EXITING THE CONSEQUENTIALIST CIRCLE: TWO SENSES OF BRINGING IT ABOUT[1]

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Section I: Introduction

Consequentialism is a state of affairs centered moral theory. It determines the moral rightness, wrongness, requirement, permissibility, and/or prohibition of actions through appeal to rankings of states of affairs as better and worse.[2] This state of affairs centered moral theory finds support in state of affairs centered views of value more generally, upon which the fundamental things of value are states of affairs, or at least upon which the relevance of all things of value to reasons for action is captured in rankings of states of affairs as better or worse. Such theories of value and distinctively moral value find additional support in state of affairs centered views of practical reasons, actions, and desires, upon which all reasons to act are reasons to promote states of affairs, the object of every action is to bring about some state of affairs, and all desires/preferences are propositional attitudes towards states of affairs as to be brought about or made true.

Each of these state of affairs centered views has encountered strong opposition, but together they form a mutually reinforcing circle, and

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[2] Traditional consequentialism holds that it is right to act "so as to promote agent-neutral goods," (Pettit 2015, 228), but more recent formulations often remove the limitation to an agent-neutral ranking of goods and to the deontic category of 'rightness,' maintaining only that agents "ought always to do what will lead to the outcome that is best." (Schroeder 2007, 279) Even such a broadened characterization does not accommodate certain forms of consequentialism, including satisficing and multi-ranking forms.

the support that each provides the others often constitutes the most effective response to the serious challenges that each encounters separately. For example, within the context of a commitment to the claim that the fundamental things of value are states of affairs, or are at least captured in rankings of states of affairs, the most plausible view of reasons will be one upon which all reasons are reasons to promote such valuable states of affairs, and intentional actions will all be rationalized as promotings of such valuable states of affairs (Pettit 2015, 224–232). Apparent reasons to act that are not reasons to promote will be accounted for through indirection, or by sophisticating the account of rankings to account for such actions as promotings. Similarly, if all actions aim at states of affairs to be brought about, and all reasons to act are reasons to promote states of affairs, it will be plausible to expect the rationales for all such reasons to be based in appeals to the value of the states of affairs that they are reasons to promote (Smith 2003; Portmore 2011, ch. 3).

Certain of these state of affairs centered views, moreover, are embedded as a set in cornerstones of contemporary philosophical inquiry. For example, the state of affairs centered views of actions, reasons, and desires/preferences are embedded in standard forms of rational choice theory and the 'standard story' of action. To begin inquiry within the context of these default positions is thus to find oneself already operating within the state of affairs centered circle, with strong presumptions in favor of adopting other views within the circle.[3] Once we find ourselves within this circle of mutually reinforcing state of affairs centered views, the consequentialist circle, it becomes difficult to exit. Serious difficulties confront these views taken separately, but each can draw upon the others as grounds for adopting what might otherwise seem to be implausible or ad hoc strategies for accommodating the view in question.

Many other philosophers have noted the connection between state of affairs centered moral theories and state of affairs centered accounts of values (Herman 1993), actions (Anscombe 1958; Korsgaard 2008; Schapiro 2001), attitudes (Anderson 2001; Thompson 2008), or reasons (Scanlon 1998), and have argued against the former by arguing against the latter. My arguments here will complement many aspects of these arguments. But these arguments are typically grounded in particular alternative accounts, and such targeted arguments against a particular state of affairs centered account, e.g. of value or reason or attitudes or action, can be countered by the apparent support the state of affairs centered account in question receives from other state of affairs centered accounts. My project, by contrast, is to map an exit route out of this circle, a path that challenges the prima facie plausibility of these state of affairs centered views of actions, reasons, desires, values, and distinctively moral values as a set,

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[3] These points are developed in Secs. III and IV.

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and that does so without relying upon the appeal to any other particular account.

This path comes into view with the distinction between two different senses in which actions can be understood as bringing about states of affairs. The first sense, henceforward the 'deflationary' sense, maintains only that in acting, agents are the cause of their action happening, and make it true, in acting, that the action happens. If I perform action X, I bring it about, in this deflationary sense, that I X – that my Xing occurs. In acting, I cause my action to happen and make it true that it happens. Every completed action is a bringing about in this sense; indeed, bringing about such an alteration of existing states of affairs is a necessary consequent of the completion of any action, regardless of its aim. But the second sense, henceforward the 'rationalization' sense, obtains in cases in which the primary reason for which an action is undertaken is the promotion of some state of affairs. The obtaining of some state of affairs is the reason to perform such an action, and the action itself is a bringing about of the state of affairs that rationalizes it. Only some actions would appear to be bringings about in this second, rationalizing sense.

I will demonstrate that the state of affairs centered views making up the consequentialist circle are committed to the claim that all actions, reasons, desire/preferences, and values involve bringing about in not just the deflationary sense, but the rationalizing sense as well. Failure to clearly distinguish these senses, I will argue, obscures the implausibility of such views as a set.[4] The distinction thus provides a potential tool for leveraging ourselves out of this consequentialist circle, demonstrating that in the absence of additional argument the connections among such prima facie implausible views are not mutually reinforcing but mutually debilitating.

The distinction between senses of bringing about shifts the burden of proof. Compelling arguments for one or another of these prima facie implausible views, and from this view to the others within the circle, are necessary to make the case for re-entry. I will take up two such arguments. The first purports to provide independent support for the state of affairs centered view of desires/preferences, upon which all desires are attitudes towards states of affairs to be brought about in the rationalizing sense.[5] The argument works "up" from this account of practical attitudes to vindicate the adoption of state of affairs centered views of reasons, actions, and values. The second argument purports to provide independent support for the state of

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[4] David Sosa deploys a similar strategy to the opposite effect, harnessing a distinction between broader and narrower notions of consequence and of what it is to bring about a consequence (1993, 101) to argue that the broader senses, once disambiguated, yield a more defensible version of consequentialism.

[5] Throughout, in referring to 'state of affairs centered' views, I am referring to views that take desires/preferences, actions, reasons, values, and moral values to involve bringing about in both the deflationary and the rationalization sense.

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affairs centered view of value (and in particular moral value), and to work "down" from such an account to vindicate state of affairs centered theories of reasons, desires, and actions. I will demonstrate that each argument loses its apparent force once the distinction between senses of bringing about is kept clearly in view. The distinction thus not only supports a presumption against entering into this circle of mutually reinforcing state of affairs centered views, it provides resources to block common arguments that purport to leverage philosophical inquiry back into the circle.

In the next section I will clarify these two different senses of bringing about, sketch the prevalent view of action that attributes the second, rationalizing sense to all actions, and demonstrate the role of appeals to "degenerate" cases of bringing about in fending off apparent counterexamples. With the distinction clearly in view, we are left with the prima facie plausibility of the claim that all actions are bringings about in the deflationary sense, but the prima facie implausibility of the prevalent view of all actions as bringings about in the second, rationalizing sense. In section III I will demonstrate that the prima facie implausibility of this state of affairs centered view of action carries over to state of affairs centered views of reason and desire/preference. I will demonstrate that such state of affairs centered views are embedded in two fundamental tools of practical inquiry, rational choice theory and the standard story of action, and I will demonstrate the support that the adoption of these state of affairs centered views provides for state of affairs centered views of value and of distinctively moral value.

In section IV I will sketch the Attitudes Up argument, and show that its premises are undermined with the introduction of the distinction between senses of bringing about. In Section V I make the case that a similar fate befalls the Values Down argument. There may be reasons for entering into this circle of mutually reinforcing state of affairs centered views, but the distinction between senses of bringing about suggests instead that it is alternatives to these views that are initially plausible, and that many standard challenges to the plausibility of these alternatives are misguided. I will close in Section VI by demonstrating the particular relevance of this result for the wave of recent arguments defending evaluator-relative forms of consequentialism (e.g. Dreier 1993, 2011; Louise 2004; Portmore 2007; Sen 1983; Smith 2003).

Section II: Action and the Two Senses of Bringing It About

Certain features appear to be part of almost any account of intentional action. In particular, it is common ground among widely varying accounts of intentional action that actions are distinguished by the agent's answer to Anscombe's "Why?" question, the question that solicits the agent's reasons in acting (Anscombe 2000, 9). Actions are performances, and the end of any action is the completion of the relevant

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performance guided by the agent's reasons for undertaking it, the reasons in light of which it becomes intelligible as an action, and as the particular action that it is.[6] Our ordinary practices of giving and taking reasons for action seem to invoke reasons of different sorts. In many cases reasons are provided by locating the action as a component part of more comprehensive actions. I am breaking eggs because I am making an omelet, or intend to do so, and I am making an omelet because I am preparing breakfast for my family, etc. Here the reasons for action are provided by other actions, and the agent's end in acting is to complete the action in question, in the process of completing the more comprehensive action that provides its rationale (Thompson 2008, 138ff; Anscombe 2000, 38; Moran and Stone 2011, 53–55; Frey and Frey 2017).

In other cases we provide reasons for acting through appeal to the value of the persons with whom we interact. I might keep my promise, for example, and tell the truth, because recognizing the dignity of the people with whom I interact requires me, and every other person, to do so (Darwall 2006, 10–11; Scanlon 1998, ch. 7). Here the reason for acting is provided by appeal to the value of persons. In yet other cases my reasons for acting seem to be provided by appeal to a state of affairs that such an action will bring about (Pettit 2015, 224). The threat of a famine occurring in South Sudan, for example, is my reason for donating to famine relief. Thus, our aim in performing any intentional action is to complete the action guided by our reasons for undertaking it, and the ordinary reasons that we cite to rationalize our actions appeal to states of affairs to be promoted, other actions to be completed, respect for the persons with whom we interact, and to myriad other considerations as well.[7]

In completing any action guided by her reasons for undertaking it, the agent brings it about that she performs the action, and the proposition that she performs it comes to be true. She alters states of affairs in at least this particular way—in acting, she causes her action to occur and makes it true that the action takes place. This is the deflationary sense of bringing about, the sense in which every completed action is a bringing about that something (the action) happens, and a making it true that something (the action) happens. Such bringing about in the deflationary sense is a necessary consequent of the completion of any action, regardless of the agent's reasons for undertaking it. If the relevant action is rationalized through appeal to the value of persons, objects, or other actions rather than to the value of

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[6] If the reasons for undertaking any particular action are reasons to promote some state of affairs, then the successful completion of the performance will realize the state of affairs that it is promoting. The end of the action will be its completion guided by the agent's reasons for undertaking it, but because the reasons are to promote some state of affairs, the performance will be one of promoting the relevant state of affairs.

[7] See Scanlon (1998), Kolodny (2011), and Scheffler (2011) for discussions of the range of such considerations in ordinary practice, and the different types of reasons to act and actions that appear to be supported by such considerations.

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states of affairs, it is nonetheless a bringing about in this sense. Although this sense is deflationary compared to alternatives, it is not trivial. Indeed, I suspect it is the sense that captures certain fundamental contrasts between the practical and theoretical spheres.[8]

But this is not the only relevant sense of bringing about. In cases of actions rationalized though appeal to states of affairs, as bringing about such states of affairs, the agent does bring it about in the deflationary sense that she performs the action rationalized, completing the action guided by her reasons to undertake it, but in addition the action is rationalized as bringing about the state of affairs that rationalizes it. As is the case with all actions, actions of this type are guided to completion by reasons for undertaking them, and to complete the action is to bring it about in the deflationary sense that the action occurs. But because the reasons are provided by appeal to states of affairs as reasons to bring about such states of affairs, the action is also a bringing about in a non-deflationary, rationalizing sense. In the deflationary sense any action, regardless of the reasons rationalizing it, is a bringing about; by contrast, only actions rationalized by appeal to states of affairs to be promoted are bringings about in this distinct rationalizing sense.[9] Famine is a bad thing to happen, and I donate to famine relief in an effort to prevent it. My action, donating to famine relief, brings it about, in the deflationary sense, that I donate, but it is also an action of bringing it about, in the rationalizing sense, that famine does not occur, or at least of minimizing its occurrence.

Cases of actions that are bringings about in both senses stand in apparent contrast with cases of actions that are bringings about in the deflationary but not the rationalizing sense. Actions of this latter sort are guided to completion by the reasons that rationalize them, but the reasons are not provided by appeal to states of affairs as reasons to bring about states of affairs. We have already seen that in our ordinary practice of giving and taking practical reasons, such reasons to promote states of affairs seem only to be some reasons among others. When they are the primary reasons for performing actions, the actions will be bringings about in both the deflationary and the rationalizing sense. When other reasons are primary, by contrast, the actions will be bringings about in the deflationary sense, but not, seemingly, in the rationalizing sense. For example, although I may well hold that promise breakings are bad things to happen and/or

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[8] See my subsequent discussion (fn 26) of the potential relevance of this deflationary sense of bringing about to a plausible account of the contrasting directions of fit characteristic of beliefs in the theoretical sphere and desires in the practical sphere. See also the discussion in Sec. IV of relevance of this deflationary sense to the distinction between Weak and Strong Propositionalist accounts of practical attitudes.

[9] Thus, Annette Baier suggests that "one thing I can do…is to contribute causally to a variety of states of affairs," (1970, 653) and Douglas Lavin marks off the subset of cases in which "an agent's doing something…can be understood as her causing something to happen." (2013, 281).

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that my promise breakings are bad things to happen for me or relative to me, hence that I might have reasons to bring it about in the rationalization sense that more promise-keepings (by me) occur, my primary reason to keep my promise does not seem to be to promote any such state of affairs. Rather, my reason is respect for the persons with whom I interact (or value for my integrity). Keeping my promise for such a reason brings it about that I keep my promise in the first, deflationary sense: in performing such an action, I cause it to be the case that I keep my promise, and make it true that I keep my promise. But promoting some state of affairs simply does not seem to be the type of action that I am performing in keeping my promise, because the reasons rationalizing the performance of this action do not seem to be reasons to promote some state of affairs. Reasons of respect guide my action of promise keeping to completion, and my reasons for many other actions are provided not by appeal to states of affairs, but to beautiful objects, valued traits of character, other more comprehensive actions, etc. Every one of these completed intentional actions, regardless of the reasons for performing it, is a bringing about in the deflationary sense; only the subset of such actions rationalized by appeal to states of affairs appear to involve bringing about in the rationalizing sense as well.[10]

Nonetheless, a prevalent view of action holds that all of our actions are, such appearances notwithstanding, bringings about of states of affairs in the rationalization sense. They all not only "alter the way the world goes," (a characterization compatible with the deflationary sense) they all "aim at making the world go a certain way," (rationalizing sense) hence all actions are bringings about in both senses (Portmore 2011, 56). What appears to demarcate actions of one type among others, that they are bringings about in the rationalizing sense, is taken, like the deflationary sense, to be a feature of all actions. Such a view of action is defended by a wide array of philosophers[11]; the common element is that not only is the end of every

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[10] Nye, Plunkett, and Ku emphasize a distinction between our motives to perform actions that are bringings about in the rationalization sense, motives "that are state-directed, or motives to bring about certain states of affairs," and motives to perform actions that are only bringings about in the deflationary sense, "motives that are act-directed…motives simply to do certain things." (2015, 5) Much of my argument to follow supports their defense of the plausibility of these other non-consequentialist motives simply to do certain things against the charge that they become theoretically 'mysterious' (2015, 4).

[11] For example, see, in addition to Portmore and Thomas Nagel (1970, 47), Michael Smith's argument that what makes a bodily movement an action is that it "is caused and rationalized in the right kind of way by some desire that things be a certain way, and some belief he has that…moving his body…has a suitable chance of making things the way he desires them to be." (Smith 2012, 387). See also Annette Baier's demonstration that for Roderick Chisholm and others such "bringing it about that" is "something we always do," (1970, 655), and John Stuart Mill's claim that "all action is for the sake of some end," (2001, 2) where his acting 'for the sake of' seems best understood as invoking such bringing about in the rationalization sense.

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action its completion guided by the reasons for undertaking it, hence not only is every completed action a bringing about in the deflationary sense, but in addition every action is taken to be rationalized as bringing about some state of affairs, hence every action is fundamentally a bringing about in the rationalization sense as well. In Thomas Nagel's words, "to act or to refrain" simply is "to promote or to prevent things." (1970, 47)

What of the myriad apparent counter-examples we find in ordinary practice, cases in which the reasons guiding my actions to completion do not appear to be reasons to promote? A standard strategy for accommodating the persistent appearance that such actions are not bringings about in the rationalization sense grants that there is an intuitive break in the neighborhood between types of actions, but maintains that the break is not, appearances notwithstanding, between actions that are bringings about in the rationalization sense and those that are not. Rather, it is a break *within* the set of actions that are bringings about in the rationalization sense between degenerate and non-degenerate cases. Such a strategy maintains that cases in which I seem to be performing actions of types other than bringings about, for example keeping my promise, are in fact merely degenerate cases of bringing about in the rationalization sense, cases in which the event/state of affairs that I am bringing about is (at least in part) an action by me, and I bring about such an event/state of affairs by performing that very action. Thus, following Nagel, my "performance of act B," e.g. my keeping my promise, is really "a degenerate case of promoting the occurrence of act B," (1970, 47) e.g. of promoting the state of affairs in which my promise-keeping occurs. On this view, the intuitive distinction is a distinction between degenerate and non-degenerate cases of bringing it about in the rationalization sense. Such an account can even recognize the intrinsic value of my keeping my promise, albeit as a state of affairs to be promoted. The value of the state of affairs rationalizes the action of bringing about the occurrence of my promise-keeping, in this case by keeping my promise. Hence, even keeping my promise is a bringing it about in the rationalization sense, a bringing it about that my promise-keeping occurs.

Once my keeping my promise is thus understood as but one among other states of affairs that I can bring about in the rationalization sense, puzzles emerge about what reasons I have to bring about this state of affairs rather than alternatives. Is the occurrence of such a state of affairs better overall? Often not. Is it better for me? Again, often not. Is it perhaps, although worse overall and worse for me, somehow better relative to me? Here it becomes unclear what is being asked, or how to go about providing an answer (Schroeder 2007; but see also Dreier 2011) We commonly take an agent to have reasons to keep his promises whether or not the occurrence of his promise-keeping is better overall or better for him, and whether it is even coherent to claim that it is

better relative to him. But the reasons that we take ourselves to have are reasons to keep our promises, not to bring it about that our promise-keepings occur, and there is no place for such reasons on the state of affairs centered view of action.

Our distinction between senses of bringing; however, suggests that such puzzles about our reasons to keep our promises are the product of a straightforward confusion. All actions are bringings about in the deflationary sense, but only some are bringings about in the rationalization sense, whether degenerate or otherwise. Although there is some plausible sense in which my keeping my promise is bringing it about that I do, it seems equally clear, given the choice between senses, that the relevant sense is the deflationary one, not a degenerate version of the rationalizing alternative. Why, then, adopt such a seemingly implausible view? My suggestion is that failure clearly to distinguish the two senses of bringing about lends a misleading air of credibility, and even inevitability, to such an account of action, segueing from the fact that it is a consequent of every completed action that it brings about an alteration in states of affairs to the claim that the object of every action is to make some states of affairs obtain. After all, every completed action does bring about some state of affairs—breaking a promise brings it about that I break a promise, going for a run brings it about that I go for a run, etc. Keeping my promise **is** bringing it about (in the deflationary sense) that my promise-keeping occurs. It can seem to be a mere rephrasing to characterize the action in question **as** a promoting of some state of affairs—a bringing it about (in the rationalizing sense) that some valuable event—my promise-keeping—occurs. In keeping my promise, I bring it about that I do, thus (the thought goes) my aim or object, in keeping my promise, is to bring about the state of affairs that I keep my promise. Such a line of thought can lull us into thinking that we do after all keep our promises to bring it about that our promise-keepings happen. The state of affairs centered view of action, with its account of degenerate cases, comes to seem unavoidable and even natural, its initial apparent conflict with ordinary practice notwithstanding. If even such seemingly resistant actions are bringings about, albeit degenerate cases of such actions, then all are.

But the distinction between senses of bringing about inoculates us against this tempting segue. Every completed action is a bringing about in the deflationary sense, but it does not follow at all that every—or indeed even any—action is a bringing about in the rationalization sense. That every completed action is a bringing about in the first sense is a necessary consequent of completing an action, regardless of whether it is ration alized as a component of a more comprehensive action, or by respectful interaction among persons, or by some state of affairs to be brought about. Even if no action was a bringing about in the rationalization sense, every action would nonetheless be a bringing about in the deflationary sense. The

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rationalization sense is concerned with actions that are guided to completion by reasons to promote states of affairs; the deflationary sense captures a necessary consequent of the completion of any action performed for any reason, whether or not it is a bringing about in the rationalization sense. Thus, the fact that every action is a bringing it about in the deflationary sense provides no grounds for holding that any, much less all, actions are bringings about in the rationalization sense. Nagel's claim that 'to act' is 'to promote' is non-problematically true in the deflationary sense, but seems just as non-problematically false taken in the rationalization sense. And the truth of the former does nothing to mitigate the apparent falsity of the latter. The distinction leaves us with the apparent implausibility of treating all of our actions that are apparently not bringings about in the rationalization sense as cases, and often as degenerate cases, of actions that are. Bringings about in the rationalization sense seem to be one type of action among others; it simply seems misguided to treat all actions as instances of this type. The distinction between senses dissipates any air of plausibility to interpreting actions that do not seem to be bringings about in the rationalizing sense as actions that are degenerate cases of such bringings about. In the absence of additional arguments, the state of affairs centered view of action stands as a counter-intuitive proposal to shoehorn reasons that are not reasons to promote and actions that are not bringings about into reasons and actions of this particular type.

In addition to the counter-intuitiveness of this categorization of all actions as actions of one particular type, the state of affairs centered view is independently puzzling, particularly in its account of pivotal degenerate cases. Consider the case in which my promise keeping is recognized as intrinsically valuable. The straightforward, intuitive account of such cases is that they are not bringings about in the rationalizing sense. Rather, the agent keeps his promise for the reasons of integrity, respect for persons, etc. that he has to perform such an action, guided by such reasons to its completion. On the state of affairs centered view, by contrast, the goodness of the occurrence of the event of my keeping my promise provides me with reasons to bring it about that I keep my promise, and my means of bringing it about that I keep my promise is by keeping my promise. Whereas on the commonsense view there is one action, keeping my promise, which I perform for the reasons that I have to keep my promise, on the state of affairs centered view such a degenerate case involves at least two actions by me, my keeping my promise and my bringing it about that I keep my promise, and one of these actions, my keeping my promise, is called upon to do double duty both as the state of affairs to be brought about and as the means by which I bring it about.

My action of keeping my promise must also do double duty on such an account in yet another respect. The action of my keeping my promise is an event that I am bringing about for reasons, but it is also an

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action that I do for reasons. If it is good for my keeping my promise to happen, such a judgment seems to reflect, and presuppose, the good reasons that I have to keep my promise: My promise-keeping is a good thing to happen because I have good reasons to keep my promise. But the state of affairs centered view seems to get this backwards, holding that I have good reasons to keep my promise because such promise-keeping by me (for reasons) is a good thing to happen (Quinn 1993, 173). To the extent that I have good reasons to bring it about that I keep my promise, this seems to be because I have good reasons to keep it. But then shouldn't I keep it for the good reasons that I have to do so, not for the reasons that it is good for such a promise-keeping by me to happen?

Nor will it do on such a state of affairs centered account to suggest that in recognizing that my promise-keeping is a good thing to occur, I recognize that it is keeping my promise *for the reasons that I have to do so* that is the intrinsically valuable state of affairs to bring about, hence that keeping it for such reasons is a constitutive means to bringing it about that I do. If I keep my promise for the good reasons that I have to do so, then I keep my promise for reasons that are not reasons to promote—reasons of respect for others, personal integrity, etc. that guide my action through to completion. There is no longer any role in such cases for bringing it about in the rationalizing sense. These are not degenerate cases of bringing about in the rationalizing sense, they have instead 'degenerated' into the kinds of cases that commonsense suggests that they are, cases in which my reasons to act are not reasons to promote, and in which the actions undertaken are only bringings about in the deflationary sense.

On such an account, moreover, my actions in degenerate cases are events or states of affairs that I have reasons to bring about, no different in this respect from actions by you that I might have reasons to bring about. I keep my promise to bring it about that my promise-keeping occurs, at least when keeping my promise is the most effective means to bringing it about that my promise-keeping occurs.[12] I thus

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[12] If keeping my promise is rationalized as a means to bringing it about that my promise-keeping occurs, presumably there can be more effective means in certain cases to bringing it about that I keep my promise. Mind altering drugs, self-coercion, hypnosis, etc. might all bring it about that I keep my promise. Won't such actions in some cases be more effective as means to bringing it about that I keep my promise? This highlights the fact that on such an account, upon which the fundamental value of my keeping my promise is as an event that happens, keeping my promise need not be the most effective means to bringing such a state of affairs about. Yet the adoption of such alternative means seems to undermine the value of my keeping my promise. The obvious response is that because the event that I aim to bring about is an action by me, an action that is valuable because it is done for relevant reasons, coercion or self-hypnosis does not bring about the valuable outcome because it thwarts the relevant reasons for performing such an action. But once again such an account seems to be a rejection of, rather than a modification of, the state of affairs centered view. What is valuable is that the agent keeps her promise for the reasons of dignity, integrity, and or respect that she has to do so.

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stand in a relationship of causal explanation with respect to my own action of keeping my promise as I do towards your action of keeping your promise. Each is an event that I might have reason to bring about. But as Richard Moran points out, "the stance from which a person speaks with any special authority about his belief or his action is not a stance of causal explanation but the stance of rational agency." (2001, 127–28) The state of affairs centered account seems to be in danger of losing our grip on our everyday actions of keeping our promises, going for walks, contemplating art, etc. as exercises of our practical rational agency.[13] All of this puzzling complexity can be avoided, however, simply by returning to our common understanding of such an action as keeping my promise for the reasons that I have to keep my promise, and not treating it as a degenerate case of an action of bringing about the occurrence of a good event that happens to be an action by me, and for which performance of the action is the best means to bring this event about.

The state of affairs centered view, we have seen, conflicts with our ordinary practices of giving and taking practical reasons. Any appearance of accommodation within our account of acting for reasons turns on a failure to distinguish clearly our two senses of bringing it about. Moreover, the state of affairs centered view encounters serious difficulties in its own right, particularly in its account of degenerate cases. The distinction between senses of bringing about allows us to cast these difficulties in sharp relief.

Section III: The State of Affairs Centered Views of Reason and Desire/Preference

The state of affairs centered view of action is mirrored by state of affairs centered views of reasons to act and desires to act, upon which all reasons to act are reasons to bring about in both the deflationary and the rationalization sense and all desires/preferences to act are desires to bring about, in the rationalization sense, the states of affairs that are taken to be their objects. Keeping our distinction in view, I will show that the prima facie implausibility of the prevalent view of action carries over to these views of reason and desire/preference.

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[13] Others have highlighted this problematic feature of state of affairs centered accounts. I take Annette Baier to be warning that a view conflating these senses "reduces my apparently varied action repertoire to a single item: the making of a causal contribution," (1970, 653) echoing Bernard Williams' concern that such an account of actions and reasons for action reduces agents entirely to "a locus of causal intervention in the world." (1973, 96) G.E.M. Anscombe warns that such an account implausibly mandates that it is always and only "the consequences that are to decide…the most he can say is: a man must not *bring about* this or that." (1958, 13).

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In the deflationary sense, every reason to act is a reason to bring about some state of affairs. In acting on my reason to keep my promise, for example, I bring about the state of affairs upon which my promise-keeping occurs. To act successfully for any reason is to alter states of affairs such that my performance of the action occurs and it is true that it occurs. Reasons to bring about in the rationalization sense, by contrast, appear to be reasons to perform actions of a distinctive type, reasons to bring about states of affairs rather than, for example, reasons to respect persons by telling the truth and keeping my promises, reasons to perform actions by performing their sub-parts, etc. Although all reasons to act are reasons to bring about in the deflationary sense, reasons to act in this rationalization sense appear to be a subset of the set of reasons to act. I have reasons to keep my promise, and to do what I can to bring it about that you keep yours. Only reasons for performing the latter action, not the former, appear to be reasons to bring about in the rationalization sense. Reasons for performing the former action seem typically to be reasons to perform an action that is not the promoting or bringing about, in the rationalization sense, of some state of affairs or event.

Nonetheless, there is a prevalent state of affairs centered view of reasons to act, often labelled the teleological conception of reasons (Scanlon 1998, 80; Portmore 2011, ch. 3), that takes all practical reasons to be reasons to bring about in both the deflationary and the rationalization sense. Phillip Pettit takes such a view to be sufficiently established that he can simply "assume that justification…consists in showing that…the option justified promotes the relevant goods better than alternatives." (2015, 225) Thomas Nagel also presents this as the obvious view: "Every reason is a predicate R such that for all persons p and events A, if R is true of A, then p has prima facie reason to promote A."[14]

Reasons to act that do not seem to be reasons to promote, e.g. reasons to keep my promise, are dealt with on such an account in the same way as resistant actions; that is, they are treated as degenerate cases of reasons to promote. The suggestion is that reasons to keep my promise are, after all, reasons to bring it about in the rationalization sense that my keeping my promise occurs. Typically the action that most effectively brings it about in the rationalization sense that my promise-keeping happens is keeping my promise. My reason to

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[14] (Nagel 1970, 90) See also Smart: "let us use the word 'rational'…for the action which is…likely to produce the best results." (1973, 47); Portmore: "our reasons for action are a function of our reasons for preferring some of these possible worlds to others, such that what each agent has most reason to do is to bring about the possible world…that she has most reason to want to be actual," (2011, 33); and Smith: "x ought to phi…if and only if phiing…produces the most good and the least bad," (2003, 576) See Nye, Plunkett, and Ku (2015, 14–19) and White (Unpublished essay) for arguments against this state of affairs centered view of reasons.

keep my promise, on such a view, is a reason to bring it about in the rationalization sense that my keeping of my promise occurs, happens, or obtains.[15] Again, failure to distinguish clearly the deflationary and rationalization senses can make it seem natural to move from the true claim that acting on my reason to keep my promise brings it about, in the deflationary sense, that my promise-keeping happens, to the otherwise implausible and counter-intuitive claim that I am really acting on a reason to bring about the occurrence of my promise-keeping. I am, after all, bringing it about that my promise-keeping occurs. But the sense in which this is clearly true is the deflationary sense, while the sense that is endorsed on such a state of affairs centered view, the rationalization sense, is one upon which this appears not to be true at all. At the very least, with the distinction between the senses in view an argument is necessary for this prima facie implausible commitment to treating all such apparent reasons to act that are not reasons to bring about (in the rationalization sense) as degenerate cases of such reasons to bring about.

Desire

In ordinary discourse desires apparently take a variety of types of objects,[16] including particular things (I want a Harley), states of affairs (I desire that he comes with me), and, perhaps most frequently, actions (I want to go, to keep my promise, to buy a cow, to improve the taste of the stew) (Brewer 2009, 20–22). Regardless of what different accounts of desire/preference take the deep structure of such practical attitudes to be, there is widespread agreement that to successfully realize my desire to X is for it to be the case that I X successfully. And we have seen that to perform such an action, to X, is to bring it about in the deflationary sense that I X. The satisfaction of any such desire to X will bring it about, in the deflationary sense, that my Xing occurs and that it is true that my Xing occurs.

It is natural to take the object of such a desire to act to be an action, for example to take the object of my desire to keep my promise to be my action of keeping my promise. But regardless of whether the object of such an attitude is an action or a state of affairs, it is nonetheless true that in realizing this object by performing the action I will bring it about, in the deflationary sense, that I keep my

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[15] Thus Portmore suggests that in such cases one runs "merely for the sake of bringing it about that one runs." (2011, 56).

[16] See, on this point, Brewer (2009, 20–21) and Anscombe (2000, 66–72, 91). Many have noted the apparent contrast here with intentions, all of which appear naturally to be intentions to phi with actions as their objects (Moran and Stone 2011, 48–54). Note that it is a separate question whether any or all such attitudes with actions as their objects are nonetheless appropriately captured in propositional form. On this point, see my discussion of the Attitudes Up argument in Section IV.

promise, and will make it true that I keep my promise. Such desires/wants *to X,* however, do not appear to be desires to bring something about in the rationalizing sense (Anscombe 2000, 91; Brewer 2009, 20–21). I seem to desire to keep my promise, for example, not that my promise-keeping occurs, and not to bring it about that my keeping of my promise occurs. I seem to satisfy such a desire to act by performing the action that is its apparent object guided by the reasons that I have to undertake it. Again, in doing what I desire to do I will bring it about in the deflationary sense that I do it and that it is true that I do it. But intuitively I desire to help my friend, not to bring it about that my friend helping happens.

Nonetheless, on a prevalent state of affairs centered view of practical attitudes all desires are after all taken to be bringings about in the second, rationalization sense—attitudes that have some state of affairs to be brought about as their object. Such desires in turn are taken to rationalize actions as bringing about the occurrence of the states of affairs that are their purported objects. What is common to all versions of this view, despite their many variations, is that the object or aim of every desire is, in Michael Smith's words, "that things be a certain way."[17] As with the prevalent views of reason and action, it is standard on such views to treat recalcitrant desires to X, desires to X that do not seem to be desires that X occurs, as degenerate cases of such desires with states of affairs as their objects. Desires to X are really desires to bring it about that my Xing obtains, desires that rationalize actions that bring about such states of affairs. On this view when I desire to keep my promise for the reasons that I have to keep my promise, strictly speaking, I desire that my promise-keeping occurs. Thus, Wayne Sumner suggests that the object of such a desire to X is actually "the state of affairs which consists of your doing it." (1996, 124) On this view to successfully realize the object of such a desire to act is, strictly speaking, to do what you desire to do in order to bring it about in the rationalization sense that the real object of your desire, the state of affairs "which consists of your doing it," occurs.

Without the distinction between senses, it is easy to slide from the plausible claim that to successfully pursue the object of my desire to keep my promise is to keep my promise, hence to bring it about in the deflationary sense that my promise is kept, to this prima facie implausible claim that the object of my desire to keep my promise is (really) that my promise-keeping occurs, an object that I bring about,

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[17] (Smith 2012, 387). See also Dennis Stampe's account, upon which "One who wants it to be the case that p perceives something that makes it seem to that person as if it would be good were it to be the case that p." (1987, 359) Although Derek Parfit's account of desire is at points tantalizingly ambiguous between these two senses, ultimately he does seem to opt for the state of affairs centered view of desire, upon which all desires bring about in both the deflationary and the rationalization sense. To desire, he suggests, is to want some event, but always more perspicuously to "want some event to occur." (emphasis mine) It is an attitude "of wanting something to happen, and being to some degree disposed to make it happen, if we can." (2011, 43)

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in the rationalization sense, by keeping my promise. With the distinction clearly in view, however, it seems prima facie implausible that to successfully do what I desire to do is always to bring about some state of affairs in the rationalization sense, just as it seems prima facie plausible that to do what I desire to do is to bring about some state of affairs in the deflationary sense.

Only some actions, reasons, and desires appear to involve bringing about in the rationalization sense, although all actions, reasons, and desires appear to involve bringing about in the deflationary sense. I have now demonstrated that, with the distinction between senses of bringing about clearly in view, the state of affairs centered views of actions, reasons, and desires/preferences all fly in the face of such appearances, maintaining that all actions, reasons, and desire/preferences involve bringing about in the rationalization sense. The initial implausibility of such views is obscured by a failure to distinguish clearly the rationalization sense from its deflationary counterpart. Indeed, without this distinction in senses, the claim that every action brings about a particular alteration in states of affairs, and the claim that the agent's aim in acting is always to bring about some particular alteration in states of affairs, can seem to be virtual restatements each of the other, with the intuitiveness and plausibility of the first allaying and obscuring concerns about the apparent counter-intuitiveness and implausibility of the second.

Before taking up arguments in the next section for discounting this apparent implausibility and embracing such state of affairs centered views, I will first demonstrate the pervasiveness of these views and the support that they provide for other views within the consequentialist circle, state of affairs centered views of values generally and of moral value in particular. One indication of their pervasiveness is that commitments to such views are embedded in what has come to be known as the 'standard story' of action, at least in its standard form. The standard form of this standard story takes all actions to be bringings about in the rationalization sense, in particular to be bringings about of the contents of the practical propositional attitudes that rationalize them, and all such rationalizing practical attitudes are held to have states of affairs as their objects. The reasons provided by such rationalizing attitudes are reasons to bring about, in the rationalization sense, the states of affairs that are the objects of the relevant practical attitudes.[18] Although with the disambiguation of the two senses it seems more plausible that only some actions, reasons, and desires/preferences involve bringing about in the rationalization sense, the standard form of the standard story bypasses intuition and takes bringing about in this sense to be involved in every action, reason, and desire. The point is not that this story cannot be and has

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[18] See Frankfurt (1978) for a presentation and criticism of the standard story, and Smith (2012) for a presentation and defense. In Hurley (2018) I discuss the relationship between moral consequentialism and the standard story in more detail.

not been challenged, it is that it is the *standard story*, the default theory of action that frames debates in ethics and metaethics unless participants explicitly highlight and challenge aspects of this framework.

A second indication of the prevalence of these views is the widespread adoption of rational choice theory. Rational choice theory is often put forward as the framework within which all relevant inquiry into rational deliberation and decision making must proceed (Anderson 2001). Yet such a framework incorporates the state of affairs centered views of action, reason, and desire/preference. Actions are rationalized by the agent's preferences, essentially comparative attitudes towards states of affairs, as bringing about such states of affairs.[19] Reasons to act are reasons to bring about preferred states of affairs, and the agent has the most reason to bring about the best state of affairs, understood as the state of affairs that maximally satisfies the agent's preferences among states of affairs as revealed in the appropriate ranking.[20] Every action not only alters states of affairs, it is rationalized as bringing about the preferred states of affairs. Again, the point is not that such a theory has not been challenged, it is that in the absence of explicit challenge it is the default theory of rational choice, and the state of affairs centered views of action, reason, and desire/preference are embedded within this default theory. To operate within the standard story of action and rational choice theory is to adopt these initially implausible views of action, reason, and desire/preference, upon which all involve bringing about in not just the deflationary but also the rationalization sense.

I will now briefly indicate the nature of the support provided by such state of affairs centered views for state of affairs centered views of value and of distinctively moral value. If the object of every reason to act is the promotion of some state of affairs, it can seem to fall out as a virtual corollary that good reasons to act are reasons to promote good states of affairs, that agents have better reasons to promote better states of affairs, and that agents have the most reason to bring about the best state of affairs. Michael Smith seems right that adoption of such state of affairs centered views invites a "reduction of one moral concept (the concept of what we ought to do) to another pair of moral concepts (the concepts of goodness and badness)," such that

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[19] For discussions of this role for preferences, see Anderson (2001, 22–23) and Sen (1973, 241–59). For a general presentation of rational choice theory, see Briggs (2016). An alternative understanding of rational choice theory limits preferences merely to playing roles in a predictive model, rather than this explanatory, rationalizing role. Preferences, on such a merely predictive model, do not purport to explain choice, they reflect choice, and such modeling of choices in rankings of states of affairs is defended on pragmatic grounds, (Schroeder 2017) for example as allowing powerful formal tools to be deployed that facilitate prediction. Such predictive models of choice in preference need involve no commitment to the state of affairs centered views of action, reason, and desire/preference.

[20] Elizabeth Anderson suggests that on such a theory "the rational act is the act that maximally satisfies an individual's preferences." (2001, 21)

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the action that an agent ought to perform will always be one that "produces the most good and the least bad." (2003, 576) Moreover, it seems clear that the rational response to the value of states of affairs is promotion. Given that all reasons, on such views, are reasons to promote, and such promoting/bringing about is the rational response to the value of states of affairs, the default view would seem to be that the rationale for such reasons to promote, the value to which they are responsive, is a rationale based in the value of states of affairs as better overall, or better for me, or better relative to me, or perhaps just as more highly ranked (and only in this sense better).[21] Intuitively, states of affairs are not the only things of fundamental value, and the rational response to other things of value, for example persons, objects, and relationships, is often reasons to act and interact with such things – to keep promises to, to contemplate, to assist, to enjoy, to defend. These seemingly are not reasons to promote higher ranked states of affairs. The state of affairs centered views challenge all such intuitions about things of value and the reasons that reflect them.

Adoption of these state of affairs centered views of actions, desires, reasons, and values in turn provides powerful support for consequentialist moral theory, the state of affairs centered view of distinctively moral value. If good reasons reflect valuable states of affairs, then good distinctively moral reasons will reflect the evaluation of states of affairs from a distinctively impartial point of view (as impersonally, agent-neutrally better), or will at least reflect a distinctive and prominent role for valuation from such an impartial standpoint, perhaps interacting with other rankings of states of affairs in the determination of reasons that are distinctively moral (Portmore 2011; Scheffler 1982).

Such state of affairs centered views of action, reason, desire/preference, and value also provide indirect support for a consequentialist approach to moral theory by ruling out other major alternatives. We have already seen that such views rule out all reasons to act that are not reasons to bring about in the rationalization sense. Because major alternatives to moral consequentialism, including Kantian, virtue ethical, and many contractarian alternatives, appeal to reasons that are not such reasons to bring about in the rationalization sense, adoption of these views rules out these major alternatives to moral consequentialism, or forces advocates of such accounts to shoehorn moral reasons into the form of reasons to promote, a form that can render them implausible and obscure their guiding rationales (Herman 2016; Schroeder 2017). Consider, for example, the case of deontic constraints. Intuitively such constraints against lying, stealing, breaking promises, etc. arise in cases in which agents have reasons to bring

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[21] The point is sometimes made by emphasizing that if all reasons are reasons to promote, it is not clear what a plausible rationale for such reasons could be that does not appeal the goodness and badness of states of affairs (See Smith 2003).

about in the rationalization sense. But such promoting involves doing certain things, e.g. lying, killing, stealing, and breaking promises that, at least in the relevant cases, agents have decisive, distinctively moral reasons not to do, reasons that are seemingly not reasons to bring about in the rationalization sense. For example, we each may well have reasons to bring it about that fewer lies are told, but we also each have reasons not to lie reflecting the distinctive accountability that we each have for our interactions with others. In the case of deontic constraints the latter reasons outweigh the former. If all reasons are reasons to bring about, this straightforward intuitive account, and the theories that incorporate it, must be rejected. Instead, any account of such constraints must appeal all and only to reasons to promote, maintaining that such apparent reasons to do and not to do are after all only other reasons to promote and prevent, for example reasons to minimize the lyings by me that happen or even to minimize lyings by me that happen at time t.[22]

It is worth pausing at this point to make it clear why the claim that every action is a bringing about in the deflationary sense provides no support for such moral consequentialism. We have seen that even if no action is a bringing about in the rationalizing sense, all actions are nonetheless bringings about in the deflationary sense. If the deflationary sense is taken to be sufficient for a moral theory to be consequentialist, then even a Kantian theory upon which the only things of fundamental value are persons and wills, and no actions are rationalized by reasons to promote, and all moral actions are performances rationalized by the value of persons, will be a form of consequentialism. One can of course stipulate that whatever results from an action that I have decisive moral reasons to perform on such a moral theory simply is the best outcome, parroting the form of a consequentialist moral theory: the action will be right on such a theory iff the outcome is best. But the rightness of actions, on such a theory, would not be explained by, rationalized by, determined by, or in any way dependent upon the evaluation of outcomes; indeed, it is the telic value of states of affairs that would be determined through appeal to the deontic evaluation of actions.

Although the presentation of such alternatives to substantive consequentialism in a consequentialist form may have some pragmatic point in particular contexts (See Colyvan, Cox, and Steele 2010, and Schroeder 2017), they are nonetheless substantive alternatives to moral consequentialism, not instances of it. Because the deflationary sense is compatible with any non-state of affairs centered theory of

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[22] For such evaluator relative forms of consequentialism that 'consequentialize' deontic constraints within a framework that recognizes only reasons to promote states of affairs, see Dreier (1993), Smith (2003), Louise (2004), and Portmore (2011, 97–108). Other accounts have recourse to indirection, maintaining, for example, that such apparent fundamental reasons are in fact dispositions to act that we have reasons to cultivate, reasons that are all fundamentally reasons to promote (Pettit 2015, ch. 7).

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actions, reasons, attitudes, and values, it does not, unlike its rationalizing cousin, dictate moral consequentialism unless the position is weakened "to the point of triviality." (Brown 2011, 750)

Before proceeding, it will be useful to summarize the argument to this point. I have exposed an ambiguity between senses of bringing about. The deflationary sense applies to all actions, practical reasons, and desires, but provides no support for the state of affairs centered views that make up the consequentialist circle. The rationalization sense of bringing about appears to apply only to some actions, reasons, and desires, but the state of affairs centered views take all actions, reasons, and desires to involve bringing about in this rationalization sense. Within the context of the distinction such views thus seem to attribute, implausibly, the rationalization sense of bringing about to all reasons, desires/preferences and actions, when only the deflationary sense is properly attributed. Such views, although apparently implausible, are pervasive, and the implications of their adoption are momentous.

On the commonsense view that the deflationary sense applies universally, but the rationalization sense does not, the result is a presumption against such state of affairs centered views, and a presumption, in addition, against accepting the implications of such views for moral theory and theories of value generally. Indeed, in place of a presumption in favor of consequentialist moral theories there will be a presumption against them, since other moral theories can straightforwardly accommodate commonsense moral reasons to act that are not reasons to promote, while consequentialism cannot. The prima facie implausibility of these state of affairs centered views as a set suggests a pivot to more intuitive views upon which success in achieving the object of any desire will bring about some states of affair in the deflationary sense, but only in some cases will successfully achieving the object of such desires involve bringing about states of affairs in the rationalization sense. Others will be preferences/desires to X or that I X, where successfully Xing is not bringing about in the rationalization sense. All reasons to act will be reasons to bring about in the deflationary sense because they are reasons to act, and actions bring about such alterations in states of affairs. But only some reasons will be reasons to bring about, produce, or promote in the rationalization sense; others will be reasons to perform actions other than bringings about. All actions will be alterations of states of affairs in the deflationary sense, but only some actions will be bringings about in the rationalization sense. Others will be doings that are not promotings. Finally, all good reasons may well be responsive to value, but there is no reason, on this prima facie plausible view, to insist, contrary to intuition and ordinary practice, that the value to which they are responsive is always captured in an antecedent ranking of better and worse states of affairs, much less that the only relevant things of fundamental value are states of affairs.

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Section IV: The Attitudes Up Argument for the Consequentialist Circle

With the distinction between senses of bringing about clearly in view, the prevalent state of affairs centered views of action, reason, desire/preference, and value all appear initially to be implausible. In what follows I will take up two kinds of argument for discounting this apparent implausibility and endorsing such state of affairs centered views. One, the Attitudes Up argument, invokes the standard story of action to provide independent support for the state of affairs centered view of desire/preference, and proceeds from this view of desire "up," so to speak, to support the state of affairs centered views of reasons, actions, values, and distinctively moral value. The other, the Values Down argument, begins with purported independent support for the state of affairs centered view of value, and in particular moral value, and proceeds "down," so to speak, to ground the state of affairs centered views of actions, reasons, and desires/preferences. I will demonstrate that with the distinction between senses of bringing about clearly in view, the purported independent grounds for each of these state of affairs centered views, grounds for leveraging us back into the otherwise implausible circle, are undermined.

The Attitudes Up strategy builds upon the standard story of action, in particular upon the account of practical attitudes incorporated into this story. On this standard form of the standard story actions are rationalized by beliefs and desires.[23] More specifically, desires, properly understood, are propositional attitudes, and actions are rationalized through appeal to such attitudes as bringing it about, in the rationalizing sense, that the content of the proposition obtains, hence that the proposition is true. My flicking the switch and adding the salt are actions, for example, because they are rationalized by my desires that the room be illuminated and that I improve the taste of the stew. A desire to X, for example to improve the taste of the stew, rationalizes adding salt on this story because it is fundamentally a desire that I improve the taste of the stew, and its object is the state of affairs that is the propositional content of the attitude, that my improving the taste of the stew occurs (or the truth of the proposition that I improve it). Adding salt is rationalized as bringing it about in the rationalization sense that my improving the taste of the stew occurs, marking off this movement as an intentional action. In sum, actions are rationalized by desires as

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[23] Carl Hempel (1961) and Donald Davidson (1980) are often credited with introducing the standard story in its contemporary form. See also Frankfurt (1978) and Smith (2012) for two subsequent presentations. Although the standard form of the standard story appeals to a role for desires and beliefs as both causing and rationalizing intentional actions, I will focus exclusively in what follows upon the rationalizing rather than the causal role.

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bringing it about that their propositional content obtains and that the proposition is true.

The standard form of the standard story thus holds that all *desires* are attitudes towards states of affairs as to be brought about. The rationalizations provided by such desires supply the agent's *reasons* for all actions, reasons to bring it about in the rationalization sense that their propositional contents are made true and made to obtain, and the movements are *actions* in virtue of being rationalized as bringing about in the rationalization sense the objects of such attitudes, the states of affairs that are their propositional contents. The story thus motivates the adoption not only of the state of affairs centered view of desire, but the state of affairs centered views of reason and action as well.

Donald Davidson's influential early theory of action is among the first and the most influential of many accounts that can be interpreted as invoking such a standard form of the standard story. (1980) All basic actions are bodily movements rationalized by desires. But even a desire to X, for example Davidson's infamous desire to improve the taste of the stew, is understood as having as its content a proposition, in this case "He improves the taste of the stew." To desire to improve the taste of the stew is, for Davidson, to have "a proposition he wants true." (1980, 86) If we take seriously that for the agent to desire to improve the taste of the stew, on his account, is for the agent to want it to be true that he improves the taste of the stew, it seems to follow that the object of such a desire is the state of affairs "he improves the taste of the stew." The action of adding salt is rationalized as bringing it about (in the rationalization sense) that this desirable state of affairs is made the case, hence that the proposition is made true.

My desire to improve the taste of the stew is a desire that I improve the taste of the stew, and I should bring about this state of affairs and not some other one, say that Donald improves the taste of the stew, because there are considerations that favor one of these states of affairs, that *I* improve the taste, over the other, that *Donald* improves the taste, such that it is the former that I have more reason to bring about than the latter. The occurrence of the state of affairs that I improve the taste is preferable to the occurrence of the state of affairs that Donald does. On such an account, it is natural to conclude that agents have better reasons to bring about a higher ranked, and in this sense better, state of affairs, and have the best reasons to bring about the highest ranked state of affairs (when there is such a state of affairs). I bring it about that I improve the taste rather than that Donald does because my doing so is better overall, or better for me, or better relative to me, than Donald doing so. The standard form of the standard story thus supports the state of affairs centered view

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of values along with the state of affairs centered views of action, reason, and desire/preference.

Central elements of this standard form of the standard story have been widely challenged, and many of these challenges undermine support for the Attitudes Up argument. Some challengers deny, for example, that desires, properly understood, play the pervasive rationalizing role the story attributes to them; (Scanlon 1998, ch. 1) others deny that desires, properly understood, are propositional attitudes.[24] Either challenge, if successful, undermines the Attitudes Up argument for stepping back into the circle of prima facie implausible state of affairs centered views.

But the distinction between senses of bringing about suggests that even if these central elements of the standard story, the pervasive rationalizing role of desires and the claim that all desires are captured in propositional form, are left unchallenged, the story does not support a state of affairs centered view of desires, much less state of affairs centered accounts of actions, reasons, and values. The point is not that more radical departures from the standard story are not warranted, it is that they are not necessary to rebut the Attitudes Up argument. I will demonstrate that even granting these central elements of the standard story, the distinction between senses of bringing about suggests that the most plausible account of desires/preferences does not lead into the consequentialist circle at all.

The standard form of the standard story takes these aspects of the story, that all actions are rationalized by desires and all desires can be captured in propositional form, to commit proponents to the position Talbot Brewer labels Strong Propositionalism, the view that "the real intentional object of a desire is always a proposition." (2009, 21) Every desire, for the Strong Propositionalist, is to bring about, in the rationalization sense, the truth of this proposition by bringing about the state of affairs that makes it true. The state of affairs centered view of desires, hence those of action, reason, and value, follow. But endorsement of the central components of the standard story is also consistent with Weak Propositionalism, the view that "the object of any desire is capturable in propositional terms, in the sense that the truth of the relevant proposition is a

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[24] Many philosophers working in the Aristotelean and Anscombean traditions allow that practical attitudes such as desires, wants, and intentions often play an important rationalizing role in the correct story of action, but deny that such desires or wants are propositional attitudes. Rather, the desires, wants, and intentions that rationalize actions are *performative* rather than *propositional* attitudes, attitudes with actions as their objects that are only mischaracterized as having propositional form (Thompson 2008, 127–138; Lavin and Boyle 2010; 168–174). They are in no sense properly characterized as intentions, wants, and/or desires that X obtains; they are instead intentions, desires, and wants to X that rationalize an action through appeal to the action that is their object.

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necessary and sufficient condition for the attainment of the desire's end." (2009, 21)

No commitment to a state of affairs centered view of desires is dictated by the central components of the standard story because it requires only Weak Propositionalism, and Weak Propositionalism does not entail that the aim or object of every desire is a state of affairs. The Weak Propositionalist can readily allow that the object of my desire to X is Xing, not the state of affairs that I X. The propositional form of my desire to X, as a desire that I X with the propositional content that I X, is the form that emphasizes the state of affairs that must be the case for the successful attainment of the object of such a desire to X. The object of my desire is to keep my promise, and attainment of this object will bring it about, in the deflationary sense, that I keep my promise. This condition of the attainment of the object of my desire to keep my promise is captured in the propositional form of the desire as a desire that I keep my promise.[25]

With the choice between Weak and Strong Propositionalism in view, Weak seems in many respects more plausible than Strong (Brewer 2009, 21; Darwall 2002, 93). We have already seen, for example, that we often seem to desire *to act*, and that such desires are not more perspicuously captured as desires to bring it about that our acting occurs or that the proposition that we have acted is true. Weak Propositionalism accommodates such desires with actions as their objects, because it allows that the object of my desire to act is my acting. For the Weak Propositionalist, success in achieving the object of my desire to act will bring it about in the deflationary sense that I act and that it is true that I act, and this feature of such a desire is captured in its propositional form. To act on my desire to X is to bring it about, in the deflationary sense, that I X. It is this deflationary upshot of achievement of the object of the desire that is captured by its propositional form. Only a conflation of senses of bringing about appears to lead to the mistaken view that the "real" object of the desire to act is not the action, but the truth of the proposition that I act or the occurrence of the state of affairs that makes this proposition true. Strong Propositionalism seems to fall prey to this conflation, and to the resulting implausible state of affairs centered view of desire.

Without the distinction between senses of bringing about, it can seem that the commitment to the propositional form of desires commits advocates of the standard story to Strong Propositionalism and the claim that all desires involve bringing about in the rationalizing sense. With the distinction in view, it becomes clear that the commitment to the propositional form of desires is only

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[25] I expand on these implications of the adoption of Weak Propositionalism in (Hurley 2018).

a commitment to Weak Propositionalism, and to the corresponding claim that all desires involve bringing about in the deflationary sense. Such a view readily accommodates the plausible view that many desires and reasons and actions do not involve bringing about in the rationalizing sense, and that the things of value to which many desires, reason, and actions are responsive are not only states of affairs, and are not captured in rankings of states of affairs.[26]

Nonetheless, if there are independent grounds for maintaining that all things of fundamental value are states of affairs, or that, whether or not other things are of value, the relevance of all value to reasons for action is always captured in rankings of states of affairs to which all reasons are responsive, then all reasons will be reasons to promote, desires will rationalize actions in virtue of reflecting such reasons to bring about the states of affairs that are their contents, and the actions rationalized will all be bringings about, in the rationalizing sense, of such states of affairs. To pursue such an argument, however, is to abandon the Attitudes Up strategy in favor of a Values Down alternative. It is to such an alternative that I now turn.

Section V: The Values Down Argument for the Consequentialist Circle

The Values Down approach takes as its point of departure a state of affairs centered view of value, including moral value. The most straightforward form of the state of affairs centered view of value holds that states of affairs are the fundamental things of value, such that the reasons that have a value-based rationale are, or are grounded in, reasons to promote such valuable states of affairs. A

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[26] The contrasting directions of fit of theoretical and practical attitudes are also sometimes cited as providing support for the standard form of the standard story. One common account of this contrast takes the fundamental attitudes characteristic of the two spheres, beliefs and desires, to be distinguished not by their objects, which are taken in each case to be states of affairs, but by the contrasting directions of fit that such attitudes manifest with respect to such objects: beliefs aim to fit the world; desires aim to make the world fit them (Platts 1979, 256–7; Smith 1994, 111–19; Boyle and Lavin 2010, 171ff). The distinction between senses of bringing about, however, suggests that although the realization of a state of affairs *is* a necessary condition for successfully achieving the aim of any desire in the deflationary sense, it in no way follows that the aim or object of such a desire is a state of affairs in the rationalizing sense. Strong Propositionalism entails the latter commitment, but Weak Propositionalism does not. Such a Weak Propositionalist can also accommodate Anscombe's arguments that the object of the appropriately contrasting practical attitudes, intentions, is always an action, and that the relevant contrast in the objects of the relevant practical and theoretical attitudes, between actions as the objects of intentions and states of affairs as the objects of beliefs, is crucial to identifying the contrasting mistakes to which such attitudes are susceptible (Anscombe 2000, p;.56; Moran and Stone 2011, 67–9).

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more nuanced form allows that things other than states of affairs are of fundamental value, but holds that whatever relevance such valuable things have to our reasons for action is captured entirely in antecedent rankings of states of affairs, such that agents have more reason to promote higher ranked states of affairs, and the most reason to promote the highest ranked state of affairs (when there is such a highest ranked state of affairs) (Portmore 2011, 66–7). Any reasons to act that reflect value are reasons to bring about better and avoid worse states of affairs, in Michael Smith's words "to produce the most good and the least bad." Thus although, as Niko Kolodny points out, things of value seem to range beyond states of affairs and seem to provide rationales not only for reasons "to bring it about," but also for reasons "to respect or engage with or honor or act in a certain way for the sake of," (2011, 47) the state of affairs centered view suggests that ultimately things of value only provide rationales for reasons of the first sort, reasons to bring about in the rationalizing sense. Any other reasons to act would have to have a non-value based rationale, but it is not clear what such a plausible rationale could be.[27]

If value is captured in rankings of states of affairs, and reasons to act reflect value, then reasons to act will be reasons to bring about (in the rationalizing sense) states of affairs (Pettit 1993, 231; Pettit 2015, 225). Moreover, all actions will be rationalized by such reasons as bringing about (in the rationalizing sense) states of affairs, and rationalizations for action supplied by desires will be rationalizations as bringing about, in both senses, the states of affairs that are the contents of such desires in propositional form. The Values Down argument thus supports the views that all reasons, actions, and desires are actions of bringing about, reasons to bring about, and desires to bring about in the rationalization sense. Even with the two senses of bringing about clearly disambiguated, such a Values Down argument suggests that, contrary intuitions notwithstanding, all actions, reasons, and desires/preferences involve bringing about in the rationalizing as well as the deflationary sense.

To make such a Values Down argument explicit, however, is to make it clear that the argument is only as strong as the state of affairs centered account of value that grounds it. We have seen that such a view is itself prima facie implausible; what considerations can be marshalled in its defense? First, the very framework that consequentialists

[27] Scanlon (1998, 81–83) demonstrates that Thomas Nagel (1986, ch. IX) was committed in his early work to such a state of affairs centered view of value, and for this reason could not provide a plausible rationale for the reasons to act and refrain from acting that generate deontic constraints. Such constraints appear paradoxical and formally puzzling for Nagel precisely because it is not clear what a plausible rationale for such reasons to act that are not reasons to promote could be within the context of a state of affairs centered conception of value. Nagel resisted the implications of the Values Down argument, but because he accepted the state of affairs centered view of value that grounds the argument, his argument ultimately fell prey to them.

and their critics alike often adopt as appropriate for adjudicating disputes in moral theory can seem to presuppose such a state of affairs centered theory of value, providing theoretical grounds for the view. The framework characterizes consequentialist theories as maintaining that the good is prior to the right and alternatives to consequentialism as maintaining that the right is prior to the good (Rawls 1999, sec. 5; Herman 1993, 209–13). Such a shared framework presupposes that opponents of the state of affairs centered theory of moral value must not only provide a rationale for moral reasons to act that is not based in the appeal to better and worse states of affairs, they must provide a rationale for such reasons that is seemingly not based in any appeal to the goodness of anything at all. The very framework for adjudicating disputes in moral theory presupposes that morally relevant reasons, if they are to have a rationale based in goodness, must be reasons to bring about in the rationalizing sense, reasons based in the goodness of states of affairs. But what possible rationale for distinctively moral reasons could there be that is not based in some appeal to value? (Scheffler 1982, 88–90 and 101; Smith 2003, 587) If there are compelling grounds for operating within such a framework, there are theoretical grounds for the Values Down argument.

A second source of independent support for the state of affairs centered account of value is commonly taken to be provided by the 'compelling idea' that many consequentialists see as the core of their theory, and that even many critics recognize as having independent intuitive appeal. The moral form of the idea is that it is always right—morally permissible—to do what brings about the best overall outcome (Scheffler 1982, 4; Schroeder 2007, 281). How could it ever be wrong to do what's best? Recent variants, in an effort to accommodate deontic constraints without indirection, take the idea instead to be that it is always right—morally permissible—to do what brings about the best outcome relative to the agent (Dreier 2011, 100; Portmore 2005, 98; Sachs 2010, 264). The account of value that best accommodates the intuitive appeal of such ideas is one upon which agents always have at least sufficient moral reason to promote the most valuable state of affairs, but also sufficient reasons simpliciter to bring about the best state of affairs relative to them—to produce the most good and the least bad. But if the value of states of affairs always supplies at least a sufficient reason to promote the highest ranked state of affairs, apparent decisive reasons not to do so must be discounted or incorporated into more complex rankings of states of affairs that agents have reasons to promote, and conflicting reasons seem best understood as reflecting different rankings of states of affairs as better or worse, not as reflecting sources of value other than states of affairs. Such considerations of theoretical framework and deep intuition seem to support the state of affairs centered view of value, and to support the Values Down argument that is based upon it.

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Yet with the distinction between senses of bringing about in view, it becomes clear that such considerations of theory and intuition merely smuggle in the universality of the rationalizing sense of bringing about, they do not provide considerations to support doing so. The compelling idea appeals to a platitude that relates deontic evaluation of actions to telic evaluation—that it is always right to do what's best. But invocations of the idea by consequentialists smuggle in an interpretation of the relevant telic evaluation upon which it is the goodness of *states of affairs* that is invoked by the platitude, thereby interpreting it as the intuition that bringing about the best state of affairs, understood in the rationalizing sense, is always right to do, apparent contrary intuitions notwithstanding.

The more plausible interpretation of the platitude is instead that it is always right to do what it is best to do, understood as what the agent has decisively good reasons to do (Wiggins 2006; 216; Hurley 2017). Doing what it is best to do in this sense, performing the best action or course of action, does always bring it about, in the deflationary sense, that one has done it, and this claim that it is always right to do what it is best to do does seem highly intuitive (Darwall 2006, 98; Archer 2014, 108). But such an interpretation of the compelling idea provides no support for a state of affairs centered theory of value, or for the Values Down argument. The state of affairs centered interpretation, by contrast, provides such support, but only because it smuggles in precisely what seems counter-intuitive, the claim that it is always right to bring about, in the rationalizing sense, the highest ranked state of affairs. Such an interpretation, in short, hijacks the intuitive appeal of the claim that it is always permissible to do what it is best to do, swapping it out for the claim that it is always right to bring about (in the rationalizing sense) the best outcome.[28] The latter, notoriously, yields counter-intuitive results. But these results are taken to be in tension with the intuitive appeal of the idea itself. With the distinction between the deflationary and rationalizing senses clearly in view, it is no longer plausible to see this as a conflict of intuitions. Rather, the intuitive idea is that it is always permissible to do what it is best to do. Intuitive deontic constraints do not conflict with this idea, only with a counter-intuitive interpretation of it that smuggles in, contrary to intuition, the rationalizing as well as the deflationary sense of bringing about.

The traditional framework also smuggles in the rationalizing sense of bringing about, sliding from the reasonable claim that opponents

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[28] John Broome may initially seem to avoid smuggling in the rationalizing sense, because his formulation relates deontic evaluation of actions to telic evaluation of actions rather than states of affairs: "the rightness of acts is determined by their goodness." (1991, 6) But instead his formulation simply relocates the invocation of the rationalizing sense to his state of affairs centered account of the telic evaluation of actions, identifying "the goodness of the act with the goodness of its consequences." (1991, 4)

of consequentialism must provide a rationale for reasons that are not reasons to bring about in the rationalizing sense, to the claim that all such reasons must have a rationale that is not based in the appeal to the good. All that follows, however, is that such reasons must have a rationale that is not based in the goodness of states of affairs—that their rationale must be based in things of value other than states of affairs (Herman 1993, 208–12). But this demand can readily be met by basing such reasons in the value/goodness of character, other actions, persons, wills, objects, etc. The value of such things other than states of affairs does seem to provide rationales for such reasons. Only the importation in to the framework for debates in normative ethics of the very state of affairs centered theory of value that is in question yields a framework that can purport to provide independent theoretical support for the state of affairs centered theory of value.

With these purportedly independent sources of support undermined, the state of affairs centered account of value seems vulnerable to challenges that it encounters both at the level of intuition and at the level of theory. First, it simply seems false that states of affairs are the only things of fundamental value. Persons, relationships, objects, etc. also seem to have value that is not reducible to states of affairs.[29] Second, the reasons to which such other sources of value give rise often appear to be reasons to perform actions of many types other than bringings about in the rationalizing sense. Although the rational response to the value of states of affairs may well be promotion, the rational response to the value of persons, wills, relationships, objects, etc. often does not seem to be bringing about in the rationalizing sense—recall Kolodny's list of options to bringing about, including respecting, engaging with, honoring, and acting for the sake of.[30]

Many such reasons seem not to be reasons to promote or bring about in the rationalizing sense. They are not, for example, reasons to minimize lying, or to minimize my lying, or to minimize my lying now. They are reasons that we each have not to lie, reasons that reflect the value of the persons with whom we interact. This in turn casts doubt upon the claim that the relevance of all value to reasons for action can be captured in an antecedent ranking of states of affairs to be promoted. There may be descriptive or predictive rather than explanatory strategies for representing such reasons in a ranking

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[29] Samuel Scheffler suggests that "one may value one's privacy, or one's friend's sense of humor, or the opinion of a trusted advisor," (2011, 27) and Tim Scanlon adds to this list "objects and their properties (such as beauty), persons, skills and talents, states of character, actions, accomplishments . . . relationships, and ideals." (1998, 95)

[30] Kolodny concludes that it is simply a "mistake. . .to think that things of value are sources of reasons only in the sense that, when we are able to bring about something of value, we have reason to do so." (2011, 68) Scanlon, similarly, suggests that everyday reasons include "reasons for admiring the thing and for respecting it,. . .to preserve and protect it," and "to be guided by the goals and standards that the value involves (as when I value loyalty)."(1998, 95)

of states of affairs, such that what I have most reason to do is to bring about the highest ranked state of affairs (Colyvan, Cox, and Steele 2010, sec 4; Schroeder 2017). But such a merely descriptive or predictive approach provides no challenge to our ordinary practices of valuing, deliberating, and acting, upon which many fundamental things of value are not captured in an explanatorily robust ranking of states of affairs, many of the reasons to act to which such values give rise are not reasons to promote/bring about (in the rationalizing sense), and many actions are not bringings about in this sense. Finally, there are a range of alternative theories of value, including Kantian, Aristotelean, buck passing, and other irreducibly pluralist theories of value, that allow, indeed in some cases dictate, such reasons to act and actions that are not reasons to promote and promotings in the rationalizing sense.[31]

Both our everyday practices of valuing, and the myriad theories of value that reflect them, suggest that states of affairs are at most one among other kinds of things that we value, and that reasons to promote states of affairs are only some among the reasons to which the recognition of value gives rise. With the distinction between the rationalizing and deflationary senses in view, neither the aforementioned appeal to intuition (the compelling idea) nor the appeal to theory (the priority of rightness or goodness) supports the claim that all reasons are reasons to promote valuable states of affairs in the rationalizing sense or the claim that all value is, or is captured in, rankings of states of affairs. Without such claims the Values Down argument is blocked.

Section VI: Conclusion

I will close by drawing out one of the central implications of the preceding arguments for the current debate in moral theory. Consequentialists have responded to powerful criticisms of traditional consequentialist moral theories by abandoning much of the traditional substance of such theories while clinging tenaciously to their form. New wave consequentialists endorse positions traditionally associated with their opponents, maintaining that rights, autonomy, respect for persons, etc. are not just instrumentally, but intrinsically valuable, and defending deontic constraints against lying, killing, stealing, etc. without recourse to indirection. But they insist that any plausible theory incorporating such commitments must nonetheless

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[31] Some Kantians argue, for example, that wills rather than states of affairs are the primary bearers of value (Herman 1993, 214ff). Scanlon adopts a buck passing theory of value, holding that to call something valuable is to "say that it has other properties that provide reasons for behaving in certain ways with regard to it."(1998, 96) Reasons to promote or bring about are typically recognized on such a buck-passing account as only a subset of the reasons that are invoked by calling something valuable. See, for example, Scanlon's discussion of reasons of friendship. (1998, 88–90).

be "consequentialized," that is, have a consequentialist form.[32] The relevance of all value to reasons must be reflected in rankings of states of affairs, all reasons are reasons to bring about states of affairs, and agents have more reasons to bring about higher ranked states of affairs.

Insistence upon this form often comes at the expense of plausibility. Accounts that recognize the intrinsic value of rights, autonomy, and respect for persons, for example, but that insist upon taking such values into account from an agent-neutral, impersonal standpoint, seem both to acknowledge non-aggregative values, and to insist, implausibly, that their moral relevance is exhausted from an aggregative standpoint (Hurley 2013; Williams and Smart 1973; 111–16). Consequentialist accounts that incorporate deontic constraints against breaking promises without indirection appeal to evaluator-relative rankings of states of affairs, upon which the best state of affairs is the one that minimizes my promise breakings, or perhaps minimizes my promise breakings at some particular time (Dreier 1993; Louise 2004; Portmore 2011, 99–100). Such a reason to promote may well generate a deontic constraint on minimizing promise breakings overall. But it is not clear what plausible rationales for such reasons to promote could be. If the relevant considerations only involve the states of affairs to be brought about, why focus on minimizing *my* promise breakings rather than promise breakings overall, and why privilege minimizing my promise breakings *now* over those that might happen in the future? The insistence on shoehorning such intuitive elements of morality into consequentialist form obscures the rationales for these very elements, and threatens to undermine their apparent plausibility through recourse to the very tools that purport to accommodate it (Schroeder 2017).

Why such confidence that all plausible candidate moral theories must nonetheless be consequentialized? Why insist that such intuitive elements of morality must be incorporated in these gerrymandered ways, ways that threaten to lose sight of the very rationales the account seeks to capture? My suggestion is that what accounts for this confidence are the other views within the consequentialist circle, the state of affairs centered views of actions, reasons, and desires/preferences that are deeply embedded within the central tools of philosophical inquiry in the practical sphere. If actions are all bringings about

[32] Portmore characterizes such consequentializing strategies as taking "whatever considerations that the non-consequentialist theory holds to be relevant," and insisting "that those considerations are relevant to determining the proper ranking of outcomes." (2007, 40; see also Dreier 2011; Louise 2004; Sen 1983) Such consequentializers continue to maintain some non-trivial form of priority of such telic rankings of states of affairs to the deontic evaluation of actions. See, for example, Portmore's rejection of 'Footian' consequentializing procedures that abandon such priority, (2011, 111–16) and Smith's claim to carry out a reduction of deontic evaluation to such evaluator relative telic evaluation. (2003, 576) Dreier is an outlier, seemingly eschewing any such priority (2011).

in the rationalizing sense, and reasons are all reasons to bring about states of affairs in the rationalizing sense, and desires are all attitudes with states of affairs to be brought about as their objects, it becomes difficult to see how any plausible account of distinctively moral reasons can avoid a consequentialized form, however much adoption of such a form skews the substance of the resulting theory and the rationales that it can provide. But how can the prevalent accounts of value, reasons, desires, and actions, and the tools of practical inquiry in which they are embedded, all be wrong?

In the preceding sections of this paper I have sketched the outlines of an answer. The distinction between senses of bringing about yields reasons to step outside of the circle entirely, and to modify the tools that purport to provide grounds for leveraging us back in. These are reasons for jettisoning the skewing form of consequentialism along with its problematic substance. For the growing number of consequentialists who eschew the traditional content of the theory while endorsing the form, the argument from other views within the circle, from the state of affairs centered views of actions, reasons, and attitudes, is the central argument for being a consequentialist about value.[33] The exit strategy that I have laid out here is a fundamental challenge to the central premises upon which this argument rests.

There may of course be compelling considerations that can be offered in favor of one or another of these state of affairs centered views, or for stepping wholesale into the consequentialist circle. But claims that such state of affairs centered views of action, reason, desire/preference, value, and morality are natural and intuitive, I have argued, cease to be plausible once the distinction between senses of bringing about is kept clearly in view. Moreover, I have shown that Attitudes Up and Values Down arguments for entering into this consequentialist circle themselves cease to be persuasive once the distinction between senses of bringing about is kept clearly in view. The distinction between a sense of bringing it about that is universal, but that does not lead us into the circle, and a sense of bringing it about that would lead us into the circle were it universal, but that seems clearly not to be, leaves us with a presumption against stepping into the circle of mutually reinforcing state of affairs centered claims, a circle within which consequentialist moral theory in some form or another rightly comes to seem unavoidable.

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[33] Two examples of such an argument can be found in Smith (2003) and Portmore (2011, ch. 3).

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