

statements is explained by appeal to human stances, in virtue of their being related to agents, hypothetical or actual.

The neointernalist character of the proposal is due to the relation of resultance between reason-giving properties and desires. The resultance relation is neither a causal nor a justificatory relation. The resultance relation makes conceptual space for us to relate reasons to desires and reasons to values in an elucidatory and informative way that avoids the reduction of the resultant property to the resultance base of the resultant property.

Reason-giving properties are resultant upon a base of desires. Desires are based in perceived properties of things and give reasons to favor, choose, etc. those things.

An agent's pro-attitudes are holistic in their relations. Some may, of course, be more important than others, but there is not one anchor desire or even a set of anchor desires. The pro-attitudes that form the resultance base of a given reason for the agent are themselves a complicated and holistic set of attitudes embedded in the agent's larger psychological makeup.

My account is also particularist. Particularism is a bottom-up, holist view. To the extent that there are useful and valid generalizations about the valence and behavior of reason-giving properties, they are not the bases for the reason-giving or right-making or wrong-making properties of any given context but rather are based in the way contexts, a wide variety of them, actually behave. That someone wants power can be, in one context, a reason to give it to her, that someone wants power can be, in a different context, a reason to withhold it from him.

The most plausible account of reasons, I believe, is one that understand reasons as contextual and "situated" but allows us to think about reflection on those reasons in about as radical a way as we should reasonably expect. I am rejecting the idea of an Archimedean point outside of whatever contexts make for agents' reasons, a point from which we can decide what reasons the agent really has. We can figure out what reasons the agent really has only by *relative* abstraction and attempts at recontextualization.

Reason Contextualism: Theses

This dissertation is about the nature of reasons for actions and attitudes. Stepping back from a morals-based discussion and looking at reasons as such, it explores reasons as favorers or justifiers. I show that a conception of reasons is prior to a conception of rationality, then propose a neointernalist, contextualist account of reasons.

Reasons, Rationality, and Value

The most basic sense of 'reason' is a consideration that counts in favor of an action or attitude. In this dissertation I am mainly concerned with reasons as contributory reasons. A contributory reason is "a feature whose presence makes something of a case for acting by in such a way that the overall case for doing that action be improved or strengthened by the addition of a second reason of the same [contributory] sort" (J. Dancy: "What Do Reasons Do"? (2003), 95). This is to be distinguished from an 'operative' or 'motivating' reason. When we cite an agent's operative reasons, we are trying to make her deliberations, attitudes, and actions intelligible. One can see a motivating reason as a conjunction of a pro-attitude toward an action with a certain property and a belief that a certain action has that property or can bring it about. The reason then consists in this conjunction, which rationalizes the action.

We might think that because something is good we have a reason to promote it or instantiate it in our actions. Thomas Scanlon rejects this: an option gives us reasons not in virtue of its value, but rather its value depends on its reason-giving properties. Another view of reasons has it that what it is for a consideration to be a reason is for it to function in various ways to make actions count as more or less rational, where rational is specified ahead of what a reason is. I take up the dispute between these two basic positions. The dispute boils down to whether we should hold that 'being a reason' is a more fundamental notion for an account of practical reason than 'being rational,' or vice versa. I side with Scanlon on this issue, but my understanding of the relation between being a reason and having value differs from Scanlon's.

The standards or requirements of rationality specify how an agent ought to think and/or act: how her various attitudes ought to "hang together" and how they ought to relate to her actions. According to Scanlon's account, natural properties make for reasons "directly." Being valuable is not a reason-giving property: "to be good or valuable is to have other properties that constitute such reasons— It is not goodness or value itself that provides reasons but rather other properties that do so. For this reason I call it a buck-passing account" (T. Scanlon: *What We Owe To Each Other* (1998), 97).

We have to determine whether or not rationality has priority relative to reasons for actions and attitudes. One could claim that reasons have their normative strength or are defined with reference to the rationality of actions. Thus, roughly, one would have a reason to do an action only if it is rational. My view is that these sorts of theories of reasons are mistaken. There is no doubt that to be a reason for an agent the action must be rational for the agent to do. However, it is a mistake to try to construct a maximalist theory of rationality for actions and on its basis determine what reasons agents have.

I criticize two accounts of rationality. One is taken from Derek Parfit (and Scanlon's discussion of Parfit), and it holds that an attitude's being irrational is a matter of its being open to rational criticism (D. Parfit: *Reasons and Persons* (1984); "Reasons and Motivation"

(1997); "Rationality and Reasons" (2001)). However, for most of our desires, there will always be some plausible rational criticism of them (usually more than one), and some basis for defending them.

Another account, that of Joshua Gert, puts rationality first and construes reasons as having normative force by virtue of their role in contributing to the rationality of actions (J. Gert, "Justifying and Requiring: Two Dimensions of Normative Strength" (2003)). For Gert, an action is rational if and only if it does not involve the risk of non-trivial harm to the agent or if involving the risk of non-trivial harm to the agent this harm is "made up for" by the action's likely bringing about some at least as important benefit or avoidance of some at least as important harm for someone.

I show that both of these "maximalist" theories of rationality end up helping themselves to assumptions about what reasons agents have. However, these cannot themselves be derived from a maximalist conception of rationality *not* based on reasons. Therefore, in fact, reasons come first for them.

While Parfit's definition is overly inclusive already on the face of it, my objection to Gert is the following. On Gert's definition of irrationality, it seems to be irrational to drive your car to buy a carton of ice cream. Driving your car to get a carton of ice cream involves a risk of non-trivial harm to you. There is chance, small but real, that you will suffer a serious accident. This would be quite significant harm. By buying a carton of ice cream I neither avoid a harm as significant (i.e., as severe) as a serious traffic accident nor get any benefit that could outweigh being in a serious traffic accident. So, on Gert's definition of irrationality, it is irrational to drive to the supermarket to get a carton of ice cream. Gert's conception of rationality and irrationality tacitly depends on claims about what reasons agents have, that is, that harms and benefits give us reasons for action. Why is it irrational to seek harm without compensation? Because I have reasons (associated with my life, health, those I love) not to seek or to avoid harm. It does not work the other way: my reason for avoiding/refraining from a harmful action is not that it is irrational (but that it destroys my health, deprives my of my life etc.). Thus, with the introduction of the consideration of harm and benefit, Gert's professed rationality-first view really puts reasons first.

How reasons come first; reasons, agents, and internalism

The terms "harm" and "benefit" are very abstract evaluative terms. In a sense, of course, we all have reason to avoid harms and get benefits. However, such a conception of value and reasons is problematic. To say that something is a benefit is just to say that it gives specific reasons for action and has specific evaluative qualities. It is reasons (and values) that come first, and not rationality. Items that give reasons must be thought of as giving reasons in their concrete normative and evaluative properties. 'Harm' and 'benefit' should be understood as abstract second-order properties that are based in concrete reason-giving.

What is it for an agent to have a reason to have some attitude or perform some action? One of the most vehement disputes in the theory of reasons, the dispute over "internalism". The internalist position can be sketched in the following way: A has a reason to perform a particular action if it is the case that if A deliberated on the facts in a procedurally rational way, starting from her current motivations (her motivational set), A would be motivated to perform that action. For Bernard Williams, who proposed the internal-external reasons problem, this connection to the agent's current motivational set is necessary in the case of

internal, but would not be necessary in the case of external reasons (which, therefore, do not exist for Williams).

The motivations we start our deliberation with are pertinent when we talk about substantively rational deliberation, but not to procedurally rational deliberation. Substantively rational deliberation is deliberation that starts out from good or appropriate motivations. Procedurally rational deliberation, in turn, is deliberation that is rational in the sense that errors of fact and reasoning are avoided etc., but is not a matter of any of the motivations with which A began her deliberations.

Since reasons are agent-centered (being tied to particular motivational sets), there are no reasons in themselves. 'Motivational set' means the agent's desires, pro-attitudes, etc. taken on the whole. Motivational sets are not static, but dynamic in relation to rational processes of deliberation. For Williams, deliberation often involves the modification of the agent's motivational set, along the way of the deliberative route.

Internal reason statements can be discovered in deliberative reasoning. If A has a reason to perform a certain act, then A, in principle, could discover it in deliberation from her motivational set. Two or more internal reason statements can be true of an agent and those statements can even conflict. In cases in which two or more internal reason statements are true of an agent there may be no sound deliberative route directly to a reason statement that resolves the conflict.

Reasons contextualism

Much of the literature on reasons starts out from the fact that agents have reasons and argues for or against certain specific substantive theses about those reasons (for instance, whether or not reasons are desire-based, whether they consist in states of affairs or propositions, or how best to accommodate morality within an account of reasons). These sorts of substantive arguments are worthwhile, but need to be understood within a broader framework if they are to push us toward more comprehensive and useful characterizations of reasons. My guiding question here is: how do we come to have reasons in the first place, if they are to figure in agents' practical deliberations and "weigh" for and against practical conclusions? I propose what I take to be the most plausible account of reasons: reasons contextualism. Context functions in reason contextualism as constitutive of the reasons the agent has.

Contextualism in epistemology is primarily a counter-skeptical move that introduces strong semantic constraints, constraints of context, on the use of the word 'knows.' For the epistemological contextualist, the meaning of 'knows' depends upon the context in which it is being employed and hence the ascriptions of knowledge to subjects in which the term 'knows' is used.

The reasons contextualism I am advocating is not a counter-skeptical move. Context plays a different role for me. Contextual "standards" for reasons are not more or less stringent; however, they vary from context to context.

I present some features of what I would take to be a convincing theory of reasons: constructivism, 'neointernalism', and particularism (with the last, I sympathize in many respects, but I don't endorse the entire package).

Constructivism makes the ontological claim that moral facts are constituted by human stances and the semantic claim that moral statements are truth-apt, but the truth of true moral