

University of Groningen

Reasoning about morality

Verhoeven, Willem Adriaan

DOI:
[10.33612/diss.135594000](https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.135594000)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2020

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Verhoeven, W. A. (2020). *Reasoning about morality: The empirical turn in Early-Modern moral philosophy from Hobbes to Rousseau*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. University of Groningen. <https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.135594000>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

Stellingen bij het proefschrift: Reasoning about Morality: The Empirical Turn in Early-Modern Moral Philosophy from Hobbes to Rousseau

Willem Verhoeven

1. According to Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, reason is not simply the slave of the passions. Rather, reason participates in practical deliberation by weighing and selecting desires in view of their consequences. (Chapters 1, 2, and 5)
2. For Hobbes, practical reason is neither an innate faculty nor limited to merely finding the means to our desires. Rather, the practical reasoning that produces the laws of nature involves both identifying the pursuits most suited to human nature, and finding the means to these ends in view of the human condition. (Chapter 1)
3. Locke's dichotomy between ideas of modes and of substances prohibits the method of deriving values from facts. As Locke does not provide an alternative approach to moral epistemology, his philosophy is left without a clear foundation for morality. (Chapter 2)
4. As Hobbes, Locke, Condillac, and Rousseau all maintain that words play an important role in human cognition by structuring and expanding our ideas, they have sometimes been read as early proponents of linguistic relativism. Yet this interpretation is only warranted in the case of Condillac. (Chapter 3)
5. Helvétius's highly reductionist account of human nature describes humans as entirely determined by their passions. Accordingly, Helvétius thinks that the purpose of both morality and the state is to provide the most effective means to satisfy whatever passions we might have. (Chapter 4)
6. Rousseau's moral epistemology and conception of man should be interpreted in the context of early modern empiricism rather than as a return to Platonism or an anticipation of Kant. (Chapter 5)
7. In the study of the history of philosophy, it is often more instructive to display the fissures and the loose ends of a theory than to strive for a fully coherent interpretation by trying to resolve all of its inconsistencies. (Introduction)
8. The approach of deriving morality from a conception of human nature can be interpreted as an attempt to apply an empiricist methodology to ethics, as it presents morality as representative of an empirical object – namely human nature.