

body has the authority to demand immoral conduct, but we may still have the standing to rebuke people who follow morality and breach their commitments to us.

As I hope these varied challenges have illustrated, Gilbert's *Rights and Demands* is immensely rich. It will prompt philosophical investigation on many fronts and play an enduring role in shaping rights theory.

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Henning, Tim. *From a Rational Point of View: How We Represent Subjective Perspectives in Practical Discourse*.

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From a Rational Point of View attempts two main projects. The first is the development of a novel theory of the semantics of belief and desire sentences, called Parentheticalism. Its guiding idea is that we often use belief and desire sentences not to speak from our own perspectives about the minds of others, but rather to speak, from other peoples' perspectives, about the world.

Since belief and desire sentences are ubiquitous in "practical discourse" (the language of reasons, rationality, and ought), Henning's second project is to mine Parentheticalism for insights into practical philosophy. Henning argues that Parentheticalism illuminates (inter alia) the transparency of belief, the logic of anankastic conditionals, the ontology of normative reasons, the distinction between subjective and objective normative reasons, the normativity of the requirements of rationality, the ontology of motivating reasons, the "missing agent" problem in action theory, and even Kant's thesis of the unity of apperception. The predominant payoffs are unity and compositionality. Parentheticalism's account of practical concepts is argued to be more unified, and its semantic theory more thoroughly compositional, than those of familiar alternatives.

From a Rational Point of View is dense, complicated, and often technical. It everywhere rigorously engages the details of relevant literature, even concerning points Henning admits are minor. The book's digressions often make real contributions, but they also distract from the flow of argument. Readers primarily interested in the big picture may find this aspect of the book challenging. But persistence pays off. The book's semantic theory is imaginative, enlightening, and appealing, as is its unifying account of reasons, oughts, and rationality. Both components deserve and reward close study.

The rest of this review aims to provide a sense of the big picture. After an informal overview of Parentheticalism, I sketch two areas of application which I find especially promising: the distinction between subjective and objective reasons, and the normativity of the requirements of rationality. I conclude by suggesting that while Henning's book contributes greatly to our understanding of practical language, it does less to settle substantive questions in practical philosophy than one might hope.

PARENTHETICALISM

Parentheticalism's leading observation is that belief and desire sentences are not always used primarily to describe the minds of others. Consider the following:

- (A) Rebecca believes that the Twins will win.
- (B) Rebecca desires a ticket to the Twins game.

Sometimes, in uttering (A) or (B), my goal is not to inform you about Rebecca's mind but to introduce as a topic of discussion the possibility that the Twins will win, or to request a ticket for Rebecca. That is, I might utter (A) in roughly the same spirit as one might utter the following:

- (A*) The Twins will win (or so Rebecca believes).

And while in American English it is more idiomatic to use "wants" or "would like" in this way, I might nonetheless utter (B) in roughly the same spirit as one might utter the following:

- (B*) Sell Rebecca a Twins ticket (or so she requests)!

On such a reading, the "believes" and "desires" clauses of (A) and (B) are not the subject matter of my utterances, but merely "parenthetical" comments (as J. O. Urmson famously put it, in "Parenthetical Verbs," *Mind* 61 [1952]: 480–96). This usage of these sentences is associated with a range of linguistic data. For example, if someone replies to (A) or (B) with "No!" they may be best interpreted as disagreeing with the claim that the Twins will win, or the imperative in (B*), rather than denying that Rebecca's mind is as I say it is. Similarly, anaphoric uses of "that" (as in "I disagree with that!") may be best interpreted as referring to the claim that the Twins will win, or the imperative.

Strikingly, the orthodox semantics for these sentences does not explain why these sentences can be used this way. But Henning argues at length that the aptness of this usage cannot be explained pragmatically (12–22).

Henning thus proposes a novel semantics for these sentences. Parentheticalism claims that belief and desire sentences are ambiguous between straight readings and "parenthetical readings." The latter are analyzed in a way inspired by Chris Potts's account of conventional implicature (*The Logic of Conventional Implicature* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005]).

Potts's key idea is to analyze some sentences as expressing a pair of contents, one "at issue" and one "not at issue." The at-issue content (henceforth AIC) represents the sentence's intuitive subject matter, whereas the not-at-issue content (NAIC) represents the sentence's parenthetical comment about the subject matter. Potts develops a dynamic semantics exploiting this distinction. The NAIC is what is asserted, strictly speaking. But the AIC fixes the interpretation of subsequent anaphoric pronouns (such as "that") and provides the target for subsequent disagreement ("No!"). When a two-content clause is embedded, its AIC is what contributes to the semantic value of the embedding sentence.

Henning applies Potts's ideas to belief and desire sentences, which end up ambiguous between two readings (15–30). On straight readings, they express a single (at issue) content. On parenthetical readings, they express both an AIC (e.g., that the Twins will win) and an NAIC (e.g., that Rebecca believes that the Twins will win). The AIC governs subsequent discourse and composes in the way Potts describes (thus explaining the linguistic observations glossed above). But since the NAIC is asserted, these sentences are “subject-oriented” (5): they attribute their subject matter to someone else's perspective. Henning develops three distinct formalisms (relying on different assumptions) to make these ideas precise. And, as (B*) foreshadowed, Henning argues at length that the AICs of desire sentences are imperatives (61–64).

My discussion will remain at an informal level, but one more semantic detail is important. Henning combines Parentheticalism with a contextualist semantics for “ought” and “reason” (88–92). Ought and reason sentences are true or false relative to a pair of contextually supplied parameters (the “modal base” and “ordering source”), which represent (very roughly) a set of options and an ordering over those options. When ought or reason clauses appear subsequent to belief or desire clauses, the AICs of the latter determine the values for the former's parameters.

Parentheticalism raises a number of questions. Is Henning right that this usage of belief and desire sentences cannot be explained pragmatically? Is it plausible that belief and desire sentences are systematically ambiguous? Are parenthetical uses of these sentences as ubiquitous as Henning suggests? Though these questions are important, I will set them aside in what follows, focusing instead on two of Henning's applications of Parentheticalism to problems in practical philosophy.

APPLICATIONS

The first application I will consider is to the distinction between subjective and objective normative reasons. Suppose Bernie, who desires gin, falsely believes that a glass containing gasoline contains gin. Many find it natural to say that there is no normative reason for him to drink. Yet it still seems as though there is a sense in which drinking is the thing for him to do. This idea is often captured by saying that there is a subjective normative reason for him to drink. On Parfit's influential gloss of this idea, objective normative reasons are primitive. Then, P is a subjective normative reason for A to ϕ just in case A believes P, and if P were true, P would be an (objective) normative reason for P to ϕ (Derek Parfit, *On What Matters* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 1:35–36).

Parfit-style approaches face numerous well-known objections. The objection that worries Henning most is the concern that they fail to explain “the normativity of subjective normative reasons” (111). He claims that Parfit-style approaches cannot explain why “we feel entitled to criticize” people who don't comply with their subjective normative reasons (111). If I understand his point correctly, Henning thinks that an account of subjective normative reason should entail that when something is a subjective normative reason for someone to act, it has some actual normative property. A Parfit-style approach doesn't do that, as it entails only that subjective normative reasons would have a normative property if they were true.

Henning argues that contextualism and Parentheticalism allow for a superior account of subjective reasons. The bones of this account are familiar from discussions by other contextualists: claims about subjective reasons are said to be claims about normative reasons that are made in contexts that supply an ordering source determined by the agent's perspective (say, by the agent's beliefs). By contrast, objective reasons are reasons relative to (say) the context of a fully informed observer (113).

Henning's innovation is to use Parentheticalism to resolve a tension between this contextualist proposal and key linguistic data. We standardly ascribe false subjective reasons by using belief sentences, as in the following:

(C) Bernie's reason to drink is that he believes that the glass contains gin.

But contextualism entails that (C) is false, since Bernie's belief is not literally his reason. Moreover, contextualism predicts that we can correctly say that the reason for Bernie to drink is that the glass contained gin. But we can't: reasons ascriptions are factive, requiring true complements.

Parentheticalism squares contextualism with the truth of (C). An embedded belief clause contributes its AIC, not its NAIC, to the semantic value of the embedding sentence. So, Parentheticalism entails that (C) is true just in case Bernie's reason to drink is that the glass contains gin (speaking in a theorist's language in which reasons ascriptions are not factive). While other contextualists have suggested similar ideas, Henning claims that only Parentheticalism provides a fully compositional account of the truth conditions of (C) (126–27). (Notably, however, the combination of contextualism and Parentheticalism does not explain—and leaves somewhat puzzling—why reasons ascriptions in English are factive in the first place.)

This approach explains the normativity of subjective reasons as follows. Since claims about subjective reasons are simply claims about normative reasons (albeit relative to a particular context), they straightforwardly ascribe to subjective reasons a normative property: the property of being a normative reason.

Now turn to the second application: practical rationality. Henning adopts a "myth theory" about structural requirements of rationality. Henning's discussion is complex, but his central point seems to be that even wide-scope approaches to rationality cannot simultaneously explain the "normative status" of rationality and avoid implausible bootstrapping (137–38). That is, he argues that any theory which entails that we ought to do what rationality requires of us will also entail that, for example, some evil agents ought to do evil things.

Henning develops a two-part theory that allows him to capture relevant intuitive data while denying the existence of structural requirements. The first part is an account of rational action in terms of subjective reasons (135–36), which I will set aside here. The second is a suite of conditionals which mirror structural requirements of rationality but are said to be simply truths about what people ought to do (the truth of which is explained by Parentheticalism and contextualism).

Henning's replacement for the *enkrasia* requirement is illustrative:

(D) If you believe you ought to ϕ , then you ought to intend to ϕ (152).

When the antecedent is interpreted parenthetically, its AIC (that you ought to ϕ) is both what contributes compositionally to the meaning of the full sentence and what supplies the ordering source for the interpretation of the subsequent “ought.” So (D) is true just in case if you ought to ϕ , then (given that) you ought to intend to ϕ . And that sentence (Henning claims) is true. (One might worry here, in John Broome’s spirit, about cases in which one believes that one will ϕ even if one does not intend to ϕ . But I won’t pursue that point here.)

Henning claims that this approach is more plausible than structural approaches. Because (D) is true only on a parenthetical reading of its antecedent, it does not combine with “You believe you ought to ϕ ” (on a straight reading) to entail that you ought to intend to ϕ , relative to any context at all. So it does not license implausible bootstrapping (149–50). (This feature of the view resembles other recent contextualist approaches to the semantics of these conditionals, but Henning claims that Parentheticalism’s semantics is more fully compositional than the others.) And Henning claims that conditionals such as (D) and related language are normative simply because they are “a special case” of ought-discourse (133).

REFLECTIONS

I think that there is quite a lot to be said for the contextualist approach to both of these issues. And I am impressed with Parentheticalism’s fully compositional explanations of the key contextualist gambits. Yet I doubt whether Parentheticalism and contextualism can, by themselves, provide a full account of either subjective reasons or practical rationality.

My worry concerns whether Henning’s approach satisfactorily explains the normativity of subjective reasons and rationality. Henning’s theory purports to account for the normativity of subjective reasons and of rationality by holding that sentences about subjective reasons and sentences like (D) refer to normative properties. Sentences about subjective reasons attribute the property of being a normative reason to a proposition, and the sentences Henning uses to replace structural requirements of rationality ascribe the property of being what you ought to have or do to a mental state or action.

Here, I think that many philosophers will not be convinced. A number of philosophers (even those sympathetic to contextualism) have recently suggested that not all claims about reasons and oughts refer to normative properties. On this view, only claims about reasons and oughts interpreted relative to a particular, privileged context (and thus a particular, privileged ordering source) refer to genuinely normative properties. John Pittard and Alex Worsnip call this ordering source “the actually true normative standards” (“Metanormative Contextualism and Normative Uncertainty,” *Mind* 126 [2017]: 155–93, 170), and John Broome calls the ordering it induces the “final ordering” (“A Linguistic Turn in the Philosophy of Normativity?,” *Analytic Philosophy* 57 [2016]: 1–14, 10). Claims about reasons and oughts made relative to other contexts, and thus other ordering sources, do not refer to normative properties and so are not (strictly speaking) normative claims.

According to this view, explaining the normativity of subjective reasons and of *enkrasia* would require something specific. It would require explaining why subjective reasons have the property of being normative reasons (relative to the actually true normative standards) and explaining why we ought (relative to the actually true normative standards) to intend to do what we believe we ought to do. Parentheticalism *per se* does not deliver this result. It explains only why subjective reasons are reasons relative to the perspective of the agent in question, and why agents ought (relative to their own perspectives) to intend to do what they believe they ought to do. And when an agent has false beliefs or vicious desires, the context associated with their perspective will supply an ordering source other than the actually true normative standards.

This way of thinking about normativity suggests a limit to the insights Parentheticalism can provide into practical philosophy. Parentheticalism offers a unified, rigorously compositional account of the truth conditions of sentences that involve belief, desire, reason, and ought. That is a substantial accomplishment. But Parentheticalism leaves unanswered what Henning correctly identifies as a central question about subjective reasons and rationality, namely, whether (and, if they are, why) they are normative. It thus does not offer a complete theory of subjective reasons and practical rationality that can stand as a genuine alternative to, for example, cognitivist or self-government-based theories of practical rationality.

While this is a significant limit to the interest of Parentheticalism to practical philosophers, it may not ultimately be a criticism of Henning's project, as he sees it. Henning at one point notes his agreement with Pittard and Worsnip about related issues (94). So it may be that he does not take himself to have explained the normativity of subjective reasons and rationality in the sense I have been discussing. As John Broome once, notoriously, said, "Even the word 'normative' has a nonnormative (in my sense) sense" (*Rationality through Reasoning* [Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013], 11). But explaining the normativity of subjective reasons and rationality, in this sense of normativity, is an important project that interests many philosophers. And those seeking such an account will not find it in Parentheticalism.

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Korsgaard, Christine M. *Fellow Creatures: Our Obligations to the Other Animals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 272. \$24.95 (cloth).

Christine Korsgaard is one of the most important moral philosophers working today. Over the past several decades, she has gradually constructed a powerful theory of the self, the good, and the right to show that if you value anything at all, then you must value all rational beings as ends. In this eagerly awaited book, she expands this theory by arguing that if you value anything at all, then you must value all sentient beings as ends too. She then examines the implications of this argument for a wide range of issues in animal and environmental ethics.

This is an incredibly important work. Despite an emerging consensus that sentient beings have moral standing, many philosophers still assume that Kant-