

9

The Humean Theory of Reasons

Mark Schroeder

This paper offers a simple and novel motivation for the Humean Theory of Reasons. According to the Humean Theory of Reasons, all reasons must be explained by some psychological state of the agent for whom they are reasons, such as a desire. This view is commonly thought¹ to be motivated by a substantive theory about the power of reasons to motivate known as *reason internalism*, and a substantive theory about the possibility of being motivated without a desire known as the *Humean Theory of Motivation*. Such a motivation would place substantial constraints on what form the Humean Theory of Reasons might take, and incur substantial commitments in metaethics and moral psychology. The argument offered here, on the other hand, is based entirely on relatively uncontroversial methodological considerations of perfectly broad applicability, and on the commonplace observation that while some reasons are reasons for anyone, others are reasons for only some. The argument is a highly defeasible one, but is supposed to give us a direct insight into what is philosophically deep about the puzzles raised for ethical theory by the Humean Theory of Reasons. I claim that it should renew our interest in the relationship between these two kinds of reason, and in particular in the explanation of reasons which seem to depend on desires or other psychological states.

1.1 THE HUMEAN THEORY OF REASONS: WHAT

Consider a case like that of Ronnie and Bradley. Ronnie likes to dance, but Bradley can't stand even being around dancing. So the fact that there will be dancing at the party tonight is a reason for Ronnie to go there, but not for Bradley to go there—it is a reason for Bradley to stay away. Ronnie

¹ See, for example, Williams (1981), Bond (1983), Darwall (1983), Korsgaard (1986), Hooker (1987), Hubin (1999), and others.

and Bradley's reasons therefore differ—something is a reason for one to do something, but not for the other to do it. And this difference between their reasons seems obviously to have something to do with their psychologies. It may not be ultimately explained by the difference in what they *like*, of course—the explanation may ultimately derive from a difference in what they *value*, or what they *care* about, what they *desire*, *desire to desire*, what they take or would take *pleasure* in, or what they *believe to be of value*. I'm not claiming that it is uncontroversial that one rather than another of these kinds of psychological states is what really explains the difference between Ronnie and Bradley—after all, many of these psychological characteristics often go hand in hand, and even moderately sophisticated views can make them hard to distinguish simply by considering cases. All I'm claiming is that it should be pretty close to uncontroversial that there are at least some reasons like Ronnie's, in that they are explained by *some* psychological feature.²

The *Broad Humean Theory of Reasons* says that all reasons are explained in the same way as Ronnie's—by the same kind of psychological feature:

Broad Humean Theory Every reason is explained³ by the kind of psychological feature that explains Ronnie's reason in the same way as Ronnie's is.

The Broad Humean Theory of Reasons is really too broad to sound familiar to most readers familiar with the philosophical literature on reasons. That literature is full of references to, and attacks on, a familiar view that is

² Allow me to head off a possible distraction. There is a sense in which what reasons one has depends on what one *believes*. In this sense, though there will be dancing at the party and Ronnie and Freddie both like to dance, if Freddie is aware of this but Ronnie is not, then we might say that Freddie has this reason but Ronnie does not. This is the *subjective* sense of 'reason'. When I say that it is uncontroversial that at least some reasons depend on psychological states, this is not what I intend. What I mean, is that it is uncontroversial that at least some reasons *in the objective sense* depend on psychological states.

³ A qualifying note about how to understand this talk about *explanation*. The fact that there will be dancing at the party tonight is a reason for Ronnie to go there, in part *because* Ronnie likes to dance. That must be part of *why* it is a reason for Ronnie to go there, because it is not a reason for Bradley to go there, and liking to dance is precisely what distinguishes Ronnie from Bradley. The Humean Theory of Reasons is a generalization of *this* claim. It is the claim that whenever *R* is a reason for *X* to do *A*, that is in part *because* of something about *X*'s psychology—that this is part of *why* *R* is a reason for *X* to do *A*. I'm using the term 'explained by' to cover these kinds of claims about what is so *because* something else is so, and what is part of *why* it is so. This is not intended to import epistemic or pragmatic ideas about what *agents* might be doing when they engage in the behavior of *explaining* things to one another. In my sense, *X* explains *Y* iff *Y* is the case *because* *X* is the case, or *X* is part of *why* *Y* is the case. The explanation is the *content* of the answer to a 'why?' question—not the answer itself, nor the process of giving it.

more narrow than the Broad Humean Theory. This view is a *version* of the Broad Humean Theory because it agrees that all reasons must be explained by the same kind of psychological feature as explains Ronnie's. But it is more specific than the Broad Theory, because it takes a view about what kind of psychological state does explain the difference between Ronnie's and Bradley's reasons. It says that it is a *desire*, in the traditional philosophical sense:

Narrow Humean Theory Every reason is explained by a desire in the same way as Ronnie's is.

Even the Narrow Humean Theory of Reasons, of course, is only loosely called 'Humean'; there is an excellent case to be made that Hume himself was not a Humean in either sense. Both theories are associated with Hume's name primarily because their proponents have typically been loosely inspired by Hume.⁴

So allow me to reveal my hand. I believe that a version of the Narrow Humean Theory of Reasons is true, and I have defended such a theory elsewhere.⁵ But in this paper I will not be arguing for the Narrow Humean Theory. The argument of this paper is only a motivation for the Broad Humean Theory. It is my *view* that there are good arguments from the Broad Humean Theory to the Narrow Humean Theory, but I will not advance those arguments in this paper. Indeed, I think that for most of the philosophical reasons for which philosophers have been interested in whether the Humean Theory of Reasons is true, whether the Humean Theory is Narrow or not is beside the point. In the next subsection I will explain why.

1.2 THE HUMEAN THEORY OF REASONS AND MORAL SKEPTICISM

The Broad Humean Theory of Reasons takes no stand on what kind of psychological state it is that explains the difference between Ronnie and Bradley. It only claims that whatever it is, it is also needed to explain every other reason. But this does not water the Humean Theory down so much as to make it of little interest. On the contrary, it is exactly the right specificity of view that we should be worried about, for exactly the reasons

⁴ So it's not worth quoting Hume for the purpose of refuting either view. Compare Korsgaard (1997). See also Setiya (2004) for an excellent discussion of how to understand Hume's commitments about practical reason.

⁵ Schroeder (2004), (forthcoming-b), (forthcoming-c).

that philosophers have been worried about the Narrow Humean Theory of Reasons all along.

The principal philosophical interest of the Narrow Humean Theory of Reasons, after all, is that it is supposed to play a special role in motivating certain kinds of skepticism about the universality or objectivity of morality. The problem is that according to the Humean Theory, every reason must be explained by a desire of the person for whom it is a reason. But it is hard to see how such an explanation could possibly work for all moral reasons. Consider this case: Katie needs help. So there is a reason to help Katie. It is a reason for you to help Katie, a reason for me to help Katie, and in general, it is a reason for *anyone* to help Katie. Some of the most important moral reasons seem to be like the reason to help Katie—they are reasons for *anyone*, no matter what she is like. But does *everyone* really have some desire that would explain a reason for her to help Katie in the same way that Ronnie's desire to dance explains his reason to go to the party? It seems fairly implausible.

So those who accept versions of the Narrow Humean Theory often take revisionist views about the kind of objectivity that moral claims have. Gilbert Harman, for example, argues for these reasons that moral claims aren't really universally binding, but are only binding on people who have implicitly contracted in certain ways. This is his brand of moral relativism in 'Moral Relativism Defended' and subsequently.⁶ Philippa Foot argues for almost identical reasons that moral claims don't provide reasons to everyone, but only to those who care about morality. That is her thesis in 'Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives'.⁷ The difference between Harman and Foot is that Foot thinks that there is another, non-reason-giving, sense in which moral claims nevertheless 'apply' to everyone, even to those to whom they don't give reasons. John Mackie argues that it is essential to moral claims that moral requirements give reasons to everyone. Since this is incompatible with the Humean Theory of Reasons, he concludes that moral claims are uniformly false.⁸ These are all drastic forms of skepticism about the objectivity or universality of morality that are motivated by the Humean Theory of Reasons. And it is these kinds of arguments which give the Humean Theory so much of its interest for moral theorists. It is in order

⁶ Harman (1975). See also Harman (1978) and (1985).

⁷ Foot (1975). Foot, however, subsequently rejected this view. See, for example, Foot (2001).

⁸ Mackie (1977). The interpretation of Mackie's argument from 'queerness' is controversial, however, since there are at least two other good candidates for the kind of argument that Mackie intended to offer. Richard Joyce, however, does unambiguously endorse this argument as the best argument for a moral error-theory, in the process of motivating his moral fictionalism. See Joyce (2001).

to avoid these kinds of implications that moral philosophers have been so concerned, over so many years, to finally conclusively refute the Humean Theory.

But notice that none of these arguments actually turns on making any particular assumptions about what *kind* of psychological state is necessary in order to explain a reason. No matter what kind of psychological state is necessary in order to explain a reason, it is fairly implausible that we are going to be able to expect that everyone, no matter what she is like, will have some psychological state of the requisite kind in order to explain a reason that is supposed to be a reason for everyone. So the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons best captures what lies at the heart of this kind of worry about the universality or objectivity of morality—the kind of worry that the revisionary Humean takes to be conclusive.

Now if the Narrow Humean Theory of Reasons is the most popular version of the Broad Humean Theory, it is easy to understand for purely sociological reasons why it would receive so much attention. But what we can expect for sociological reasons is quite different from what we should demand of good philosophy. There are any number of supposed refutations of the Narrow Humean Theory of Reasons in the literature, all for the purpose of setting aside the kinds of skeptical arguments run by Harman, Foot, and Mackie. But it's simply faulty reasoning to think that if an argument you want to rebut needs the premiss that p , you can rebut it by refuting $p+$, a stronger premiss. If we're really concerned about the kinds of skeptical arguments raised by Harman, Foot, and Mackie, we have to be concerned about the more general Broad Humean Theory of Reasons.

1.3 THE CLASSICAL ARGUMENT FOR THE HUMEAN THEORY

So why haven't philosophers critical of the skeptical arguments of Harman, Foot, and Mackie been more concerned about this more general view? Are they philosophically lazy? No; a much better explanation is easy to find. The better explanation is that it is widely believed to be common knowledge what the *only motivation* for believing the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons is.⁹ And it is an argument which, if it works, also establishes the truth of

⁹ Hubin (1999: 31): 'I think what is special about the Humean position on reasons for acting is approximately what most defenders and detractors alike are prone to point to as its attraction ... What attracts many of us, to the different degrees that we are attracted, to Humeanism is, as many have suggested, a motivational argument.'

the Narrow Humean Theory of Reasons. I call it the *Classical Argument* for the Humean Theory.

Elijah Millgram, a critic of the Humean Theory, puts the Classical Argument most succinctly: ‘How could anything be a reason for action if it could not motivate you to actually *do* something? And what could motivate you to do something, except one of your desires?’¹⁰ Millgram’s first rhetorical question states the thesis of *reason internalism* and his second that of the *Humean Theory of Motivation*. If having a reason requires being motivatable, and being motivatable requires having a desire, then having a reason must require having a desire. And that is enough of the Humean Theory of Reasons to motivate the kinds of skepticism just discussed.

A great deal of the abundant literature critical of the Humean Theory of Reasons has focused on rebutting the Classical Argument, and many of the points made there are fairly conclusive. The Classical Argument leaves much to be desired, as a motivation for the Humean Theory of Reasons. But if this is the only motivation for the Broad Humean Theory, then we can straightaway draw two conclusions about the kind of view that the Humean Theory takes about desires. First, they have to be motivating states. And second, they have to be *ubiquitous* motivating states: any action whatsoever has to have one of them in its causal etiology.

These two conclusions set enormous constraints on the kind of shape that the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons might take. If they are sound, then refutations of the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons can take for granted some fairly strong conclusions about what kind of psychological state explains reasons, according to the Humean: not only that they are *desires*, but what desires, in fact, *are*. But I think that if we are genuinely interested in the kind of view that can motivate Harman’s, Foot’s, and Mackie’s kinds of skepticism about the objectivity of morality, then we should cast our nets wider. In particular, I don’t think that the Classical Argument gives the best or most interesting argument for the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons. It is the purpose of this paper to offer a better and more general motivation for the Humean Theory, one which doesn’t commit that theory to any particular story about what explains the difference between Ronnie and Bradley. It is my purpose to show how *few* assumptions about the Humean Theory of Reasons are necessary in order to motivate it.

¹⁰ Millgram (1997: 3). The classical argument is given in Williams (1981), cited in Bond (1983) and Darwall (1983), and discussed extensively in Korsgaard (1986), Hooker (1987), Millgram (1996), and in many other places. Of these authors, Darwall is the only one who allows that there are other motivations for the Humean Theory of Reasons.

2.1 THE POSITIVE MOTIVATION

It is fairly uncontroversial, as I suggested in section 1.1, that the difference between Ronnie's and Bradley's reasons is due to a difference in their psychologies. It is not uncontroversial, of course, *which* difference in their psychologies it is due to. But the central idea behind my motivation for the Humean Theory is to take what we *do* know about Ronnie and Bradley's case, and to put it to work. If there is *any* uniform explanation of all reasons, then maybe what we know about how *some* explanations of reasons work will help to shed light on how *all* explanations of reasons must work. And that is the idea that I will be pushing. There are broad-based theoretical motivations to hope that there might be some common explanation of why there are the reasons that there are—broad motivations to be in search of a uniform explanation of all reasons. If we are after a uniform explanation of all reasons, I will be suggesting, Ronnie and Bradley's case is where we should look.

This may not move you. You may be thinking, 'but maybe there are *two kinds* of reason—one kind that gets explained by psychological states, and one kind that doesn't!' I agree. There *may* be two kinds of reason. But on the face of it, the reason for Ronnie to go to the party and the reason for Ronnie not to murder are both *reasons*—they are both cases of the same general kind of thing. It would be very surprising if these two uses of the word 'reason' turned out to be merely homonyms. So, given that they are both cases of the same kind of thing, it is reasonable to wonder whether there is anything to be said about why they are. And it is this reasonable thing to wonder, I will be suggesting, which will lead to the hypothesis that all reasons are explained in the way that Ronnie's is.

Of course, it doesn't follow from the fact that Ronnie's reason is explained, in part, by his psychology, and the hypothesis that there is a common explanation of all reasons, that psychological features figure in all of these explanations. It could be that the feature of Ronnie's psychology plays a *role* in the explanation of his reason that can be filled by other kinds of thing—for example, by promises or special relationships. And in any case, if we really care about finding a common explanation of all reasons, something must motivate us to pay attention to Ronnie and Bradley's case, in particular. After all, there are many cases of reasons, and we might know something about how many of them work. Where does the pressure come from to try to generalize Ronnie and Bradley's case to cover others, rather than trying to generalize other cases to cover Ronnie and Bradley's?

This last question is really what this paper is about. My aim is to give a principled motivation for looking to cases like Ronnie and Bradley's. And it will come in two steps. First I'll give a principled motivation from a broad methodological principle for looking to cases of reasons that are *merely agent-relational*, rather than to reasons that are *agent-neutral*, in a sense that may be unfamiliar, but which I will explain. The second, more controversial, step will be to isolate psychology-explained reasons as a better candidate to generalize from than other categories of merely agent-relational reason, such as those deriving from promises or from special relationships. The first step will occupy the remainder of part 2; I'll offer two arguments for the second in part 3, and another in part 4.

2.2 A METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE

The argument that if we are looking for a uniform explanation of all reasons, merely agent-relational reasons are the most methodologically promising place for us to look, trades on what I think should be an uncontroversial methodological principle. I'll uncover this principle in two stages. First, suppose that you start noticing a lot of shapes like the ones depicted in Figure 1. These shapes seem to have something interesting in common, and if you investigate, you will be able to find all kinds of interesting things about them. They are, for example, the shape that objects which are actually circular occupy in our visual fields, and so if you are, for example, a painter, it would behoove you to learn more about what they really have distinctively in common that explains why they are *that* shape, rather than some other. It might, after all (indeed, it will), help you to recreate them accurately.

But you'll be going about things all wrong if you start trying to figure out what these shapes distinctively have in common that distinguishes them simply by looking at *them*. It will put you off on all sorts of wild-goose-chases. For example, one of the first things you're likely to notice

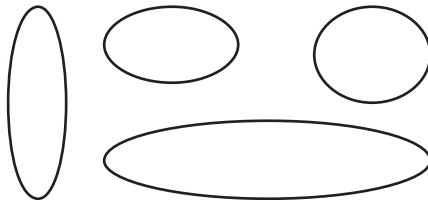


Figure 1

about your shapes is that they are all round. But what ellipses all have distinctively in common—for the shapes that you are trying to investigate are ellipses—is not simply that they are all round *plus something else*. You won't ever find something that you can add to their being round, to give you the right account of what sets them aside as a distinctive class of shapes. To discover the answer to that, you have to look not only at ellipses, but at *foils*—shapes that are like ellipses, but not. In particular, you will want to look at egg-shapes and other non-elliptical ovals. Features that are shared by both ellipses and egg-shapes can be quickly set aside as irrelevant. The Methodological Principle, then, is this:

MP If you want to know what makes *P*s *P*s, compare *P*s to things that are not *P*s.

I want to take this carefully in order to be perfectly clear how uncontroversial the Methodological Principle should be, because I want to emphasize exactly how natural and forceful my motivation for the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons is. But lest I be accused of belaboring the obvious, the Methodological Principle quickly generalizes once we start paying attention to the case of relations. And here my example will be slightly contrived. Suppose that having discovered what ellipses have in common¹¹ you notice that some people are the *ancestors* of other people, and decide that you want to discover the same thing about this relation, that you have discovered about the property of being an ellipse. It follows from a generalization of the Methodological Principle that some people are not going to be particularly worth investigating, if you are trying to discover what the common explanation is, of what makes one person the ancestor of another.

Eve, who is the ancestor of everyone (I warned you this would be *slightly* contrived) will not be a particularly good place to start, in investigating the *ancestor of* relation. Since she is the ancestor of everyone, she has no non-descendants to compare to her descendants as foils. And so you will suffer from an embarrassment of riches, if you try to sort through all of the things that all of Eve's descendants have in common, in search of the one that makes them her descendants. Since every human being is one of Eve's descendants (as I stipulated), any feature that every human being shares will become a candidate, and you will have no way of ruling any of these out. So Eve's case gives you no privileged *insight* into the *ancestor-of* relation. Being descended from Eve is not being human *plus* anything else, any more than being an ellipse is being round *plus* something else.

¹¹ They consist in the set of points whose summed distance from each of two fixed points is the same. (This knowledge *will* help you to depict them more accurately, if you really are a painter, because by tying a thread around two pins, you can use this knowledge to trace any ellipse you like with indefinite accuracy.)

So if you really want to investigate the *ancestor of* relation, the generalization of our Methodological Principle tells us that you need to pay more attention to cases like that of Japheth. Japheth is the ancestor of many people, but he is also not the ancestor of many others. And so we have lots of non-descendants of Japheth to compare to lots of descendants of Japheth. With so many foils, we'll be able to rule out many more potential candidates for what it is that makes Japheth the ancestor of the people who are his descendants. In fact, it is quite likely that there will be *only one* natural candidate for what all of Japheth's descendants have in common but his non-descendants lack: that they are people to whom he stands in the ancestral of the *parent of* relation. So it is quite likely that Japheth's case is going to help you to zero in very quickly on the common explanation of what makes someone the ancestor of someone else. The Generalized Methodological Principle says, then, to pay attention to cases like that of Japheth:

GMP If you want to understand what makes $x_1 \dots x_n$ stand in relation R , compare cases in which $A_1 \dots A_n$ stand in relation R but $B_1, A_2 \dots A_n$ do not, in which $A_1 \dots A_n$ stand in relation R but $A_1, B_2, A_3 \dots A_n$ do not, and so on.

Since everyone is a descendant of Eve, Eve's case sets an important *constraint* on a good account of the *ancestor of* relation. The account will be wrong, if it yields the wrong predictions about her case. That is why it is a relief to check and see that Eve does, in fact, stand in the ancestral of the *parent of* relation to everyone. But by the Generalized Methodological Principle, her case is not the right kind of case to give us any particular *insight* into what makes someone the ancestor of someone else. And that is because it leaves us with no useful foils. It allows us to see things that ancestor–descendant pairs have in common, but since it leaves no foils, focusing on this case is like trying to understand ellipses without comparing them to other shapes. It doesn't rule enough out.

2.3 . . . APPLIED TO THE CASE OF REASONS

My *ancestor of* case is, as I noted, slightly contrived. It is highly unlikely, to say the least, that Eve is really the ancestor of *everyone*. To be so, she would have to be her own ancestor, which seems rather unlikely to be the case, stipulations aside. So to that extent, the *ancestor of* relation really only approximates the troubles that beset us when we turn our attention to the *reason* relation. For one of the most philosophically salient features of the *reason* relation—and one that we should have fully in view, if we understand the puzzles about the objectivity of morality raised by the

Humean Theory—is that there are some reasons that really *are* reasons for everyone, no matter who she is or what she is like. These *universal*, or *agent-neutral*, reasons of morality, about which the Humean Theory of Reasons is supposed to raise so many puzzles, are supposed to be such reasons. Agent-neutral reasons, in the uncontroversial sense, are like the case of Eve, in that they are reasons for everyone.¹² They may place *constraints* on a good theory about the common explanation of reasons, but they can't give us any important *insight* into what makes some consideration a reason for someone to do something. For in their case we suffer from an embarrassment of riches. There are too many things that everyone has in common for the case to give us any insight into what distinguishes people for whom *R* is a reason to do *A* from those for whom it is not.

So by the Generalized Methodological Principle, it follows that if you want to know what the common explanation of all reasons is, agent-neutral reasons like the reason to help Katie are not going to be a promising place to start. The *promising* place to start is with the case of reasons that are *merely agent-relational*: reasons for some people but not for others. Ronnie and Bradley's is such a case. And so Ronnie and Bradley's case is a much more promising place to look, in order to discover what makes reasons reasons than the case of the agent-neutral reason to help Katie, or any of the other moral reasons.

And that is an interesting result. We might have thought that Humeans are obsessed with cases like that of Ronnie and Bradley because they begin

¹² Unfortunately, both the words 'universal' and 'agent-neutral' turn out to have misleading associations. See Schroeder (forthcoming-a) and (forthcoming-d), for discussion of the difference between the controversial and uncontroversial senses of 'agent-neutral'. In essence, in *The Possibility of Altruism* Nagel (although using the terms 'objective' and 'subjective' at the time) made an uncontroversial distinction between reasons that are reasons for everyone, and reasons that are reasons for only some (1970). But Nagel also adopted the controversial assumption that the only kind of action that a reason can be in favor of, is an action of the form, 'promote state of affairs *p*'. Only given this highly controversial background assumption does Nagel's uncontroversial distinction, which I am putting to use, succeed at tracking the issues of 'agent-relativity' and 'agent-neutrality' that have anything to do with the distinction between consequentialism and deontology. The distinction I am making here therefore has nothing directly to do with the existence of agent-centered constraints, of special obligations, or of agent-centered options.

It is also important to distinguish *universal* reasons from *universalizable* reasons. A reason is *universal* if it is a reason for everyone. A reason is *universalizable*, if its existence follows from a general (universal) principle, of the form, 'for all *x*, if *x* is in conditions *C*, then there is a reason for *x* to do *A*'. So reasons can be universalizable without being universal. See also my Schroeder (2005) for further discussion of this important distinction. For my purposes, getting confused about this is worse than getting confused about whether the distinction has something to do with agent-centered constraints or options, and so I've elected to retain the term 'agent-neutral' as the less confusing of these two options.

with a pre-theoretic prejudice against reasons like the one to help Katie. After all, Christine Korsgaard has claimed repeatedly that the very idea of a Humean Theory of Reasons *starts* with a special focus on reasons like Ronnie's and a chauvinistic attitude about other intuitive examples of reasons, such as the one to help Katie.¹³ But the Generalized Methodological Principle explains why it is natural to be interested in cases like Ronnie and Bradley's. For according to the GMP, we *need* to focus on cases of reasons that are merely agent-relational, in order to see what role the agent-place plays in the three-place *reason* relation: *R* is a reason for *X* to do *A*.

But this observation is still insufficient to justify or even motivate the Broad Humean Theory on the basis of our premisses. The observation tells us that *merely agent-relational* reasons are the place that we need to look, in order to see what makes reasons reasons, but Ronnie and Bradley's case is only one *kind* of case of merely agent-relational reasons. The observation explains why the efforts of many philosophers to give explanatory accounts of reasons on the basis of paying special or exclusive attention to moral reasons are straightforwardly methodologically unpromising. But it does not justify paying any more attention to psychology-explained agent-relational reasons than to promise-explained agent-relational reasons, special-relation-explained agent-relational reasons, or any number of others, and that is why the methodological principle only gives us the *first* step in our motivation for the Humean Theory.

Compare: Al promises to meet Rose for lunch at the diner. Andy has made no such promise—he's promised his sick mother to visit her at the hospital. The fact that it's time for lunch is a reason for Al to head to the diner. But it's not a reason for Andy to head to the diner—it's a reason for him to head to the hospital. This difference between Al's and Andy's reasons is explained by their respective promises, rather than as a matter of what they like or dislike, want or don't want, care about or not. In another case, Anne is Larry's infant daughter. That is a reason for him to take care of her. But unless you are in Larry's family or a particularly close friend, it isn't a reason for you to take care of Anne. Now, you might have all manner of reasons to take care of Anne—she might, for example, have been abandoned by her father. But the fact that she is Larry's daughter is not among *your* reasons to take care of her. Here it is Larry's relationship to his daughter that seems to make for a difference between his reasons and yours.

¹³ One such argument is the central line of argument in her (1986); a distinct and more general argument to this effect is implicit in the opening pages of her (1997).

So examples of merely agent-relational reasons are ubiquitous.¹⁴ Our Methodological Principle tells us to look at what is distinctive of merely agent-relational reasons, in order to understand reasons in general. But that isn't yet enough to close in on the Humean idea of focusing on Ronnie and Bradley's case, in which the difference in reasons is due to some *psychological* feature. To do that, we need an argument that Ronnie and Bradley's case gives us a *better* insight into what is distinctive of the agent-place in the reason relation than do Al's case or Larry's case. That is, we need to establish an *asymmetry* thesis. My argument for the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons does not rest on ignoring Al's case and Larry's case, or on taking Ronnie's case more seriously. It rests on establishing this Asymmetry Thesis, to which I turn in part 3.

3.1 WEAK ASYMMETRY

I'd like to offer three motivations for the Asymmetry Thesis: a weak, a middling, and a strong. The weak motivation motivates a weak version of the Asymmetry Thesis, but rests on less controversial grounds, the middling motivates a middling version of the Asymmetry Thesis and rests on middlingly controversial grounds, and the strong motivation motivates a very strong version of the Asymmetry Thesis, but rests on very controversial grounds. So they vary from weak to strong in three different dimensions. I'll summarize the weak motivation in this section, rehearse the arguments for the middling motivation in the remainder of part 3, and end up with the strong motivation in part 4; the middling motivation is the one on which I wish to place the most weight for the purposes of this paper, but the broad strategy that I am developing for motivating the Humean Theory can be developed in different ways.

One relevant asymmetry between the case of psychology-explained reasons and other cases of merely agent-relational reasons would be if one of these kinds of reason were a better candidate to generalize in order to explain universal or agent-neutral reasons such as the fact that Katie needs help, which is a reason for anyone to help Katie. According to a common view, it is hopeless to generalize what we know about cases like Ronnie's to cases like that of the reason to help Katie, and that is part of why the

¹⁴ Again, to be clear, since what I am after is agent-relational reasons in the uncontroversial sense, what is crucial here is that the reason for Al to go to the diner is not also a reason for Andy *to go to the diner*—not that it is not also a reason for Andy to make sure that Al ends up at the diner. This further feature of Al's reason is highly relevant—but it is not what the uncontroversial sense of 'agent-relational' tracks.

Humean Theory of Reasons is hopeless. But I have argued elsewhere that it *is* promising to think that the Humean Theory of Reasons may be able to explain agent-neutral reasons such as the reason to help Katie.¹⁵ There is unfortunately no space to rehearse these arguments here.

There is space, however, to consider why it might be thought unpromising to use cases like those of Al and Larry in order to explain reasons like the reason to help Katie. Al has a reason to meet Rose for lunch because of something that he has *done*—some *promise* that he has made. So one might think about contractualist theories of morality as trying to subsume moral reasons under the case of promises, as in Al's case, in this way. But whatever the promise of contractualism in general, we can only use it to subsume reasons like the one to help Katie under cases like Al's if it is based on *actual* contracts, not merely on *hypothetical* contracts. Al has a reason to meet Rose for lunch because he has *actually* made a promise, not because he *might* have made such a promise, if things were different. So only a contractualism based on actual promises could succeed at subsuming moral reasons to cases like Al's. Since that seems unpromising, this seems like an unpromising way to go.

What about cases like Larry's? Could it be that merely agent-relational reasons like Larry's, based on the fact that he is Anne's father, are used to explain reasons like the reason to help Katie? Well, not unless it turns out that everyone is Katie's father. So that doesn't look like a promising view, either. Some authors, however, seem recently to have suggested that being a *fellow human being with* someone is relevantly similar to being the *father of* someone, and that this general relationship, which everyone bears to Katie, can be used to explain reasons in the same kind of way that the fact that Larry is Anne's father can explain agent-relational reasons that Larry has to help Anne.¹⁶ But even supposing this to be true, it would not really be a case of generalizing what we know about Larry's case to all other reasons, because Larry's merely agent-relational reason to help Anne does not derive from the fact that he is a fellow human being with Anne (we all have that reason to help her) but from the fact that *he* is her *father*.

So it is not at all obvious how to generalize other cases of merely agent-relational reasons in a way that would account for the reason to help Katie. It therefore follows that if I am right that Ronnie and Bradley's case *can* plausibly be generalized to account for such reasons, then there is a relevant asymmetry among the obvious cases of merely agent-relational reasons. If we are to look to *any* kind of merely agent-relational reason for insight into

¹⁵ Schroeder (forthcoming-b), (forthcoming-c).

¹⁶ See, for example, Darwall (2006), although I'm not certain that this is the right way to understand Darwall's claims about second-personal authority.

the common explanation of all reasons, as the methodological principle suggests that it should be promising to do, then this asymmetry directs us to look to cases like Ronnie and Bradley's. I haven't discharged the antecedent of this argument, here—that requires another paper.¹⁷ But this illustrates one, weak, way in which we *might* motivate the asymmetry thesis. In the remainder of part 3, I turn to a middling way of motivating the asymmetry thesis that we need, on which I wish to place the most weight for the purposes of this paper. And then in part 4, I will use the results of part 3 in order to state a strong version of the asymmetry thesis.

3.2 THE STANDARD MODEL

Recall that the Methodological Principle does not tell us that cases of agent-neutral reasons *don't matter* for an adequate account of reasons. What it tells us is that like Eve's case, they should operate as a *constraint* on a good account, but they are not likely to give us any particular *insight* into the common explanation of all reasons. My first, weak, strategy for motivating the asymmetry thesis had us look at the prospects for each kind of merely agent-relational reason of being used to account for agent-neutral reasons. My second, middling, strategy for establishing the Asymmetry Thesis goes the other way around. It is to show that most merely agent-relational reasons can be *subsumed* under the case of agent-neutral reasons, but psychology-explained reasons like Ronnie's and Bradley's plausibly cannot. If that is right, then we can treat Al's case and Larry's case as setting constraints on an adequate account of reasons, but like Katie's case, not being particularly good sources of insight into that relation. But if it is right, then we *can't* treat Ronnie's case in this way. And that will be my argument that if we want to look for a common explanation of all reasons, psychology-explained reasons like Ronnie's and Bradley's are the first place that we should look. And this is my central presumptive argument for the Broad Humean Theory.

So consider the case of Al and Andy. Al promises Rose to meet her for lunch at the diner, and Andy promises his mother to visit her at the hospital. As a result, the fact that it is almost noon is a reason for Al to head to the diner and a reason for Andy to head to the hospital. But plausibly, this difference in Al and Andy's reasons can be traced back to a reason that they have in common—to keep their promises. One such reason is that breaking promises tends to destroy their usefulness. Another is that

¹⁷ Schroeder (forthcoming-b).

breaking promises is a breach of trust. Since this is a reason for Al to keep his promises, the fact that he has promised Rose to meet her at the diner for lunch makes heading for the diner at noon necessary for keeping his promises. And since Andy has promised to visit his mother at the hospital, that makes heading to the hospital at noon necessary for *him* to keep *his* promises. So the facts about what promises they have made explain why going *different* places at noon are *ways* for Al and Andy to do the thing that they both have a reason to do—to keep their promises.¹⁸

It is non-trivial to hold that the difference in Al and Andy's reasons is explained by a further reason that they both share, in this way. Logically speaking, all that we need in order to explain the difference between Al and Andy, is to appeal to the following *conditional*:

Conditional Promise For all x and a , if x promises to do a , then there is a reason for x to do a .

Logically speaking, no one need have any reasons whatsoever in order for Conditional Promise to be true. But I appealed to something *further* in order to explain Al and Andy's reasons:

Categorical Promise There is a reason r such that for all x , r is a reason for x to keep her promises.

In this case, it does seem like Categorical Promise is true. I named two such reasons, and likely there are more. And in this case, that seems to be *why* Conditional Promise is true. So though Al and Andy's reasons differ, that difference can be traced back to an agent-neutral reason. Some philosophers seem to believe, in fact, that *no* conditional like Conditional Promise could ever be true without being backed up with a categorical reason like that in Categorical Promise.¹⁹ But this would be a bold substantive thesis. Logically speaking, Categorical Promise does not follow from Conditional Promise.

Yet the difference between your reason and Larry's can be explained in this same kind of way. Anne is Larry's infant daughter, and that is a reason

¹⁸ Let me immediately head off one source of misunderstanding. When I say that one reason to keep promises is that breaking promises is a breach of trust, I do *not* mean to be suggesting that there is a *further* agent-neutral reason not to breach trust (but not saying what that reason is), and that since breaking promises is a breach of trust, this reason transfers its force to a derivative reason to keep promises. All I am saying is that the fact that breaking promises is a breach of trust is an agent-neutral reason to keep promises. So the explanation that I gave *discharged* the obligation to say *what* the agent-neutral reason from which Al and Andy's reasons derive *is*. But the explanation that I did *not* give *failed* to discharge this obligation—it merely passed it on to the further claim that there is an agent-neutral reason not to breach trust.

¹⁹ I have written about this theory in detail in Schroeder (2005).

for Larry to take care of her, but not a reason for you to take care of her. This, it seems, is because the following conditional is true:

Conditional Child For all x and y , if y is x 's infant child, that is a reason for x to take care of y .

Conditional Child backs up a reason for Larry to take care of Anne, but it doesn't back up a reason for you to take care of her. But in this case, also, it doesn't seem like Conditional Child is true all by itself. Like Conditional Promise, it seems to be backed up by a reason that you and Larry *share*—one to take care of whatever children you *do* have:

Categorical Child There is a reason r such that for all x , r is a reason for x to take care of whatever children she brings into the world.

Again, it is easy to come up with such reasons. One is that a person's children are moral subjects who cannot provide for themselves, for whom she is causally responsible. This reason seems to back up Larry's reason to take care of Anne, but to avoid backing up the same reason for you to take care of Anne—Anne, after all, is not *your* child.²⁰

Cases like these, in which differences in agent-relational reasons are backed up by an agent-neutral reason, follow what I call the *Standard Model* for reason-explanations.²¹ The Standard Model is important and interesting, but all that we need to understand about it here is that in a Standard Model explanation, some class of merely agent-relational reasons is collectively subsumed under an agent-neutral reason from which they derive. What I've illustrated here is that merely agent-relative reasons like Al's and like Larry's can be explained in this kind of way, and hence subsumed under the case of agent-neutral reasons. As such, they place *constraints* on a good account of the common explanation of all reasons, but they don't promise to give us any special *insight* into it.

It is natural to think that all cases of merely agent-relational reasons will be like Al's and Larry's cases in this way—that every time some contingent feature of an agent's circumstances plays a role in explaining why something is a reason for *her* to do something, even though it is not a reason for others to do it, it does so by subsuming her case under a more general agent-neutral reason. The theory that all explanations of agent-relational reasons work in this way is the *Standard Model Theory*. According to the

²⁰ Again, I do not mean to be saying that there is some more basic agent-neutral reason to take care of moral subjects for whom one is causally responsible. That would not answer the challenge to say what this reason is; it would only put it off. I only mean to be saying that the fact that your children are moral subjects for whom you are causally responsible is a reason for you to take care of them.

²¹ See Schroeder (2005), (forthcoming-a), and (forthcoming-c).

Standard Model Theory, though Ronnie's psychological state does play some role in explaining his reason, the role that it plays is a *contingent* one, that can also be played by other kinds of thing. So the possibility of Standard Model explanations is why it doesn't follow from the conjecture that all reasons are explained in fundamentally the same way, and that Ronnie's reason is explained in part by his psychology, that all reasons are in part explained by psychological features. It gives a natural story about how it could be that all reasons really are explained in the same way, and Ronnie's psychological state plays a role in the explanation of his reason, but there are not psychological states in the explanation of every reason. According to the theory, this is because the *role* played by Ronnie's psychology can also be played by other kinds of thing.

But what I'll argue in the next section is that the class of psychology-explained reasons like Ronnie's *can't* be subsumed under agent-neutral reasons in this kind of way. The Standard Model Theory, that is, is false. And that will be the asymmetry that I will argue gives us middling warrant to hold that Ronnie's case is a more promising place to look in order to see what role the *agent*-place plays in the *reason* relation.

3.3 IS THERE AN AGENT-NEUTRAL REASON TO PROMOTE YOUR DESIRES?

To have a Standard Model explanation of reasons like Ronnie's, we need two things. First, we need an action-type *A* such that in every case like Ronnie's, the action the reason is for is a *way* for the agent to do *A*. And second, we need a reason, *R*, that is a reason for anyone to do *A*. It is easy to see how to construct the appropriate *A* and *R* in the paradigmatic cases in which the Standard Model is motivated. What Rachel has a reason to do on both Monday and Thursday is to write about whatever she is thinking about at the time. And the reason for her to do this is that it has been assigned by her poetry professor. Because this is a reason for Rachel to write about whatever she is thinking about, it follows that no matter what Rachel is thinking about, she has a reason to write about that.²²

But unfortunately, it is quite difficult to construct the appropriate *A* and *R* for the full range of cases like Ronnie's. Here I will assume for the sake of argument that there *is* some action *A* such that all actions for which there are psychology-explained reasons are *ways* of doing *A*. For the sake of argument, I will assume that this is the action of *doing what you want*. It is

²² See Schroeder (2005) for an extended discussion of Rachel's case.

unclear, I think, whether any such action-type will do the required work for the Standard Model, but the issues are complicated. I will confine myself to arguing that even if there is some such action A , there is no good candidate, R , for what the agent-neutral reason is to do this thing. If there is not, then the Standard Model Theory is, I think, wrong, and wrong in an interesting way. The way in which it is wrong leaves a relevant asymmetry between psychology-explained and other merely agent-relational reasons. And from the preceding considerations, that means that reasons like Ronnie's are the most promising place to look for a unified explanation of all reasons.

This may seem like a silly view. It may seem obvious that there is a reason to do what you want. But we have to be careful how we understand that claim, and consequently we should be suspicious about whether the thought supports the Standard Model in any way. Compare the following:²³

Easy For all x and a , if doing a is what x wants, then there is a reason r for x to do a .

Mid For all x , there is a reason r for x to: do what x wants.

Hard There is a reason r that is a reason for all x to: do what x wants.

The problem is that in order to get a Standard Model explanation of the full range of cases like Ronnie's, **Hard** must be true. But it is not at all obvious that **Hard** is true (that is why I called it '**Hard**'). At best, it is **Easy** that is obvious.

Consider the case of Brett. Brett wants to finish his Ph.D. in philosophy. Working on his dissertation on the pragmatics of context-dependence promotes finishing his Ph.D. in philosophy, and so there is a reason for Brett to work on his dissertation on the pragmatics of context-dependence. Moreover, it is easy to see what this reason is. It is that working on his dissertation will enable him to finish his Ph.D. But Brett also wants to become a rock star. Recording a new album with his band will promote this aim. And so it seems that there is a reason for Brett to record a new album with his band. Moreover, it is easy to see what this reason is. It is that recording a new album with his band is necessary in order to get picked up by a label, and hence in order to become a rock star.

Obviously, the reasons for Brett to do these two things are different. Examples like this (at least, enough of them—one for every want) are enough to make **Easy** true. But for **Mid** to be true, there must be a *further*

²³ Here I bracket the question of whether these claims are *sufficient* as stated. We're interested in the view that psychological states like desire play a *necessary* (but not necessarily sufficient) role in the explanation of reasons. If you think some further condition is also required in order to *complete* this explanation, by all means build it in. This question is orthogonal to the one that I am pursuing here.

reason for Brett to *do what he wants*, some fact about the world that is both a reason for Brett to work on his dissertation and a reason for him to record a new album with his band. And for **Hard** to be true, this reason, whatever it is, must also be a reason for Ronnie to go to the party, for Vera to practice playing chess, for Christina to buy a new cookbook, for Bill to hike the Appalachian Trail, and so on. What single state of the world could possibly tell in favor of such a rich and diverse class of actions? I don't see what it could be, and no one who believes that there is such a reason has ever given me a good answer as to what they think that it is, either.

The idea I hear most often is also the most unpromising, so let me set it aside, here. The conjecture that I hear most often is that the reason r which makes **Hard** true is just the truth of **Hard** itself! How convenient! Unfortunately, also how circular. Even if the truth of **Hard** does satisfy the condition that **Hard**'s existential quantifier governs, it simply *can't* be the only thing that does. For in order to be such a reason, it must first be *true*. But in order for it to be true, there must first be such a reason. So it can't be the only one. The fact that I so often hear this hopeless answer seems to me to be evidence that no one does have any good idea of what consideration it could be that makes **Hard** true.

So despite appearances, it should not be at all obvious that there *must* be *some* agent-neutral reason to do what one likes. What should be obvious is that a Standard Model explanation of psychology-explained reasons like Ronnie's owes us something significant. It is committed to holding that there *is* some such reason. And so it should be able to tell us what this reason is. I myself don't know what this reason is. I have no *proof* that there is no good answer as to what it is, but no one, no matter how confident that there *must* be some such reason, has ever given me a satisfactory answer as to what it is. And so I remain suspicious that their convictions that there is such a reason arise not from knowing what it is, but because they are in the grip of a theory—the Standard Model Theory. This constitutes my second, middling, motivation for the asymmetry thesis.

4.1 THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF

So in sum, this is my argument for the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons, given the middling motivation for the asymmetry thesis:

- 1 Ronnie's reason is explained by some feature of his psychology.
- 2 All reasons are, at least at bottom, explained in the same kind of way.
- 3 From the *Generalized Methodological Principle*, agent-neutral reasons should function as a *constraint* on a good unified explanation of reasons,

but they don't give us a promising place to look for how that explanation *works*.

- 4 From the *Asymmetry Thesis*, all merely agent-relational reasons *other* than the psychology-explained ones can be successfully subsumed under the case of agent-neutral reasons.
- C So psychology-explained reasons like Ronnie's are the *most methodologically promising* place to look for features of how the uniform explanation of all reasons must work.

I don't claim that this argument gives more than a presumptive motivation for the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons. All it tells us is that Ronnie and Bradley's case is a *methodologically promising place to look* for an explanation of reasons, *so long as* we aspire for a uniform explanation. But I *do* claim that this argument gives us a *very good* presumptive motivation for the Humean Theory, which is all that I am after.

Premiss 1 is weak enough to be uncontroversial—or at least, to create a quite significant cost to rejecting it. Premiss 2 is *not* uncontroversial, but it represents an appropriate and reasonable ambition for philosophical theory. Premiss 3 is backed by a genuinely uncontroversial methodological principle. And I've argued carefully for premiss 4 in part 3 of this paper—if you think it is false, you're welcome to propose what the action and reason could possibly be that would make a Standard Model explanation of all of the reasons like Ronnie's turn out to work, without raising problems of its own. And if that fails, there is still the weak motivation for the asymmetry thesis from section 3.1. Once we recognize the Methodological Principle and apply it to reasons, we only need *some* relevant asymmetry in order to generate *some* kind of motivation for the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons.

4.2 REVISIONIST AND CONSERVATIVE HUMEANISM

Notice that I have *not* claimed that Katie's case, Al's case, Larry's case, and others like them, do not place important *constraints* on an account of reasons. On the contrary, I compared these cases to that of Eve in the *ancestor of* case. Though Eve's case did not in and of itself give us any special insight into the *ancestor of* relation, I claimed that it did place an important constraint on a successful account of that relation. Similarly, I claim that Katie's case, Al's case, and Larry's case place important constraints on a successful account of reasons. I hold that it is a serious mark against any theory of reasons that it fails to account for such reasons.

Distinguish two kinds of Humeanism—*revisionist* and *conservative*. The revisionist Humean is happy to embrace the kinds of skeptical results

about the objectivity of morality that I discussed in section 1.2. When the revisionist Humean says that all reasons must be explained by a psychological state just like Ronnie's is, she means that there is no special reason for everyone to help Katie, nor for Al to meet Rose for lunch, and so on. But when the *conservative*, or *sophisticated*, Humean says that all reasons must be explained by a psychological state just like Ronnie's is, he doesn't mean to be denying that there is a reason for anyone to help Katie no matter what he is like; he is merely making a theoretical claim about that reason's genesis.²⁴

The sophisticated Humean's theory may ultimately fail to successfully explain all of the reasons for which he wants to account. If it does so, then he is forced to take a revisionist view. And that can lead, ultimately, to skeptical results about the objectivity of morality. But the motivation that I am offering for the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons is, at least initially, *sophisticated* in outlook. What I am offering is simply a methodological consideration in favor of expecting that Ronnie and Bradley's case should give us a special *insight* into what explains all reasons. And *that*, I would have thought, is all that we need in order to have excellent presumptive motivation for finding the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons *attractive*. It is certainly enough to dispel the illusion that the only reason anyone would believe the Humean Theory is because they were committed to the Classical Argument. And that should be enough to dispel the idea that motivation by the Classical Argument can be taken for granted when evaluating the prospects of the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons.

4.3 CODA: HOW IS RONNIE'S REASON EXPLAINED?

One of the principal advantages that I've claimed for my motivation for the Humean Theory of Reasons is that it makes no discriminations among *forms* that the Humean Theory of Reasons might take. It leaves for investigation just *how* the explanation of Ronnie's reason actually works—for example, what kind of psychological state explains it, but also many other questions about how the explanation works. Since we've seen that the Humean Theory cannot accept the Standard Model explanation of Ronnie's reason, and since I've argued in part 3 that this explanation is suspicious anyway, I want to close by offering an alternative way of understanding how Ronnie's reason *does* get explained by his psychology, which leads to an interesting conjecture, which leads to a third, strong, version of the asymmetry thesis, and hence a further, related, argument for the Broad Humean Theory of Reasons.

²⁴ See Schroeder (forthcoming-b).

The fact that there will be dancing at the party tonight is a reason for Ronnie to go there, but not for Bradley to go there. And this is because Ronnie, but not Bradley, desires to dance. For this explanation to be true, something like the following has to be the case:²⁵

Expl For all agents x , if R helps to explain why x 's doing A promotes p , and p is the object of one of x 's desires, then R is a reason for x to do A .

Expl is a generalization under which we can subsume Ronnie's case. In Ronnie's case, the fact that there will be dancing at the party tonight helps to explain why going to the party will promote one of Ronnie's desires. For it helps to explain why going to the party will be a way for Ronnie to go dancing, and dancing is something that Ronnie desires to do. But since Bradley doesn't desire to go dancing, it doesn't follow from **Expl** that this is a reason for Bradley to go to the party.

The Standard Model Theory would have it that positing generalizations like **Expl** is not enough to explain Ronnie's reason. For on the Standard Model Theory, as we have seen, **Expl** itself needs to be explained. *Why* is it that **Expl** is true? On the Standard Model Theory, this question must be answered by appealing to a *further* action that there is a reason for everyone to do. But as I've argued, we *can't* successfully do that in this case.

But that doesn't mean that **Expl** must be unexplained. Compare **Expl** to another explanatory generalization. We can say that the Bermuda Triangle is a triangle, in part, because it has three sides. This is because the following generalization is true:

Tri For all x , if x is a closed plane figure consisting of three straight sides, then x is a triangle.

But no one thinks that for **Tri** to be true, there has to be a further shape, over and above triangularity, that is had by everything, and explains why everything has the conditional property postulated by **Tri**. On the contrary, people are likely to think that **Tri** is true simply because it states *what it is* for something to be a triangle. It is because triangularity *consists* in being a closed plane figure consisting of three straight sides, that **Tri** is true.

So I offer **Tri** to the Humean as a model for how the explanation of how Ronnie's reason works, if it does not follow the Standard Model. On this view, a desire helps to explain Ronnie's reason, because there being such a desire is part of *what it is* for Ronnie to have a reason. That is just what reasons are, just as triangles are simply three-sided plane figures. Like the Standard Model, this is a substantive view about *how* Ronnie's

²⁵ The account given here is the one that I defend in Schroeder (forthcoming-c), but the details are irrelevant for this point.

desire helps to explain his reason. But it is an intelligible alternative to the Standard Model. And as such, it suggests the following alternative simple argument for the Humean Theory of Reasons, based on what we might call the *Standard-Constitutive Conjecture*:

- 1 Ronnie's psychology helps to explain his reason.
- 2 The Standard Model does not successfully account for how it does so.
- 3 Conjecture: the constitutive model of Tri is the only alternative to the Standard Model.

HTR If so, then being in the kind of psychological state that Ronnie is in must be part of *what it is* to have a reason. So in every case of a reason, there must be some such psychological state.²⁶

REFERENCES

- Bond, E. J. (1983) *Reason and Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Darwall, Stephen (1983) *Impartial Reason* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
- (2006) *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality and Accountability* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press).
- Foot, Philippa (1975) 'Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives,' reprinted in *Virtues and Vices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- (2001) *Natural Goodness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Harman, Gilbert (1975) 'Moral Relativism Defended,' reprinted in *Explaining Value and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- (1978) 'Relativistic Ethics: Morality as Politics,' reprinted in *Explaining Value and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- (1985) 'Is There A Single True Morality?,' reprinted in *Explaining Value and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Hampton, Jean (1998) *The Authority of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Hooker, Brad (1987) 'Williams' Argument against External Reasons,' *Analysis* 47: 42–4.
- Hubin, Donald (1999) 'What's Special about Humeanism,' *Noûs* 33: 30–45.
- Joyce, Richard (2001) *The Myth of Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Korsgaard, Christine (1986) 'Skepticism about Practical Reason,' *Journal of Philosophy* 83: 5–25.

²⁶ Special thanks to Stephen Darwall, David Copp, Sari Kisilevsky, Russ Shafer-Landau, Ralph Wedgwood, Rob Shaver, Gideon Rosen, Gilbert Harman, Michael Morreau, Scott James, Aaron James, two readers for Oxford University Press, and audiences at the College Park Conference on Practical Rationality and the second annual Wisconsin Metaethics Workshop. Mark Murphy, in particular, provided very helpful comments and discussion at the Maryland conference and following.

- (1997) 'The Normativity of Instrumental Reason', in G. Cullity and B. Gaut (eds.), *Ethics and Practical Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Mackie, J. L. (1977) *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (New York: Penguin).
- Millgram, Elijah (1996) 'Williams' Argument against External Reasons,' *Noûs* 30: 197–220.
- (1997) *Practical Induction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
- Nagel, Thomas (1970) *The Possibility of Altruism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
- Schroeder, Mark (2004) 'The Scope of Instrumental Reason,' *Philosophical Perspectives* 18: 337–64.
- (2005) 'Cudworth and Normative Explanations,' *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, 1, www.jesp.org.
- (forthcoming-a) 'Reasons and Agent-Neutrality,' forthcoming in *Philosophical Studies*.
- (forthcoming-b) 'Weighting for a Plausible Humean Theory of Reasons,' forthcoming in *Noûs*.
- (forthcoming-c) *Slaves of the Passions*, forthcoming from Oxford University Press.
- (forthcoming-d) 'Teleology, Agent-Relative Value, and "Good",' forthcoming in *Ethics*.
- Setiya, Kieran (2004) 'Hume on Practical Reason,' *Philosophical Perspectives* 18: 365–89.
- Williams, B. (1981) 'Internal and External Reasons,' in *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).