as a *response* to the values-action gap problem. I am aware of the fact that pro-environmental attitudes do not translate every time in pro-environmental actions (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002). And I take as an example (Booth 2009: 53), the 1996 survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that illustrate the gap between values and human actions.

All in all, this paper on moral motivation is meant to answer an important question for the "value-action gap" debate: What influences us to take an environmental action? In this sense, it is important to find an efficient track to help human beings discover that the values we might generally share have positive implications for environmental protection.

Conclusion: In need of a motivational change in environmental studies.

Our philosophical enquiry was inspired by Carol Booth's "A motivational turn for environmental ethics", in *Ethics & the Environment* (Booth 2009)*.* She has made a useful start with her argument that environmental activism and community engagement could be the practical effects of the expertise of environmental ethicists (Booth 2009: 73). Thus, finding effective strategies to cultivate moral motivation could be ethicists' contribution to environmental protection.

While reading about human behaviour towards nature, I discovered very few initiatives to discuss the moral issues that concern environmental protection. And this got me thinking: What is this connection we all talk about between human beings and the natural world? And why is it so important to us? Environmental leaders argue that we have a moral duty to protect nature for the present and our future generations. But do the majority of people really feel they have any responsibilities towards the natural world?

Attempts have been made to develop a 'values-based' approach to nature protection[5], but the intellectual grounding for this has yet to be fully developed and that is what we intend to do in this paper.

Hence, I accept Booth's challenge and argue that people can develop a sense of moral responsibility towards nature if they find their motivation in a set of moral judgments that is based on common sense. However, in order to be able to educate people to become moral and sustainable citizens we have to start from the point in which we accept that a person can be motivated through internal and external determinants that can facilitate the formation of moral judgments and cultivate her sense of moral responsibility as a skill knowledge.

Consequentially, I am dedicating my work to testing the capacity of morality to be skill knowledge, and finding effective ways to 'correct' immoral behaviour by taking advantage of the practical characteristic of moral judgements. If our findings will turn out to be true we will have discovered an efficient track for creating social policies (that are guaranteed by environmental ethicists) and promoting a philosophical method to be used worldwide to fight for environmental protection and the wellbeing of future generations.

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5   A "values-based" system has been used by Tom Crompton, Change Strategist at WWF-UK, when writing the *Common Cause Report: The Case for Working with Values and Frames*.

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