ABSTRACT:

The purpose of my presentation is to explain why students of Indian philosophy (especially those interested in ethics) ought to be extremely interested in the question of what Vedic utterances convey. Through my presentation, I hope to show how and why early modern Sanskrit philosophers took this question to be at the center of debates in meta-ethics, moral psychology, and philosophy of action. Central to the presentation will also be the question of how Indian approaches to these issues compare, philosophically, to more contemporary Euro-American ones.
JONATHAN GOLD

We should begin. Thank you all for coming to the last meeting of the Columbia Society for Comparative Philosophy. This is a sad occasion for it to be the last session, but we have a very exciting program, two excellent speakers, and they have arranged a conversation for us. Before we begin, I wanted to just let you know – are there any official registered members here who have not received the e-mail about electing a new chair? Because here is the way it works, for those of you who are here. Members have the option to nominate someone to be chair. I have agreed to be nominated and stand for elections as chair for another year, and nobody else has been nominated, and so it looks like I'm in for a landslide, I'm proud to say. So what that means then is that we can just sort of announce that my victory is in the bag, and thank you all – you've been wonderful – for your support.

(Applause)

MALE SPEAKER

May we ask how many votes you received?

JONATHAN GOLD

We did receive some votes.

MALE SPEAKER

Absolutely.

JONATHAN GOLD

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More than zero. So many people actually e-mailed in their vote online. So several people voted, at least three we know of. In any event, I stand so far undefeated.

The speakers for today, without further ado, Parimal Patil of Harvard University, whose work you might be well familiar with if you are interested in Indian philosophy. He also has a number of books coming out just any second, just around the corner that we can expect to learn from as well. And Bronwyn Finnigan, who we're lucky again to have as our commentator from the University of Auckland, is here for the year studying at Harvard. And it is our great benefit to have her around again. So thank you both for coming. And I'll just let you take it over from there.

**PARIMAL PATIL**

Sure. Thank you, thank you very much.

**MALE SPEAKER**

Could I ask a question?

**PARIMAL PATIL**

Yes.

**MALE SPEAKER**

What is the line between pre-modern and early modern India?
PARIMAL PATIL

I don't know when that line is and what that date is. The reason that those terms are there is because people seem to use them and seem to be committed to certain ways of thinking about them. So I have appropriated their use, however they want to use it and don't have much at stake in it. For me, it is simply, you know, basically I care about – this talk is about what happened from 13 – basically what happened after 1320. So if you think 1320 is pre-modern, I'm okay with that. If you think it's late pre-modern, I'm okay with that. If you want to call it modern, I'm okay with that. That's for another day, about what is at stake there. So I'm shamelessly appropriating that as others use it.

Thank you. I just want to say it's a real privilege and honor to be here. I'm such a big fan of the kind of work that this forum has provided a space for, and it's really great to finally be able to I hope contribute something that you'll all find useful.

What we are really going to do today – and I say "we" because Bronwyn and I have talked about this back and forth. We're going to try to make this really as informal as possible and kind of try to keep it a workshop spirit more than a lecture. So I'm not going to read anything. I'm going to sort of go through some slides and try to present three views on the same or a very similar problem. I'm going to present one view from the work of a philosopher named Gangeśa, who lived around 1320, who belongs to the so-called nyāya-vaiśesika knowledge system. And Bronwyn is going to present two views of contemporary thinkers, a man named Michael Smith, who teaches down the road at Princeton, and a woman named – one of my colleagues, Christine Korsgaard at Harvard. And the problem has to do with the philosophy of action, or how we come to be motivated to act upon the means to some end. And some of this will get sorted out as we go.
So the idea is to really just present these three views and open it up for a conversation about how these views and these philosophers from very different times and places speak to each other, and also ask you who you think is right. So we have relatively modest expectations and goals, but we do expect answers to these two questions. So that's where we start, and we hope to end by taking home, thanks to all of your hard work, the answers to basically their problems and our problems.

BRONWYN FINNIGAN

We won't let you out of the door until we're done.

PARIMAL PATIL

That's right. Did you lock it? Yeah.

So as I said, what we want to talk about is present some views on the philosophy of action. And almost every philosopher in India, for well over a millennium, used basically the same structure, so they all spoke in terms of these three stages, and therefore these sort of four steps with three transitions. Some people didn't like something, they just etched it out, but they all were conscious of it. And the first is this idea of instigating – we'll explain what this is as we go on. I just want to first get the structure in place. This idea of instigating awareness that leads to a desire to act that then leads to motivation to the means and that then leads to action.

So "motivation to the means" is a kind of mental effort. It doesn't have to be physical in the sense of an action, like picking up a pad of paper. It's mental effort, your mind turning over, in a sense, being directed to some
particular means to some end. So the idea is that this is the basic structure. And we're really going to focus on the transition from instigating awareness to a desire to act, and from a desire to act to motivation to the means. I'm going to focus on that in my presentation of Gangeśa, and in a way Bronwyn is going to focus on that in her presentation of Smith and Korsgaard. So if you keep this structure, these three things, awareness – you might in English want to think about it as a belief or a cognition – this desire to act, and then this motivation, mental effort to the means.

So part one of this is Humeans in late pre-modern and early modern India. And we're going to focus on just the Humean part of it and not the Kantian part of it.

So again, this is back to the basic structure. And of course, even though most philosophers of India share – all, I will say – share the same structure, they interpret everything very differently. And so what I want to tell you now is how Gangeśa interprets what these terms mean. The first thing to note that is different than the way we think about it, or the way contemporary Anglo-American philosophers think about it, is that awareness, desire, and effort are all qualities. They are properties that belong to the self. For something to be a property just means that it has a location, it has a place where it is located. So if you think of the self as a bucket, awareness, desire, and motivation are three different kinds of balls that you can locate in this bucket.

What is important to remember is they are different kinds of things. An awareness is not the same kind of ball as a desire, is not the same kind of ball as an effort, all right? So there are three different kinds of qualities or properties or balls that belong in this bucket, and uniquely belong in this bucket, to the self – that's called the self.
One thing to remember is that only awareness, only the awareness ball, has mental content. Only it is really a mental event. Only it has mental content. So to say – we might say, ”I believe that P,” often that proposition P is considered the mental content of a belief. We often speak of desires as having mental content, right? Desire that P. In the world of Gangeśa, desire is not a mental event, but it can be the content of a mental event. Remember, it is a different kind of a ball, right?

So I can be aware of a desire of that P. So when we say "desire that P," we really mean "aware of desire that P," right? And so the content of a desire and the content of motivation or mental effort is all derivative on the content of an awareness event. So what that means is that in telling the story about how we go from awareness to desire to motivation, most of the work is done by the awareness event and its content because how we understand the desire and how we understand the action are derivative on that.

So what we want to do basically is we want to just kind of explain the structure and try to explain the view. We might as well start before. So the question is what generates this instigating awareness. Let me just give you – we'll go through some examples so you get the idea of the range of things that is supposed to happen. Again, the basic idea – the basic problem is this, right? Who needs chocolate? What is the means?

BRONWYN FINNIGAN

Sometimes it is going to the shop, sometimes it is going to the fridge.

PARIMAL PATIL
Okay. So I have a desire for chocolate. I am aware that the means to getting chocolate is going to the shop, and so I am motivated – I direct myself to go to the shop, right? We're trying to explain that. So the first is what generates this instigating awareness, the first step in the process. And one thing that is very important is that for these nyāya-vaiśesika philosophers like Gangeśa, it is quite a broad range of phenomenon, broad range of things.

The first is that verbal testimony can generate, produce the right kind of instigating awareness. Let's take two examples. Vedic utterances are the paradigmatic utterance that generates motivation to act. So the standard example is one who desires heaven ought to perform the new and full moon sacrifice. So if a competent speaker of the language understands that utterance, then they are motivated to the means, given certain conditions.

The second thing is that everyday utterances also produce the same kind of instigating awareness. The standard example used is one desirous of cooked rice ought to cook rice grains or, you know, the example of the chocolate shop.

The third thing is that commands also produce the same kind of instigating awareness. So, "Please shut the door," "Shut up," that produces exactly the same kind of awareness, kind of awareness, as understanding the utterance, "One who desires heaven ought to perform the new and full moon sacrifice," "One who desires cooked rice ought to cook the rice grains." Not only that, it is not just testimony that can produce instigating awareness, but other kinds – other sources of knowledge, so to speak, can too. The standard example used is a pre-linguistic infant. So the idea is an infant is thirsty. The infant is aware, somehow, that suckling at his
mother's breast, her mother's breast, will satisfy her thirst, and so she is motivated to suckle at her mother's breast. The awareness that gets the infant going, that instigates the awareness on this process, is exactly the same kind of awareness with the same structure as all of the others.

Another example, if I throw a baseball at you, and you duck, again it is the same thing. Whatever awareness starts you off on the chain to be motivated to take some action is called "instigating awareness."

Now there is something worth noticing about this. It's rather broad, right, so it includes what is conveyed by command utterances, right, which often picks up on the issue of linguistic force, right; it picks up on sort of utterances that express normative content, right? So this instigating awareness has to get us somehow to explain force as well as normative content like "oughts," as well as just action in general, all right? That is quite a broad – that's a lot of work that this has to do, yet they view it as all doing this work.

So in this sense, what we need is a kind of action in general, right, in the sense that it must be broad to explain this range of cases. And also, the way Gangeśa at least presents this account is explanatory in that – what we're going to do is provide his view, his view which he says we can use to explain all such actions, regardless of how that person might explain the action to herself. However, he also thinks that if he were to show you and explain to you why this account – why he thinks this account is right, then you too would agree that that account is right for you too.

So the point is an explanatory account, right? The person doesn't have to feel as though any of this is right, though when confronted with the account, the person should accept it, I think you would concede. All right.
Any questions so far just about the basic structure, right? We have now talked about why we get instigating awareness, and now we're going to figure out what this instigating awareness that is supposed to do all this work really is.

**MALE SPEAKER**

If you invite us to ask questions —

**PARIMAL PATIL**

Yes, please, if it's clarification especially.

**MALE SPEAKER**

The question I like [unintelligible] even later. You are dealing with a kind of action which follows some kind of deliberation or premeditation. So what do you do about intuitive action? How about Mencius' example, adult reaching out to child [unintelligible]? How about The Zen masters? In short, you have chosen I think [unintelligible]. You see, you are dealing with the kind of action which involves intentionality. How about not just the physical action, but mental act?

**PARIMAL PATIL**

So what we can do is – that's a very good question to keep in mind because if that can be a counter-example to this view, then Gangeśa would be deeply distraught, deeply depressed about the whole thing. So the answer to that question has to be an understanding of whether the content of instigating awareness and the desire and
motive that follows can be explained even for such actions as you have described. Let's go through the account and then plug that back in and see.

**MALE SPEAKER**

Okay.

**PARIMAL PATIL**

He'll say there is no problem. So first, we need to understand the content of this instigating awareness event, right? And here is what we have, right? So we have already been through this once, and I'll just read it so we get a sense. Right. So the content of the awareness event, right, that is generated when a competent speaker of a language understands an utterance containing, for example, a deontic modal, like someone desirous of rice ought to cook – ought to cook rice grains. What is conveyed to this person is the following. What is conveyed is that there is some action phi that is the intermediate – oh, let me explain this. The intermediary activity expressed by the underlying root of the finite verb, let me explain what that means. So the way – some of you are nodding your heads; you know this. So we have this sentence, "Someone desirous of rice ought to cook the rice grains." We're interested in what "ought to cook" conveys because it is really that "ought to cook" that generates the right content that we are interested in for the instigating awareness. "Ought to cook" is grammatically constructed out of a verbal root plus a verbal ending. Both verbal roots, like "to cook" versus "ought to cook," right – the verbal root "to cook" is considered a word that has a separate semantic value. The ending is considered to be a word that has a separate semantic value.
So the semantic value of the underlying root is an action. Specifically, it is an action that flows toward, that is directed towards some end, right? So here, the action is cooking – cooking is a problem – which flows towards let's say softening the rice, which is cooking the rice. The verbal ending, right, expresses in general – all verbal endings express in general – indicative senses, for example, express effort. So "cooks" together conveys the effort that an agent directs toward the intermediary activity, which leads to the softening of the rice grains.

The difference is that optative endings, or these deontic modal endings, express something different, and that's what we're interested in, what they express, what they convey, because that is where the force is, right? "He cooks," versus, "He ought to cook." "He cooks," an assertion, doesn't necessarily get our instigating awareness going, statement of fact. "He ought to cook," is what we're interested in.

So the question is what does the optative ending convey? What is the semantic value of the optative ending? This is not a place where people normally think to look for issues of philosophy of action in India. And here is what they say. They say that what is conveyed is that phi – remember, phi is the means to the end, the cooking, right – possesses the following property trio: It is the property – it can be brought about with one's own effort, right, so cooking possesses the property. It can be brought about with one's own effort. It possesses the property that cooking is the means to a desired end, an end that I have desire for. And the property does not lead to an even more undesired end, all right?

So what optative endings and any kind of deontic modal conveys is some action – that some action phi possesses these three properties, all right? So we can express this phi as phi plus three "that" clauses, right? Phi, that, phi such that it, and one, two, three. There is one distinction that might be useful. Remember, this
instigating awareness is supposed to get us to this desire to act. We're trying to figure out, if this is the content of instigating awareness, how this content gets us to have a desire to act; then how we go from desiring to act to actually directing our effort to action, right?

So there are two things that are worth keeping in mind, one distinction – one distinction with two parts. The first is a word-to-world direction of fit, right? Oh, yeah, I'll use Jonathan, yeah – where what is conveyed is grasped as fitting or being patterned after the world, so for an assertion, right? Professor Gold teaches at Princeton, right? That – what is conveyed by that utterance, right, the content of it, its grasp is actually fitting or being patterned after the way the world is, right, versus world-to-word direction of fit, where what is conveyed is grasped as a pattern the world is supposed to fit or conform to. For example, before Professor Gold was teaching at Princeton, I had the hope that Professor Gold would teach at Princeton. So, "I hope Professor Gold teaches at Princeton," is something that has a different direction of fit, right, because there what is conveyed is grasped as a pattern the world is supposed to conform to. I want the world to be such that Professor Gold in fact teaches at Princeton, right?

So in a way, these word-to-world – sometimes called mind-to-world – direction of fit goes one way, and the other, world-to-word or world-to-mind direction of fit goes another way. One way to understand what we're interested in is how we go from instigating awareness, an awareness event that has this word-to-world direction of fit, how we get then, say, an awareness of a desire that has a different direction of fit. Okay?

Let me take us back one more thing here. Now remember, we have done a little bit of instigating awareness. We want to figure out this "desire to act," right? Remember, this desire to act has to be – the semantic range of
what "desire to act" means has to be quite broad, remember, because it has to convey not just desire to act, but "should act," "ought to act," "wants to act," "hopes to act," all kinds of things with a different direction of fit.

So we want to be clear that "desire to act," we're really looking at the desire case, but it has to be much, much broader. All right. Just remember Professor Gold and his teaching at Princeton. Okay. It's a good example. It's true.

All right. So what is the big deal? What is the problem? We have been told the content of phi. So we have been told, okay, fine, you have phi, then you get this desire to act. You transition to this desire to act, and then you transition somehow to this motivation to the means. The problem is, to just say you transition or you get this desire to act doesn't explain anything because remember, instigating awareness is a blue ball in this bucket called the self, right? The desire to act is a different kind of ball. We need to know how you get this ball from this. Something has to happen, right? And the only thing that can make this happen – or not the only thing, but – whatever account we give of how this happens has to acknowledge, recognize, deal with, have some view about the content of this instigating awareness, right? Somehow phi possessing these three properties has to be sufficient for explaining how we go from this to this, how we go from understand the utterance, "I ought to –" I mean understand the utterance, right? Let's say, "Someone desirous of cooked rice ought to cook rice grains," to having the desire to cook rice grains, or having the sense, "I ought to cook rice grains." How do we get that?

So here is the trick, in my view. Let's go back to phi quickly, right? So phi, the property – it can be brought about with effort. Let's call it – yes.
FEMALE SPEAKER

I'm just not sure I'm following exactly what you're saying. So you said that the desire is not an intentional state, like awareness is. But you keep talking about the desire to, you know, that the rice is now cooked and, you know, I ought to do this, and so on. And so I didn't quite understand how to translate their emotions, desire –

(cross-talk)

PARIMAL PATIL

Right. Here is why. I have been – I have taken advantage of a little trick. So when I say "instigating awareness," I can have instigating awareness without noticing that I have it. So for me to notice that I have instigating awareness, for instigating awareness to be phenomenologically available to me, there has to be another cognition that shines a light on it. So desire is the same way. It is really the awareness of desire that I'm speaking of, just like – so instigating awareness, I'm speaking of the awareness of instigating awareness, the awareness of desire, the awareness of this mental effort.

So to say – when I speak of desire has having an object, right, I'm really speaking of the awareness of desire to act, so that desire is really the content of an awareness.

FEMALE SPEAKER

Even if you are aware of desire, that doesn't – I mean, if you mean awareness for at least desire to be conscious, it doesn't mean that desire itself doesn't have propositional content.

PARIMAL PATIL
It doesn't mean that desire doesn't have propositional content. It's just a question of what – it has a structure. It has a way we can speak about and distinguish different kinds of desires, right, or desires for one thing versus the other. So it seems as though it has – that desire is something that has content, right? It is about something. And the problem is that everything – whenever we speak like that, what entitles us to speak like that is though desire has an object – is what it would be called in Sanskrit – that objectness of desire has to come from here. So it's really just a – it's a shorthand, the way it is speaking.

**FEMALE SPEAKER**

What is here?

**PARIMAL PATIL**

Here is the awareness that can really have content. The desires having content or appearing to have content can only come from here. It can't have content on its own. It's not the kind of thing that can have content. It would be like saying a table has propositional content. It just can't have it. A desire is like a table.

**FEMALE SPEAKER**

So let's suppose that we have an awareness of the desire that we have a cooked rice dinner, right – so what you're saying is that the desire itself doesn't have propositional content, only the second order [unintell] aware that I have the desire to have a cooked rice dinner.

**PARIMAL PATIL**

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And the primary constituent of that second order desire – of that second order awareness is a desire in the case of – what I'm calling "desire," and it is an awareness in the instigating awareness. That's why they have different – you can think of them as having different directions of fit.

**FEMALE SPEAKER**

But what I don't see is how could – without the desire having —

**PARIMAL PATIL**

Yeah, keep going.

**JONATHAN GOLD**

Well, just one more time, and then [unintell].

**FEMALE SPEAKER**

[Unintell] go get too serious, and you said that you wanted it to be informal.

**PARIMAL PATIL**


**FEMALE SPEAKER**

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So if you agree or they agree that there is such a thing as being aware of the desire that such and such is the case, you could only be aware of that desire that such and such is the case where the desire had that propositional content.

PARIMAL PATIL

It's the same as I am aware that the table is brown. Tables don't have propositional content. Tables have properties. Now we can be aware that properties are possessed by that substance, table. So desires are just like tables. They're things; they're stuff.

FEMALE SPEAKER

But then I don't understand. You just said that the desires are desires that such and such —

PARIMAL PATIL

Right. Just like the table – desire for or desire to, those to and fors can also be properties, just like color in this world. We'll come back to that when we go through the account because I see what your worry is.

MALE SPEAKER

Before you go – sorry.

PARIMAL PATIL
Yeah. Let's let us get through this first. Let's go through it, and then we'll – let's hold the questions. We're getting a little bit away from ourselves here. Okay. So again – we don't have that much more to go, but we'll just go through it.

So the first is $phi$ has these three properties, right? The first, let's call the "capability condition," right, that this $phi$ is an action I can actually bring about. The second is that it is the means to the desired end, right? And the third is that, you know, it doesn't lead to an even more undesired end, that it is worth the effort. Let's call that the "relative value condition," okay?

One more piece of machinery we need before we can figure out how we go from this awareness to this desire, how we flip direction of fit. Gangeśa says two things about desire. The first is that the awareness of a primary end – there can be only two – there are only two primary ends, pleasure and the absence of suffering. Nothing else that you desire can be a primary end unless it is pleasure or the absence of suffering. So just the awareness of pleasure or the awareness of the absence of suffering leads to a desire for that end. Just being aware of it leads to your desire for it.

The second is that the awareness that $phi$ is the means to a desired end, right – that's number two – just the very awareness that there is an action $phi$ that is the means to a desired end, he says, is a secondary desire, right, that it is desire for the means to that end. So primary ends are pleasure and the absence of suffering; secondary ends are the means to that end. So the awareness that $phi$ is a means to a desired end just leads to desire for the means to that end, which we'll call for short a desire for $phi$. So a desire for cooking to take place, not the desire for me to cook, but the desire for cooking to take place.
So what that helps us to see is that in the structure of two, you can interpret two as the property – it is the means to a desired end, but also understand that kind of means the property – and this is where it is problematic – desire for \( \phi \), okay? So in this structure, desire is here in this desired end clause, but it can also be desire for \( \phi \). We need that because we’re still trying to figure out how we get from being aware that \( \phi \) has this property trio – how we somehow make this transition to desire. Nothing in this story suggests that yet.

So we have to resort to an interpretation. So the interpretation is this, that there is a broadly dispositional theory of desire at work here. And according to broadly dispositional theories of desire, right, \( \phi \) is desirable for some agent A if and only if A would be disposed to \( \phi \) under ideal circumstances. So cooking is desirable for some agent A if and only if A would be disposed to cook under ideal circumstances.

Let's sort of unpack this a bit in a way that helps us with our problem. That's just a general account, basically a David Lewis type of account, type. For any agent – let's keep going, right? So for any agent A, having a desire for \( \phi \), that is, having the awareness that \( \phi \) is the means to a desired end, just means that A would be disposed to \( \phi \), would be disposed to cook, if both the capability and relative value conditions had been satisfied. That's just what it means to have a desire for \( \phi \). It means to be disposed to \( \phi \) under certain conditions. It's just what it means.

So thus the content of instigating awareness can be captured by the following conditional. We were talking about what this instigating awareness is, right? Something like if for some agent A, \( \phi \) is the means to a desire end, and both the capability and relative value conditions have been satisfied, then A would be disposed to \( \phi \).
That is, A would be caused to have a desire to \( \phi \), and the additional premise, \( \phi \) is the means to a desired end, and both the capability and relative value conditions have been satisfied. That's all conveyed by the optative.

So the key here is to recognize that we have a dispositional theory of desire. And if we have a dispositional theory of desire, we can unpack it, let's say, in terms of this conditional. And if this conditional is there and the premise is satisfied in a way, let's say for lack of a – our mind is moved to the conclusion, right, the conclusion here being A would be caused to have a desire to \( \phi \).

Back to our original picture. Instigating awareness – the transition between instigating awareness and desire to act is – the key part there is a dispositional theory of desire. The question to keep in mind is what is doing the pushing, right? We're going from instigating awareness to this desire to act, to have this understanding of, "I ought to act, I should act, I want to act, I could act," from this awareness that \( \phi \) has one, two, and three, right? So again, the direction of fit has shifted. The question is, how does that happen? What is pushing that shift? Some options – as we all know, a broadly Humean account says desire is pushing that shift. A broadly and generically Kantian account says no, it is not desire that is pushing that shift; it's some sort of deliberative principle.

So here, what do we have? We have a dispositional theory of desire, but we have basically a deliberative account. So it is the dispositional theory of desire into this kind of deliberative account that in a way pushes us to. It is much – in some ways, the question to ask for Gangeśa is to what extent is desire pushing, if at all – it seems like not – and to what extent is this conditional doing the work. All right?
Now it is downhill from here. So this – all right. That was one transition. Now we have a second transition.

Before we get to the second transition, let's just note something about the first transition. In the first transition, we went from instigating awareness. The primary constituent of the content of that instigating awareness was what? It was \textit{phi}, an action, an action that has these three properties. In the second case, the primary constituent of our description of – the primary constituent was a desire, right, not an action.

Now, we're interested in going from this desire to motivation. And motivation again is a different kind of ball, so that is going to be a different kind of constituent of content. So now we're interested in this second transition. Remember, what got us here was this conditional with a dispositional theory of desire. Now we're going to do something else.

Let's just review. The semantic range of this desire to act includes a variety of pro attitudes, such as wants, shoulds, and oughts. It is, for example, often paraphrased by expressions such as, "I cause \textit{phi} to come about through my own effort." So, for example, with the cooking example in Sanskrit, it is often something like \textit{bakum kriptum sadeyami} [ph]. \textit{Sadeyami} [ph], "I caused \textit{bakum} [ph], to be brought about." I'm disposed – I make – I somehow make this cooking happen through my own effort, right? \textit{Bakum kriptum sadeyami}. The key is the \textit{sadeyami}. It includes a broad range of these pro attitudes.

So that's, "I desire to, want to, ought to, should," \textit{phi} equals something like, "I cause \textit{phi} to come about through my own effort, given that \textit{phi} possesses these property trio." It should strike people who are familiar with this stuff in an Anglo-American context as a little weird.
So this is just one definition of how desire to act is defined. The desire to act is a desire whose primary constituent is an action phi that has an agent – that an agent ought to bring about through her own effort, right, some agent that – some action phi that an agent ought to bring about through her own effort. Why do we care about any of this? The only reason we care about any of this is we just want to remember that what instigating awareness generates is this desire to phi. But this desire to phi is much broader than just desire, that's all, because now we care about how do we go from this desire to cook to actually being motivated to cook, to actually being directed to cook, directing our mind to cook from desire. Remember, they have to be different things. Why? Because they are different kind of balls in the ontology. You can't just say these two balls are the same. They're not in the ontology, so you have to explain how you go from one to the other.

So the question is, how do you go? It has a different story to tell. And the different story here is that it is a broadly motivational theory of desire. So first we had a dispositional theory of desire; now we have a motivational theory of desire. We're almost done; we have like two minutes left.

So according to the broadly motivational theories of desire, to desire that P just is to be motivated to make it the case, that P. That is, look at "just is to be motivated." That means they're the same thing. It seems for Gangeša, however, desire and motivation are different kinds of things. His version of the motivational account has to be causal in the sense that a desire to phi or an awareness event in which the desire to make it the case that P is the primary constituent of content, again with our problems that we were talking about earlier, has to cause a motivation to phi, or an awareness event in which the motivation to make it the case that P is the primary constituent of content.
So here, he is helping himself to a different notion of desire, that desire is not dispositional; desire is just motivational. A desire to \textit{phi} just is, which means just produces a motivation to \textit{phi}. There are going to be some conditions, but not many, okay?

So what does this mean? Back to the story. We have this account and we're interested in the transitions. From instigating awareness to desire to act, we have this dispositional theory of desire. And this is really where the action is. This is, as we said, broadly Kantian in some way. It depends on how you view this dispositional theory of desire, right?

The second part is from a desire to act to motivation to the means. The only thing that can do the pushing there is desire. There is no deliberation. There is no inferential rule. There is no norm of practical reason. It is just desire doing the pushing. So is that okay, that only desire can do the pushing there? Because that is what it means for it to be motivational in that sense. We'll get to the questions in a minute.

So my view is that in the standard account, we have these two transitions. In the first transition, it is a dispositional theory of desire, and desire isn't really pushing. In the second case, we have a motivational theory of desire, and desire is doing the pushing. And that's really the question. The real question is how these transitions take place. And so that's my account of Gangeśa's view. And the thing to note there as more technical, that when desire is a secondary constituent of content, right – so when my awareness is of something, and then that some – say an action – then an action – a desire – a concrete example, sorry. When desire is a secondary constituent of content – in Sanskrit in ends up \textit{brakhara} [ph] or \textit{visayshana} [ph]. When it is a \textit{brakhara}, a secondary constituent of content, it's interpreted dispositionally. So when you say \textit{phi} is the means
to a desired end – and remember, means to a desired end means desire for phi, right – that desire is not really what the awareness is about because the awareness is about an action.

So in that sense, the desire is a secondary constituent, right? It's an action in the way that I have a desire for. The action is the main thing. So whenever desire is a secondary constituent of content, a brakhara, it is dispositional. In the desire to act phase, I am aware of a desire. That desire is the primary constituent of content. So when desire is the primary constituent of content, it is motivational. That means that when it is a visayshana or a brakhara, it's dispositional. When it is a visayshia [ph], it's motivational.

So here is the summary. So what I've tried to do in this presentation is provide an interpretation of Gangeśa's theory of human action, and I've argued that it is based on two theories of desire, a dispositional theory of desired ends and a motivational theory of desire to act upon the means. Why is this an interpretation? Because one can – there is absolutely no doubt about – exegetically about the structure of the account, about what phi is, et cetera, et cetera. What is not clear exegetically is exactly how Gangeśa himself would account for the transitions.

My view is that this account is the only way – not a way, the only way – to make sense of how Gangeśa responds to the various objectors to his view. He responds as if this were – this is exactly what he had in mind. There is – I still don't know of any other place that you could sort of read this off from the text. So you could read off everything except how I account for the transitions. That's where the interpretation comes in, but my claim is that interpretation can be defended and that you won't find a better one. That's at least my claim, for now.
So on my interpretation of Gangeśa, when desire is a secondary constituent of the content of an awareness event, it is dispositional, while when it is a primary content, it is motivational. What this means is that for Gangeśa the desire to phi—a desire to phi is generated neither by a desire for the end, which is one thing that could push, nor by a desire for the means, but rather by a principle of reasoning, the conditional.

So on the base of my interpretation—what I didn’t tell you in the beginning, which I should have, is that all of this stuff, which I don't know if you found interesting, but this kind of questioning about how we act, about where "oughts, shoulds, wants" come from is crucial to topics in meta-ethics. And one of the huge problems—not problems, one of the huge questions in thinking about Sanskrit thought and Indian philosophy in general is why there is such a massive asymmetry between the material that we have that looks so familiar when it comes to epistemology and metaphysics, aesthetics, you name it, and why it looks so absent when it comes to things that look like to us to be ethics.

The reason is that almost no one who is interested in philosophy would ever think to look in a section about what optative endings convey. In fact, when you tell people who study Indian philosophy, "You know, you really ought to read the stuff that they paid attention to," what they paid attention to is what Vedic utterances convey. What is the grammar of a nominative singular ending? What is the semantic value of optatives? Their eyes glaze over, and they think, "Oh, that's religious stuff."

The fact is that that's where all these debates about the nature and structure of action take place, and they have been systematically ignored. When I say "ignored," I mean ignored. And yet people have been desperately
searching, coming up with accounts of meta-ethics, especially these action theories, which are based on pretty much nothing, pretty much invention.

So I guess one point is that it is really important that when we think about philosophy in India, and when we think about trying to practice philosophy in a properly comparative way, that we attend to how philosophical problems and issues were framed and analyzed on the terms of the people we're actually engaging in conversation with, and that's what I've tried to do here, and we're going to continue the conversation with Bronwyn's part, and that when you do that, you shouldn't prejudge what is philosophically interesting because in fact this section on Vedic utterances, which by the way I fell asleep over – I would have never thought to read this five years ago, so I'm guilty of the same thing – is actually fascinating. It's where all of this stuff really comes up.

So one point is look in all the wrong places, and you'll find the right answers. That's one, right? Message two is that the Tattvacintāmani, right, which I've paraphrased as "the philosopher's stone," is a remarkable, remarkable work. It was written in about 1320, and it really set the phase for the next 600 years, no exaggeration, of sort of scholastic Sanskrit philosophy in India. When I say set, it really wrote the playbook for what happens, 600 years. Yet we know almost nothing about this. And the reason we know almost nothing about this is – well, in all honesty, it is kind of a nightmare to read. It's like imagine discovering Kant's *Three Critiques* for the first time and not knowing their order, and just starting on page one and trying to figure out what is going on. It is sort of what it is like. But it's a remarkable, remarkable window onto this period – sort of the cutting edge of Sanskrit thought, which we have basically – which we basically ignored.
And all I wanted to try to do today was to suggest two things, one that you should really look in all the wrong places for interesting answers, and that second, one of the first places – one of the first wrong places to look is the Tattvacintāmani. And what we want to do now as we continue is sort of take this basic view, right, and the basic issues and show how they can be put into conversation with contemporary positions in a way that we feel is both historically and philologically responsible to the text in whose name we are doing philosophy when we do something comparative, and yet is also philosophically responsible to the standards set by the discipline today. And so I'm passing it over to Bronwyn for the standards part of this talk.

**BRONWYN FINNIGAN**

All right. So this presentation is the outcome of a conversation we've been having. I have in a lot of respects the easier job. So the text that Parimal has been dealing with, I mean, have not been translated, and so he has been trying to excavate these arguments from very complicated Sanskrit. And also, in the Sanskrit, not all the transitions are explained. So he is not only trying to translate and get a map of the terrain of what is at issue for these guys and how do they spell it out, but he has also tried to come up with an interpretation of how they could argue for these transitions that make sense of how they see these as a viable position because in a lot of respects, this presentation of Parimal is in dialogue with an opposing view. So the texts he has been translating have two different camps, and this was one camp, and this is the view that they take to be the most plausible response. But there is another camp who have a different conception altogether that say, "No, you're wrong," and they push their argument.

So I'm not translating anything, and I'm not coming up with an interpretation that makes sense of these theories. I'm going to do something much more simple. I'm just going to present the theories of one contemporary
Humean, Michael Smith, and one contemporary Kantian, Christine Korsgaard. And in a lot of respects, I'm going to use some of the terms that Parimal used. So I'm going to – this is very much a piggyback. You should be able to track – all right, this is this transition we're talking about, which resonates with that other transition. And when I put up the Kantian model, you should be able to follow that as well.

So the idea is to give three different models, worried about conceptually some of the similar spaces, and to worry about how they argue these moves together.

So I'm going to start with Michael Smith. The other thing is that while Parimal had to interpret how these transitions might go and came up with a very interesting theory about how that works, we also had to – when we were working on these texts – just try to find out, well, where are their arguments. They weren't so apparent in any case. So I'm not going to – we had some sort of rough – this is how roughly we think they think this transition goes. But there are some transitions that are just not made, that it's just not argued for. It's just saying you get straight there, which makes it very interesting that in the Indian text they all worried about this transition, and they needed to come up with an account. In some places, we'll find they just skip it. You know, we just get it altogether as a package.

And also, I'm not utterly convinced I have my interpretations of Smith and Korsgaard right, so if you know them better and you know no, no, no, no, no, this is a better move, please jump up. I'm happy to go for it because it has kept me awake.
All right. So I'm going to start. I'm going to use abstract symbols, but I'll explain them, and it should be really obvious. D is a desire. So we've got a desire to do something. So my example is a desire to eat chocolate. Chocolate is always my example. I'm always desiring to eat chocolate. And we have a belief. And in this case, the belief is going to the shop, so phi is an action. Going to the shop is a means to eating chocolate. So the Greek letters for Smith and in all of this presentation are going to be actions to do something. It is not a desire for some state of affairs or some facts. It is a desire to do something. So we have a desire to get chocolate, to eat chocolate, and a belief that if I go to the shop, that will be a means to that end.

Now, before I kind of flesh out a little detail, this – in some ways, there is a relation between having the right – this desire and this belief to not only desiring to go to the shop, but being motivated to go to the shop and actually going to the shop. So in some ways, Smith is lifting this from a Davidsonian causal theory of action. You have a belief-desire pair, and that causes you what to do.

This relation, as I'll get to the end of the slide, is a little bit curious because in some ways he wants to say, "I'm agnostic about whether that is a causal relation because I'm just unpacking the way we explain action." So we have an action of going to the shop. When we say, "Why did you go to the shop?" "Well, I went to the shop because I had this desire; I wanted to eat chocolate, and I believed if I went to the shop, I would go to get – I would be able to eat chocolate."

This combination of the desire and the belief for Smith is what he calls a motivating reason. It's why I did what I did. Now, he thinks a motivating reason is very different to a normative reason, and a normative reason is sort of the ethical ones, whether it was right or wrong. Here it is just these are the psychological states that led me
to do this. Whether or not they were mistaken, whether or not they were sound, these are the reasons that I had. These were the psychological states that led to it, or these are the psychological states that make intelligible what I did.

Now, in his later thought – I mean – and what I mean is in the papers that he has sitting on his web site as draft works in progress, he focuses on this plus because it is not just that we have a belief and a desire and that makes us do what we do. We also have the possession and the exercise of rational capacities. But it's not that we self-consciously put them together. As we get to the Kantian story, that's important that we do that. Here it is that we are exercising our rational capacities.

But, of course, a rational capacity has a norm governing it. So what makes it rational to put these two together? What makes it rational is that they're in accord with the instrumental norm of practical reason, which is if I desire to do something and I believe that doing something else is going to lead to doing that, then I should also – then I ought to do the something else. That's the instrumental norm.

So here – now, what makes it unclear is when you're reading it backwards, if it is just a reason explanation, you could say, "Well, it is because they are in accordance with that norm is why I do this." But in other accounts, it is that you exercise this capacity in putting them together, and that combination produces the action as a causal one. And, I mean, we've raced through this. We're not too sure exactly what he wants to do. In some places, he makes that transition as though it is a normative relation, and in other – and that would make sense if we're doing an explanation and it is all going backwards. You have got rational norms that make things intelligible.
But if you think of it as he is actually smuggling in a causal theory and this is going forward, then it has to be causal. And for Davidson, it is.

So that's the motivating account. Now in a lot of ways, this doesn't get you anything ethical because you could have a desire to drink a can of paint; you believe if I go to the shed I can drink a can of paint. So then I go to the shed and – yeah, you can get – you can plug anything in here and you're not going to get anything particularly ethical. And actually, we haven't talked about it, but Candace Bergler [ph] actually has a really interesting book, reasonably ambitious. I mean, at the core of this argument is to say this instrumental account of action doesn't get you ethics because you can plug in all kinds of things, and there is nothing in it that makes you go one way or the other.

But of course Michael Smith is a meta-ethicist, and he also wants an account of how we connect ethically, how they play into this story, how we can be motivated by things like, "You ought to do such and such." How do they make us come to act?

Okay. So this is just the motivating account pushed further down. One thing I should emphasize is that for Smith and also we're going to find for Korsgaard, the transition from desiring to do something to being motivated to do something is not argued for. For Smith, when you have a desire to do something, you have a disposition to do it. So it's not the sort of pushing kind of kind, the, "I'm disposed to do that." And it's going to come out actually when we focus more on how do we get the normative story going. But if I'm disposed to go to the shop, I'm thereby motivated to go to the shop, I thereby go to the shop. Being disposed is just to act in the right kind of – in the appropriate kind of way when the circumstances are such that I can act in that way.
So now we have – how do we get the normative account? How do we get the – you know, when we have an utterance, "You ought to do such and such." Well, this is the structure he thinks this kind of translates into.

And if we just bracket the belief aspect of it, and let's plug in something – I always forget your case of the, "You should do the ritual sacrifices." I think, "You ought to help old ladies who need help crossing the street." That's one thing that I do. Or no, no, no. "You ought to help drowning children. You should – you ought to save drowning children." Let's do it like that.

So if the expression is, "You ought to save drowning children," he thinks this just translates into, "You ought to save – saving drowning children is desirable or required." He thinks that is just a retranslation of, "You ought to save drowning children." It's just to say it is desirable to do this. It's required to do this.

But this is not going to get you to try to save the drowning child. And it picks up what Parimal was saying about direction of fit. So Smith agrees with this thought. Desires have the direction of fit of you want to change the world when you have them. I desire chocolate, but there is no chocolate in the room. I don't stop desiring chocolate because there is no chocolate. I start looking for ways to try to get chocolate insofar as I desire. I could stop desiring it. But simply because there is no chocolate there is not going to stop that desire. But if I believe there is chocolate in the room, and I look around and there is not, I change the belief. It's not true there is chocolate in the room.

So that's the way mind-to-world fits. So for Smith, just believing that one should save drowning children isn't enough to make you do anything to try to make any alteration in the world. It's not going to prompt you to act.
Only desires can prompt you to act because they're the things that you try to change the world in light of. So just believing to save drowning children is desirable is not going to get you to do a thing.

So how on earth does it get you to do anything? Because as a meta-ethicist, he wants an account. I mean, it would be very unfortunate if your meta-ethics couldn't make you do anything. So he has moved – and this is – we're not – I'm not satisfied, Parimal is not satisfied. It is a very strange solution, and he changes his mind. His work – I mean, this is according to one way of cashing out his view. Different papers cash it out slightly different, and I think it is still a work in progress.

But the first move is to say, well, to believe that saving drowning children is desirable, which is the normative reasoning, just is to believe that I would desire to save a drowning child if they had a maximally informed and coherent desire set. Okay.

FEMALE SPEAKER

Could you say that again, only the last part of the sentence?

BRONWYN FINNIGAN

Yeah, sure. To desire – to say to save drowning children is desirable is just to say that I would desire – I would desire to save drowning children if I had a maximally informed and coherent desire set. Now —

PARIMAL PATIL

That's just how he parses it.
BRONWYN FINNIGAN

Yeah. He has kind of built a career on unpacking what this means. So what does this mean? Well, if we just look at the maximally informed section, if I don't know what a drowning child is, I'm not going to desire to save a drowning child. I might have that desire, but I wouldn't do anything if I didn't know how to pick one out in the world. So if I'm ignorant of some relevant fact, I might not be pushed to act on that kind of desire. That's one move. So he is very optimistic that if we all had the same information – there is lots of ignorance about what is going on in the world. If we all had the same information, then we might – that's one-half of it. We might be inclined to act on those desires.

I think in cases of abortion, this comes up. I taught an introduction to ethics course, and this kind of thing came up a lot, you know. A lot of people have – I think it is built on this idea that a lot of people have misinformation about certain things. They make evaluative judgments, but if they really knew the facts, they might change their evaluative judgments. That's the kind of sentiment that is behind this idea. So if we get more information, we might be inclined to act on these kinds of desires.

But that's not enough, because he also wants to say it is a coherent desire set. So he wants to say we have all of these other desires. If desiring to save drowning children was compatible with the other desires I have, and I had the relevant information that allowed me to pick out a situation where that was relevant, then I would desire to save the drowning child. And the only move he has to say, "Well, why assume that this particular desire is going to be the coherent desire set?" is to say, "Well, isn't it kind of obvious? I mean, isn't it more coherent that this is part of the set than otherwise?" That's all he says. So in a way, it is a justificatory relation. In virtue of
that particular desire to save drowning children being coherent with his desire set, then I will have this desire to save the drowning child. And then you get the same motivating structure. But if I have to do something in order to do that, and I believe that this is a means to save the drowning child, like calling a lifeguard is a way to save the drowning child, then I will have a desire to call the lifeguard, and I will do that. And that's how I get my action popping out.

Now this is—one little wrinkle comes in because he wants to say that even in cases where we act ethically, we only—we have motivating reasons. They're the things that explain and make intelligible what we do. Well, what if it's the case that desiring to save a drowning child straightaway is an action? You don't need to find any means. How do you get your belief-desire pair in that case? So you've got desire to save the drowning child. "Saving drowning children is desirable. I would do it in such a circumstance. Such a circumstance is the case. I desire to do it." How do you get the belief-desire pair that you need to get a motivating reason so that you can explain it? And he does it by a little trick. He sort of says, "Well, let's say I desire to save a drowning child. I don't have to do anything else in order to do it. I'm disposed to do that. I don't need to do any means and reasoning. Well, I just do it by just plugging it in that I believe that saving drowning children is a means to saving drowning children. And then I have my pair." It's very trivial, but it gives you the motivating reason structure, and then you get the rest popping out.

Okay. So that's the Smith account. We really don't like that first transition. That's his attempt to try to get to what is the equivalent of the instigating awareness to desiring to act.

PARIMAL PATIL
That is the belief is the instigating awareness, and that first transition is the desire to act, and then going from desire to act to motivation to act is the second transition.

BRONWYN FINNIGAN

That's right. And this believing would do – very similar to – in some ways, you can see it resonates with the conditional that Parimal came up with. But it has got these coherence conditions in here that it is not clear how they would be satisfied and what the conditions are. It's very slippery.

PARIMAL PATIL

So we would replace – if Gangeśa were to speak to Smith, he would say, "Mr. Smith, the belief would desire to \( \phi i \) if the capability and relative value conditions were satisfied." That is, if \( \psi i \) – I'm sorry, psi – were such that I could bring psi about, and it's worth the effort. That's it. So Gangeśa specifies these conditions.

BRONWYN FINNIGAN

Okay. So that's the contemporary Humean. There were a few different Humeans. I mean, there is a whole industry based on how unlike Hume the Humeans are. A lot of these, like the coherence relations and instrumental relations, Hume would not allow. And here we have got beliefs doing the initiating work. I mean, reason is a slave to passions for Hume, so there are quite a lot of people who are sort of – no, you're twisting it.

But this is Smith trying to do the best he can to kind of get his meta-ethics and his philosophy of action as consistent with Hume as he can, but to try to explain these transitions.
PARIMAL PATIL

What makes him a Humean is not really the belief to the desire to psi move, but the desire to psi move to the motivation move.

BRONWYN FINNIGAN

That's right.

PARIMAL PATIL

That's why he's a Humean. This first part isn't Humean.

BRONWYN FINNIGAN

Yeah. That first part is just how you generate a relevant desire, but desires are doing the pushing.

PARIMAL PATIL

Desires are doing the pushing. Stage one to stage two is not Humean, just like with Gangeśa in a sense.

BRONWYN FINNIGAN

Yeah.

PARIMAL PATIL

Stage two to stage three is Humean. Desire is pushing you here, right? So okay.
Yeah. And it's the direction of fit stuff that is the real thing. All right. So that's the Humeans. So now I'm going to give you the Kantian. Oh God, we spent the entire train ride from Boston hashing this out. We're still not terribly sure. All right. So – and I've been working with Korsgaard in Harvard. That's sort of one of the reasons why I've come across – sorry, I don't know if she'd be very happy with this. I'll run it by her when I get back, and she might be appalled.

So on the Kantian account, this is what – it's Kantian because it is not Kant, it's Korsgaard. And Korsgaard verges from Kant very explicitly in a number of places. But her most recent work is slightly different to what she has been doing in previous years, so she has got a lot of manuscripts with some new arguments coming through. So this is me trying to reconstruct – I mean, it should resonate with a broadly Kantian view, but these are clearly her moves.

So for the Kantian, all right, we do have desires to promote certain ends. Here it is an end. We're not talking about actions, so states of affairs. I want to bring something about. And we have a whole bunch of, you know, empirical knowledge about what kinds of things cause what sort of other things. And for a Kantian of a Korsgaard stripe, these things – there is no structure to it. They're not – we don't have to sort of have it in place that we recognize them. What happens is we have a desire, we have a belief. We pick two of these guys out and we formulate a maxim. Now, what is important for her is we self-consciously formulate a maxim.

Now, a maxim is of this kind of structure. Doing such and such – all right. Now I have to do my chocolate example that is going to get me to an end. Going to the shop will lead to the state of affairs of having chocolate
in these circumstances. Sorry, chocolate – I should come up with something else. But we self-consciously formulate this. Now insofar as we self-consciously formulate it, we think that there is an embedded assumption that that end is desired. The fact that we choose this end and we choose this means, and we put this together as the maxim that we might act on means that we must already desire that end. She doesn't say that, but it has to be true. It has to follow.

So I'm going to use the Amagara [ph] as sort of the symbol for the maxim. This whole structure, doing this in order to achieve this end in these circumstances is the maxim. And it is the maxim as a whole that is going to be up for assessment and choice for her. Now once we've got a maxim on the table, going to the shop in order to have chocolate in these circumstances – I don't know if it's going to work. Sorry, I haven't used that example. It might come out really odd. We test it for endorsement. So endorsement is a matter of whether we could choose this, whether this could be something that I could will.

So the question is, "Well, should I do this?" Well, the first thing you would do in order to answer is does it satisfy the Kantian norm of instrumental rationality. Now, this is not a Kantian expression. This is a Korsgaard expression. But the way she fleshes out what this norm of instrumental rationality is, whoever wills an end necessarily wills the means insofar as they are rational.

So the question is can I achieve this end if I will this means? Is it possible to will them both together such that this end is actually achieved? Can I choose this whole structure such that this end is the outcome by doing this means, this action going to the shop? Can I? So the "can" here is a possibility. The first move, "Is it possible." If it's the case that chocolate is never sold in a shop, then this is going to fail. Going to the shop in order to
bring it about that I have chocolate, well, that's not going to work if it's the case that it is never, logically never – 
I mean, we can come up with a different case, so going to -- you know, swimming in my backyard pool in order 
to have it the case that there is chocolate. That is going to fail. That's never possible.

So that's the first move. Every categorical imperative is going to build on this kind of means-end structure. So 
there is the universalizing consideration. Well, if everybody did this, could I choose this?

Now at the moment, she wants – in her recent work, she wants to say we can give an account of action, which 
presupposes the ethical aspects to it. But you can bracket them off. We don't have to deal with them all at the 
same time. So as you probably know, there are different derivations of the categorical imperative, and one – I 
mean, not treating another as a means to one's end has some substantive moral import, as well as kingdom of 
ends ones. In the first one – you know, ever since Hegel it is very formal, and what is it going to give you 
morally. But she thinks it is going to give you rationality, and that's what we need to get, the action story going.

So I am going to bracket the moral ones, but she thinks once you've got that first means-end, you can do it, then 
you just build formally the rest of the derived categorical imperatives on top of that, and you'll get the clearcut 
ethical cases. I'm not quite sure where she draws the line because I think she wants to say universality is also a 
test for actions. But my worry is always why, you know. I mean, I'm more of a particularist in a lot of ways.

So let's just say we've got the norm of instrumental rationality. I can do this. The next move is to say, well, this 
maxim is appropriate relative to this norm. Now she, in her – this is the "Acting for Reason" paper. She posits 
it as "permissible," sometimes "morally worthy," sometimes "good." I'm guessing these different values of
ethics are going to come out with what categorical imperative it is satisfying. But in any case, permissible – it's a permissible thing to do because it is rational, and it is rational because it satisfies this norm of instrumental rationality.

Now what is the transition relation? For her, you have to recognize that this is appropriate. We're aware that the parts of this maxim are related in the right kind of way. Consciousness is doing some work here. And it is not just that you are aware of it. Appropriateness makes a claim or gets a grip on it. So this maxim is imbued with normative force. It's that feeling of feeling obligated. And it's a psychological state for her, a psychological event for her. We actually feel compelled. We recognize that this is appropriate relative to the norms, and we feel the pull of acting on those norms. And it's quite a significant thing. And it becomes more apparent when they satisfy the more substantive ethical norms, you know, "You ought to do such and such. You ought to save drowning children in order to bring about such and such." In those cases, talking about feeling obliged feels plausible. But she wants to say for actions you feel that as well.

So here we have got – we recognize that this maxim is appropriate, and insofar as we recognize this, we're conscious that it has some kind of force to it. We should act on those kind of norms. But that doesn't make you do anything because we need autonomy. We make choices. So we choose to act on that maxim. We register that it has some claim because it satisfies rationality. But nonetheless, we choose to act on that maxim. And the reason why we choose it is because there is an embedded respect for the moral law. We recognize that it is rational with respect to the moral law, and it is an embedded part of human nature that we respect – it's a tricky part of Kant because it's like, "Oh, aren't you embedding some sensibility into your story? If you didn't have
that respect, you might not feel some compulsion." But she wants to deny that. She wants to say that we choose respectfully, that it's because we recognize that and we have a respect that we make this choice.

So in this case, if you look at the top – so we do have an end that is being promoted. The desire to promote the end that might have been involved in me putting this maxim together doesn't cause me to do this thing at the bottom. I don't know what case would decide that it is.

**PARIMAL PATIL**

Which one, the respect and rationality?

**BRONWYN FINNIGAN**

Oh, no. I'm thinking of what example I've been working with. We choose the whole maxim. The object of choice isn't \( \phi \). You don't choose the means on this account. You choose the entire structure. And insofar as you choose this entire structure, you choose to promote the end. So the end isn't doing any causal work. You're choosing this whole thing. So if you want to say in terms of acting under a description, "We always do things in order to achieve certain other things," the action is that entire structure. You don't just do that thing, and it just happens that that is the outcome, or you choose this because it has this outcome. You don't choose it because of its effect; you choose the entire structure to do this in order to achieve that. Her view is that action is teleological and complex. It has the whole structure going.

So the reason for the action, why did you do what you did – this is the thing. For Smith, if you remember, why did you do – why did you go to the shop? I went to the shop because I desired to eat chocolate, and I believe...
going to the shop would satisfy – would enable me to eat chocolate. Here, she can have the same thing: I'm going to the shop in order to eat chocolate, but I'm not – when I say that as my answer for why I did what I did, I'm not saying these mental states caused me to do it. What I'm saying is this is the full description of what I'm doing. I'm just unpacking that whole action for you because the actions have that kind of structure.

**PARIMAL PATIL**

So the two transitions then are here, the recognition instead of the dispositional theory of desire and the – choosing to respect, right, is the second. So in both cases, there is no pushing on the part of desire, right? It is you choosing to honor, you recognizing the appropriateness of the maxim to get to the first transition. And the second transition is you respecting that maxim.

**BRONWYN FINNIGAN**

That's right. And here again —

**PARIMAL PATIL**

They're very different things than the desire pushing you, right?

**BRONWYN FINNIGAN**

Yeah. And if you remember, here again, just like with the Humean account, on the original picture you had desire to do phi or omega. And then you had to worry about how you could be motivated to do that, and then how you could do it. Here, once you choose to perform this maxim, you're thereby motivated to do all the aspects of it because you have chosen this entire thing. You've chosen this goal and all of the means to it.
because that is part of the whole package, and you do that. Choosing to do this is the same thing as doing it.

And I think that's it. I don't think I have any more bits. Yeah, okay.

JONATHAN GOLD

Well, thank you both very much.

(Applause)