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Abstract:

I will attempt to answer three questions about reasons: what kinds of entities they are, why we should care about responding to them, and how they are related to motivation. In Chapter One, I argue that the debate in the theory of reasons is stagnant and that we would be better off adopting a radically new approach— pragmatic genealogy. In Chapter Two, I discuss the nature of pragmatic genealogy. In Chapter Three, I develop a pragmatic genealogy of reasons based on the need to reconcile conflicting beliefs and desires in both individual and communal settings. In Chapter Four, I respond to possible objections. In Chapter Five, I apply the information gained from our genealogy to address our three central questions and argue that it turns out that pragmatic genealogy is a methodology uniquely suited to doing so.

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Introduction

One broad way of understanding the project of philosophy is as the project of giving reasons, where these are reasons for believing certain things or acting in certain ways. Plato and Socrates seem to have been concerned to show that it was reasonable from the perspective of prudence to live a good life, i.e., that the good life was also the life that was best for the agent.[1] Similarly, Descartes attempted to establish that we do actually have good reasons to hold many of the commonsense beliefs that we generally unthinkingly adhere to.[2] These philosophers shared a commitment to investigating the substantive content of reasons. More recently, philosophers have turned their attention to examining reasons in the abstract. In this area, we may ask a variety of interesting questions about reasons, their nature, and their connection to other areas of philosophy.

The aim of this thesis will be to go some way towards addressing three central questions in the theory of reasons: what sort of entities reasons are, how they relate to motivation, and why we should treat them as normative. I will begin in Chapter One by giving an overview of the conceptual landscape. The focus will be on detailing the important constraints that a successful theory of reasons would have to meet and presenting some of the standard accounts of reasons. I will argue that accounts of reasons have to meet three broad constraints: Normative, Explanatory, and Motivational. These constraints will turn out to be intrinsically related to our three central questions.

[1] Plato (1992).
[2] Descartes (2017).

What I hope to demonstrate is that the debate about reasons is currently in a state of gridlock. We would like a successful theory of reasons to be able to explain the ability of reasons to function as normative entities, the ability of reasons to explain actions and beliefs, and the ability of reasons to motivate action. However, it seems that when a theory is developed to account for some of these constraints, it correspondingly has great difficulty accounting for the others. Meeting the Normative Constraint appears to come at the cost of being unable to meet the Explanatory and Motivational Constraints. Meeting the Explanatory and Motivational Constraints appears to make a theory unable to meet the Normative Constraint. The philosophical stalemate consists in the fact that we have no way now of simultaneously addressing all the desiderata about reasons, and thus also no way of answering our questions.

In such a situation, we have two options. One way of responding is to double down on what we have been doing, the so-to-speak standard philosophical work. We might try to come up with new arguments employing normal philosophical methodology, using tools like conceptual analysis, intuition pumping, and clever counterexamples. I have nothing to say in principle against taking this approach. It may very well be the case that there is some yet undiscovered argument out there that will definitively show us which position is correct. However, since it has not yet yielded such a result, I think it is reasonable to consider whether there is another way of approaching the theory of reasons. Sometimes a problem may become more tractable when it is reframed in terms that emphasize different aspects of the issue.

About thirty years ago, this is exactly what Edward Craig attempted to do for the analysis of knowledge.[3] In the wake of Gettier, it seemed unclear whether the usual philosophical methods

[3] Craig (1990).

could provide a satisfactory analysis of knowledge.[4] Faced with a potentially intractable situation, Craig devised a novel way of thinking about the issue. He developed an account of the evolution of the concept of knowledge that tied its features to the social functions that it fulfilled. Craig argued that by isolating the function of knowledge and showing how it might change through time and differing social circumstances, we could come to understand the most important features of the contemporary concept.

Craig's new methodology has come to be known as *pragmatic genealogy*.[5] In Chapter Two, I will discuss the nature of this methodology, which recently philosophers have begun deploying in a variety of contexts. Ultimately, I will suggest that we attempt the same maneuver. By building a pragmatic genealogy of the concept of a reason, we can show how that concept develops as a function of social needs. An understanding of the social function of reasons will make clear to us what is at the core of the concept, and it may then be that we can use this knowledge to develop a theory of reasons that can satisfy at once the Normative, Explanatory, and Motivational Constraints.

In Chapter Three, I will offer this pragmatic genealogy. It analyzes the development of reasons as a functional response to a universal need to arbitrate between one's desires and beliefs in a way that facilitates achieving one's ends in both interpersonal and intrapersonal contexts. In Chapter Four, I will address a variety of objections that could be advanced against pragmatic genealogies generally and against ours in particular. One might wonder whether it would be better to instead address some of these issues earlier, immediately after the discussion of the

[4] Gettier (1963).
[5] Queloz (2018a).

nature of pragmatic genealogy. We would then be able to proceed more comfortable in the knowledge that we were on firm ground.

Part of the reason that I have inverted this order of presentation is that I would like to present the positive case for our approach before considering all the possible detractions. However, pragmatic genealogy is by nature somewhat experimental. Much of our evidence that we have correctly analyzed the function of reasons will consist in our being able to give a pragmatic account of conceptual development, the end of which looks like a reason. The proof, as the saying goes, is in the pudding. So, we must produce the pudding before determining if it is spoiled. Moreover, this approach has the added benefits of situating the more abstract theoretical objections within a concrete context and of allowing us to discuss together both objections to the methodology generally and to our specific genealogy.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I will argue that my hope has been borne out. Our pragmatic genealogy does provide us with knowledge that allows us to give an answer to our three important questions in the theory of reasons, while also meeting all the necessary desiderata. Indeed, it turns out to be the case that a pragmatic genealogy is uniquely positioned to bridge the Normative, Explanatory, and Motivational Constraints because pragmatic genealogies provide arguments for the normative endorsement of their objects while being able to relate those objects to psychological properties.

Chapter 1:
Three Questions in the Theory of Reasons

1.1 Introduction

In this thesis I want to focus on addressing three questions in the theory of reasons. The first question is what kinds of entities reasons are. The centrality of this question to the field seems obvious to me. The second question is what the relationship of reasons is to psychological motivation. This is a question that has received extensive discussion in the philosophy of action and, as we shall see, ties into a broader concern about the ability of reasons to act as explanations. The third question is about the normativity of reasons. Why is it that we should care about responding to reasons? Because reasons are used to direct, guide, and assess our beliefs and actions, it is natural to wonder what gives them their force. If we identify such appropriate responses with rationality, then this question amounts to the question of why we should aim to be rational.

As we explore these questions, we will see that the answers philosophers have given are motivated by thinking about an array of features that intuitively reasons very plausibly seem to have. We will see that if reasons are to have these features, that then places three constraints on the theory of reasons generally. Accounts of reasons face Normative, Explanatory, and Motivational Constraints. However, I will argue that there is an inherent tension between meeting the Normative Constraint and the Motivational and Explanatory Constraints, such that there is at present no account that can jointly satisfy them.

This claim itself is not new or especially controversial.[6] However, I wish to go beyond it by analyzing how this places the debate about reasons into a state of gridlock. It appears that this gridlock can only be removed by making concessions with regard to some of the constraints. What complicates the possibility of resolving the issue in this manner, however, is that the philosophers involved in the debate do not all weigh their intuitive premises in the same manner. Though everyone may admit that it would be preferable to have a theory that meets all the desiderata, there is no agreement about which constraints it is most important to meet.

Without agreement in this matter, philosophers have little hope of persuading each other or arriving at any sort of consensus. Indeed, it seems to me that the entrenchment of positions here results from the natural and unavoidable variance in background attitudes and assumptions. As such, I am pessimistic about the possibility that further argument under the same rules of engagement will much help matters.

Of course, it may be that I am wrong about this. There may be some revolutionary new argument that can do full justice to everyone's intuitions. However, given the way that things appear now, I will ultimately suggest that the theory of reasons might benefit from doubling back and taking a more methodologically unconventional approach. This approach will be that of pragmatic genealogy. Its nature will be the subject of the next chapter. If it turns out that I am wrong, we won't be any worse off for trying than we currently are.

[6] Alvarez (2017) and Wiland (2012) give helpful overviews of the debates about reason. In particular, this chapter is significantly informed by the discussion of reasons in Wiland (2012), especially in describing the desiderata that a theory of reasons must meet, though his list ultimately differs somewhat from ours, and in demonstrating the difficulty of any extant theory in satisfying all these at once. As such, I have provided references to his text whenever I felt the discussion there was influential and informative.

A few final notes before we commence. It is worth being clear that the sense of the word "reasons" that we will be investigating is the one that is tied to agents. We are concerned with reasons as they are reasons for agents. However, as with many words in the English language, there are other senses in which the word "reason" might be used. We sometimes use it non-agentially, as when we offer a causal explanation of a happening in the external world. It is natural to say, for instance, that the reason the tree fell is because the wind blew it over. Though it seems very likely that there is some connection between these two senses, I will not be concerned to address it. Additionally, though we will be examining reasons in general, I generally use terminology that derives from the debates about reasons for action. Where it seemed necessary, I have made some effort to relate in footnotes these terms to the closest corresponding terms in the study of reasons for belief.

1.2 What Are Reasons?

Let's begin with the broadest question: what kind of entities are reasons? The answer to this bears on everything else we are interested in discussing. By investigating here, we will eventually be led to consider the other questions as well. We can start by just giving some basic examples of reasons and exploring how we use them. If I see my friend crying, that is a reason to believe that my friend is sad. If I believe my friend is sad, many people see that as a reason to comfort that friend. These are positive reasons, i.e. they seem to be reasons that count in favor of some action or belief. By common convention, the former, reasons for belief, are called theoretical reasons and the latter, reasons for action, are called practical reasons. Reasons can also count against a belief or action. If I believe that Katie is currently living in Canada because Steve told me so, and I come to know that Steve hasn't talked to Katie in years, then that can be a reason that counts against believing that Katie is in Canada. If I know that saying

something critical will hurt my friend's feelings, that may be a reason that counts against saying it.

How we are ultimately directed by reasons depends on their balance in the situation. We weigh the positive reasons against the negative and determine what is most favored.[7] This can involve prospective deliberation, as when we are still deciding what to do or believe. Once we have fully weighed the possibilities, we might then say that there is most reason to do or believe X or, in at least one sense of rationality, that X is the most rational belief or course of action. Reasons can also play a retrospective role, in which we assess actions we have already taken or beliefs that we already have to evaluate whether they come off well or badly.

Here it is often the case that we have knowledge of more reasons than we did prospectively. It is a familiar fact that we can discover that we should have done something differently only after it has been done, and while we might be relatively blameless for this most of the time, it does not generally seem that some new reason came into existence only after our having acted. To take a famous example, imagine a person who wants a gin & tonic and falsely believes that the glass near him contains gin & tonic. It thus appears to him that he has a reason to drink from the glass. But if he discovers, after taking a sip, that it actually contains petrol, then it seems quite natural for him to conclude that there was no reason to drink from the glass at all.[8]

When we fail to do something that we have reason to do, the usual charge is that we are irrational. Derick Parfit helpfully distinguishes two senses in which this might be the case.[9] We

[7] It's worth noting that an individual reason can be positive in one context and negative in another. That this thesis is due soon counts against watching Netflix but for writing.
[8] Williams (1981, p. 102).
[9] Parfit (1997, p. 101-2).

are substantively irrational when we act against the reasons that we actually have, whatever these may be. We are procedurally irrational when we act against our reasons as they appear to us. In the former case, the gin drinker is substantively irrational, but perhaps not procedurally, if it turns out that he was justified in thinking that the glass was full of gin & tonic.

Most of us have an antecedent commitment to being rational. Most of us are also irrational on a regular basis. We make many mistakes on the order of the gin drinker and readily admit that we have beliefs that are inconsistent with each other, even if this is often without explicitly knowing which beliefs these are.[10] Interestingly, however, irrationality does not seem to be the only charge that can be brought against someone who acts or believes against the recommendation of reasons. Some varieties of reasons seem to have an additional force. If someone commits murder, then we do not merely say that person behaved irrationally. We want to say something stronger too— that this is ethically bad.

What I mean to highlight is that reasons are mediators of normativity, and that this normativity is not just that of rationality. Reasons hold us to additional normative standards. Indeed, we can speak about reasons that derive from every sphere of normativity. We have already distinguished between practical and theoretical reasons. We can further divide these categories into ethical, epistemic, prudential, and aesthetic reasons. Perhaps there may be reasons of other stripes as well. Reasons play an important role in normative life— they are a fundamental normative notion by which our actions and beliefs are directed and evaluated.

[10] There may be room to resist the idea that all inconsistency is irrational. Setiya (2004, p. 272-81) argues that we cannot be irrational unless we may legitimately be expected to eliminate the inconsistency.

Let us call this fact that reasons have important normative dimensions, i.e., that they count for or against something with a special kind of force, the *Normative Constraint***.** Any good theory must explain the normativity of reasons. This is not, however, to say that a theory of reasons must rescue the normativity of everything that we intuitively think that we should do. It may be the case that we now mistakenly think we have reasons that we do not, and that this will only be cleared up once we have a full picture of what it is to be a reason. The extent to which first-order normative theory should inform the theory of reasons is a disputed question. For example, some philosophers may be inclined to think that the notion of a reason is antecedent to the content of ethics, and that we should not therefore be too quick to dismiss an account of reasons because it does not tell us that we have a reason to do all the things we intuitively think that we ought to. However, many philosophers will disagree with this. They take inconsistency with their preferred first-order normative theory to be a mark against that account of reasons. Christian Korsgaard attributes such a position to Thomas Nagel and indicates that it reflects his confidence about what there is reason to do or believe.[11] For Nagel and like-minded philosophers, it will be a serious disadvantage to require substantial revisions to their preferred first-order normative theories.

The difficulty here leads into a general difficulty we will see in the theory of reasons. Philosophers who have strong intuitions about first-order ethical beliefs will be strongly disinclined to views of reasons that entail that in some cases those beliefs are unreasonable. For such philosophers, the result is often a stronger motivation to emphasize the Normative Constraint over and above any other constraints that there might be on reasons.

[11] Korsgaard (1996, p. 40-2).

Returning from this dialectical point to the issue at hand, we still want to know what it would look like for a theory of reasons to meet the Normative Constraint. What remains of that constraint, when we abstract from the specific content of normative theories, is the question of how reasons can be normative at all. Why should anything count for or against anything else? Where does this force come from? Since reasons are one of our primary tools for understanding and responding to normativity, it would be unacceptable to have a theory of reasons that could not explain this. So, it is this possibility that needs to be accounted for to meet the Normative Constraint.

But now we can see that meeting the Normative Constraint is intimately related to one of our central questions. It will be sufficient to show why we should care about responding to reasons if we can explain why reasons are normative. Therefore, if we have a theory of reasons that meets the Normative Constraint, we have a candidate answer to one of our central questions. If that theory also happens to give the correct account of what they are, then we have the correct answer.

The normativity of reasons is not all that there is to them. When we ask someone what their reasons are for acting or believing in a certain way, this is often a way of attempting to ascertain why it is that they act or believe in the way that they do. When that person gives their reasons, we understand these reasons as explaining their actions and beliefs. Here is a relatively trivial example. Sam is going to the store. When asked why, Sam responds that he is out of whiskey. That Sam is out of whiskey (or possibly Sam's belief that he is out of whiskey and his implicit desire for more) is his reason for going to the store. It explains to us why he acts as he does. It is often said that the sort of explaining that reasons do with regard to actions and beliefs is

rational explanation, and thus we can refer to reasons explanations as explanations that rationalize their object.[12]

What the exact nature of a rationalization is remains unclear, adequate account of reasons must allow reasons the possibility of serving in rationalizing explanations. One would also hope such an account would give us a better idea of what exactly a rationalizing explanation is. Let us call this additional important constraint on the theory of reasons the *Explanatory Constraint.*[13]

There is an important corollary to the Explanatory Constraint specifically within the sphere of reasons for action. Bernard Williams has made the extremely plausible claim that for something to count as a reason, it has to be the case that it could be a reason for which a person could act.[14] Indeed, we have already noted that reasons can be action guiding. Now, however, we should note that reasons have not only a role to play in prospective and retrospective assessment, but also a role in the present. For not only do we often see ourselves as acting for reasons, but when we so act, the reason for which we act seems to be a crucial part of what motivates us to act. When we act for a reason, we act because of that reason, where that "because" has psychological force. That this is the case places a *Motivational Constraint* on the theory of reasons, a constraint which says that it must explain how it is that reasons can motivate us to act.

The Motivational Constraint takes us into the realm of our final question: how are reasons and psychological motivation related. According to the Motivational Constraint, there must be some special relationship between reasons for action. and motivation. In the philosophy action,

[12] Davidson (2001, p. 3-4).
[13] Wiland (2012, p. 22).
[14] Williams (1981, p. 102).

the related debate has become known as the Internalism/Externalism debate.[15] Internalists about reasons hold that there is some sort of strong connection between what reasons one has and one's motivational psychology.[16] Externalists either deny that there is a connection or insist that it is not an important one.[17]

This final question is also the narrowest, as the Motivational Constraint applies only to practical and not theoretical reasons. The reason this debate does not arise about theoretical reasons is not that no psychological states play a part in the genesis of beliefs. Rather, it is that beliefs are constitutively aimed at representing true states of affairs.[18] But there is general agreement that these truths are independent of human psychology. Supplemental to this point, the process of forming beliefs appears to be involuntary.[19] We gain them automatically in response to the evidence as we see it. In contrast, the motivational preconditions for action vary widely between individuals. Still, since fully explaining an action will involve appeal to the motivational states of the agent, the projects of addressing the Motivation and Explanatory Constraints are bound together.

To recap, we have begun investigating the question of what reasons are by examining how reasons appear to intuitively function in a variety of contexts. In the process, we have posited three important constraints on a theory of reason corresponding to properties that we intuitively take reasons to have. We saw that these constraints are importantly related to our other two

[15] Finlay and Schroeder (2017) provides a comprehensive overview of the debate. See Williams (1981; 1995) and Finlay (2009) for arguments for Internalism. See McDowell (1995) for Externalism.
[16] I provided an argument unrelated to this Thesis for Williams Style Internalism in my exam essay (2020) [reference omitted for marking anonymity reasons].
[17] The terminology is a bit lose here. Some, e.g., Finlay and Schroeder (2017), would still classify the latter as Internalist, even though the position does not have any interesting consequences usually associated with Internalism.
[18] See Williams (1973, p. 136-7) and Velleman (2000).
[19] Williams (1973, p. 147-51).

guiding questions about reasons. As such, from here on, I will treat the Normative, Explanatory, and Motivational Constraints as the major desideratum for a theory of reasons. In the remainder of this chapter, let us now move away from broad and intuitive characterizations and turn to the specific theories that philosophers have offered to answer these questions.

1.3 Psychologism and Factualism

Once again, the most natural way of organizing discussion is around the broad question of what kind of entities it is that reasons are. We can begin by distinguishing broadly two views: Psychologism and Non-Psychologism.[20] Psychologism holds that reasons are psychological states.[21] The position can be traced back to the work of Donald Davidson, who argued that reasons for action were made up of pairs of beliefs and desires.[22] For instance, my reason for taking a drink from a cup could be that I want water and I believe that the cup contains water. In contrast, Non-Psychologism simply holds that reasons are not psychological states.

To many, the Davidsonian Psychologist view seems a bit simplistic. Earlier, we saw the example of a mistaken gin-drinker and suggested that the general intuition was that the gin-drinker did not actually have a reason to take a drink, since it turn out that the glass was full of petrol. Davidsonian Psychologism, however, would say that the gin-drinker does have a reason for their action, since they believed that the cup contained gin and they wanted gin. The necessary belief/desire pair existed, and this gives the wrong answer.

[20] Wiland (2012, ch. 1-2).
[21] The theoretical analog of Psychologism is Epistemic Internalism, the view that justification for belief comes from other psychological states.
[22] Davidson (2001, p. 6).

A variety of Psychologists views can result from attempting to refine the position in response to these sorts of challenges. One move is to introduce a level of idealization by making the relevant psychological states those of a counterfactual agent.[23] The conditions here usually require that the agent have correct information but can go beyond this. For instance, Bernard Williams's solution is to say that an agent has a reason only if the agent would have the relevant belief/desire pair after deliberating fully under conditions of correct information.[24] In contrast, Christine Korsgaard's Kantian view is that the agent would have to have the relevant motivational states if that agent were fully practically rational.[25]

Another move Psychologists can make is to vary the psychological states involved. For instance, they could reject the presupposition that desires are a component of practical reasons. Some philosophers who explore this line of thought have suggested that beliefs can be reasons on their own. Tom Nagel argues that beliefs can be sufficient to motivate an agent in the absence of relevant antecedent desires.[26] Nagel illustrates the point with the following example. Imagine a person who currently has no desire to learn Italian but believes that they will be visiting Italy soon. This person accepts that at that point, they will have a reason to know Italian. But if at that point they have that reason, Nagel argues that we can only avoid also attributing that reason to them in the present if we regard the person in the present as a meaningfully distinct entity from the person in the future. But since it is one and the same person at both times, we must accept that the agent's belief that they need to learn Italian is in fact a reason to learn Italian. Nagel thinks this entails that they can then be motivated by that belief.[27] Similarly, John McDowell argues that an agent's reasons are tied not to specific desires or beliefs, but to

[23] Finlay and Schroeder (2017, Section 1.1).
[24] Williams (1981, p. 103-6).
[25] Korsgaard (1986, p. 14-5).
[26] Nagel (2016, Ch. 8). Wiland (2012, p. 59-60) informs my understanding of Nagel's view.
[27] Nagel (2016, p. 64).

a more psychologically nebulous entity, a general form of life.[28] McDowell then links reasons to the form of life of the virtuous agent, such that he thinks what we have reason to do is just what we would do if we were virtuous.[29]

Psychologism does well with the Explanatory Constraint. This is no accident since Davidson was primarily concerned with action explanation. He and other Psychologists have held that mental states can be understood as explaining or rationalizing our actions in a very straightforward way: they cause those actions.[30] Intuitively, it's very plausible that mental states are causally related to action. So then, it's plausible to think that if reasons are mental states, then a reasons explanation is just a species of causal explanation or, in the case of counterfactual Psychologist theories, of potential causal explanation. In the case of theoretical reasons, rationalization is not usually accounted for in terms of causal explanation, but in terms of the logical or evidential coherence and connection between beliefs.

Most varieties of Psychologism also do well by the Motivational Constraint. This is because it is easy to see how mental states like desires can have motivational force. However, varieties of Psychologism that tie reasons to mental states that are less obviously motivational, like beliefs, may have trouble explaining how it is that reasons can motivate us in the way necessary for us to be able to act for reasons.

Unfortunately, Psychologism does significantly less well with the Normative Constraint. There may be a mismatch between psychological states and the kind of normativity that we want

[28] McDowell (1979). Here McDowell seems influenced by Wittgenstein (1958).
[29] McDowell's understanding of virtue is broadly Aristotelian. In contrast, Setiya (2007) attempts to develop a Humean virtue theoretic account of reasons.
[30] Davidson (2001, p. 8-10).

reasons to ground. Jonathan Dancy has argued that morality at least is not grounded in psychological states, but rather in facts about the world.[31] Consider an agent who believes that a friend is in trouble. It's natural to think that the agent thus has a reason to help their friend. But is the agent's reason their belief that their friend is in trouble or the fact that the friend really is in trouble? Dancy suggests that the correct response is the latter, and this is the correct answer because this is what actually justifies and requires action.

It's obvious that mental states can cause someone to act. It is significantly less obvious why having a certain mental state makes it the case that one should act in a certain way. To explain that we would need to adopt a meta-normative theory that intrinsically links normativity and particular mental states. If one does not already accept such a theory, then it is difficult to see how Psychologism could possibly meet the Normative Constraint.

The alternative to Psychologism is to deny that reasons are psychological states. One way of doing this is to just say that reasons are unanalyzable and basic, so we cannot give a useful account of them in terms of anything else. Derick Parfit and Tim Scanlon have been seen as advocating this position.[32] However, I agree with Eric Wiland, who argues that the case for the view that reasons are primitive depends on there being a lack of a case for any other account of reasons.[33] If such an account can be offered, then it is preferable to a view that leaves reasons mysterious to us.

[31] Dancy (2000, p. 49-54). Wiland (2012, p. 67-9) informs my understanding of Dancy's view.
[32] Parfit (2011, p. 63) and Scanlon (1998, p. 17).
[33] Wiland (2012, p. 72-3).

If reasons are analyzable and are not psychological states, then they must be something else.[34] The most plausible candidate for this seems to be facts. As we noted above, we often seem to talk and deliberate as if our actions and beliefs are justified or called for by the way the world actually is, rather than how our mental representations of it are. Let's call *Factualism* the view that reasons are facts of some sort.[35]

If reasons are facts, what sorts of facts would they be? Factualists have given several responses to this question by drawing on the relationship between normativity and reasons.[36] One possibility is that reasons are facts that bear a special relationship to *oughts*. For instance, they may explain what we ought to do, a view argued for by John Broome, or they may provide evidence for what we ought to do, as argued by Kearns and Star.[37] Alternatively, they may be facts that relate to values.[38]

What values these are depends on the kind of reasons in question, but the idea is that facts are reasons when they can be seen as good, in some sense of the word. For instance, if it would be good, from the prudential perspective, for you to study, then you have a prudential reason to study. If it would be good epistemically to believe that 2+2=4, then you have a reason to believe that.

We need not worry too much about the specific merits of the various factualist positions relative to each other. We are concerned with the plausibility of the general position. Because factualist accounts relate reasons to other fundamental normative notions, it is easy for them to meet the

[34] For theoretical reasons, Non-Psychologism corresponds to Epistemic Externalism. See Bergmann (2008) for discussion of various externalist views.
[35] Wiland (2012, ch. 4).
[36] Wiland (2012, p. 71-80).
[37] Broome (2006, p. 34) and Kearns and Star (2009, p. 216).
[38] Wiland (2012, p. 79-80).

Normative Constraint. Why is it that we should be guided by reasons? Because reasons tell us what we ought to do or what it would be good to do. This stands in contrast to Psychologism, which had trouble meeting the Normative Constraint. Unfortunately for the Factualists, however, their views have just as much difficulty with the Explanatory and Motivational Constraints.

The problem is most apparent in the context of motivation. If beliefs are facts, how is it possible that they can compel us to do anything? Any action must have a motivational antecedent. If that is the case, then it is only in connection with this that a fact can motivate us. What is it about that fact that allows it to jumpstart motivation? The Factualist may say that it is the relationship to obligations or the good. But this is to just push the problem back a level. That it would be good to do something or that I ought to do something does not motivate me unless I am antecedently disposed to do what is good or what I ought to do.[39] This state of affairs seems intuitively wrong. We are characteristically motivated by reasons, but on this account, it doesn't seem like reasons should reliably motivate us at all. That they do is by pure accident. Most of us just happen to have the right mental states for the right kinds of facts to move us in the right way.

Even if these difficulties could be resolved, it would then seem like the facts are explanatorily otiose. It's the psychological states that are doing all of the work. Moreover, psychological states seem able to explain actions and beliefs in cases where the relevant facts cannot. In cases where we have accurate information about the world, it may seem as if facts feature in the explanation of action. You have the belief that the cake is ready because you observe that the

[39] Mackie (1990, ch. 1.9) famously remarked about what strange things objective moral properties would have to be if they were able to both tell us what to do and make us do it.

cake is ready. You observe that the cake is ready because the cake is ready. Therefore, you take it out of the oven. However, Wiland argues that there is an issue in cases where the agent has incorrect information.[40]

Imagine an agent who goes to the store because they believe it is open, when in fact it is not. We can't deny that going to the store is an action, so what's the explanation for it? It seems wrong to say that it was the fact that the store was open because, after all, that's false. But the reason also cannot be that the store was closed. That wouldn't explain anything. The natural thought is that the agent's reason involved the belief that the store was open. Similarly, in the New Evil Demon problem, epistemologists ask us to imagine a counterpart of ours in a parallel world.[41] This counterpart has all of the perceptual experiences that we do, but in reality, all of these experiences are generated by an evil demon. The intuition here is supposed to be that both agents are rational in holding their beliefs, though one of them has false beliefs. But if that's the case, what reasons explains the deceived agent's beliefs? It can't be the way the world is because that world is not the way it is represented in those beliefs.

These sorts of arguments put pressure on the claim that Factualism can meet the Explanatory Constraint. The Factualist might respond by denying that there is a parity between the two cases. When we have correct information, it really is the facts that explain our action. When we are not deceived, it really is the facts that explain our beliefs. But in other cases, it is not facts but something else. Disjunctive Factualists insist that the apparent similarity between the correct and incorrect agents is theoretically misleading and should be ignored. Still, Wiland points out that even if Disjunctivists rescue the idea that facts can sometimes explain beliefs

[40] Wiland (2012, p. 81-85).
[41] Cohen (1984, p. 280-4).

and actions, they cannot say this is the case when the agent really is misinformed or deceived.[42] In that case, it really must be something psychological. But then, if psychological facts must at least sometimes be explanatory reasons, wouldn't we have a more parsimonious theory if we accepted that they always were?

Faced with the difficulties confronting Psychologism and Factualism, there is no consensus about what should be done. Philosophers have come up with several proposals. One possibility is to accept the distinction philosophers often make between motivating and normative reasons as a metaphysical distinction.[43] We could then offer a theory of our motivating reasons in accordance with Psychologism and a theory of our normative reasons in accordance with Factualism. But this would be a disappointing result. When we investigate something, we generally want a unified theory of it. We only accept a disjunctive one when we have no alternatives.

David Velleman has proposed another alternative to Psychologism and Factualism. He offers a constitutive account of practical reasons.[44] Velleman begins by attempting to isolate the constitutive aim of action, i.e., the end at which it necessarily aims in virtue of being action. Velleman argues that this constitutive aim is self-knowledge.[45] When we act, we aim at knowing more about ourselves. So, we have a reason to act whenever it makes our beliefs about who we are and what we will do true.

[42] Wiland (2012, p. 83).
[43] See Wiland (2012, ch. 5) for discussion of bi-partite theories. See Dancy (2000, Ch. 1 Appendix) for discussion of the history of the distinction between motivating and normative reasons.
[44] Velleman (1996).
[45] Velleman (1996, p. 719-22).

It's easy to see that Velleman's theory would be attractive to philosophers seeking to explain self-understanding. However, it is difficult to see how Velleman's Constitutivism could help us to meet the Motivational Constraint. Moreover, it's also difficult to see how we could expand it to include a theory of theoretical reasons. The constitutive aim of belief is truth. So, we have reason to believe whatever is true. That's not especially informative. Another alternative to Constitutivism the Neo-Anscombian view, runs into the same problem. Neo-Anscombian views hold that our reasons for action are typically other actions in light of which our acting makes sense.[46] But since it seems implausible that we can understand reasons for belief in terms of action, this too has the difficulty of forcing us to offer a bifurcated account of practical and theoretical reasons.

1.4 Conclusion

Let's take a moment to take stock of where we are. We began by investigating three questions: what reasons are, why they are normative, and how they are connected to motivation. Investigating the first question brought us to consider what features reasons intuitively have. We ended up endorsing three constraints on a theory of reasons. That, however, is where the trouble began.

We examined two major theories of reasons, Psychologism and Factualism. Psychologism was motivated by considerations about explanation and motivation and did well with those constraints. Factualism was motivated by thinking about the normative role of reasons and so did well with the Normative Constraint. Unfortunately, Psychologism appeared unable to meet the Normative Constraint, and Factualism appeared unable to meet the Explanatory and Motivational Constraints. As such, there seems to be a trade-off between meeting all the

[46] Wiland (2012, ch. 5).

desiderata we want to satisfy. We then briefly considered Constitutivist and Neo-Anscombian alternatives but found them unable to resolve the difficulty.

We seem to be in a quagmire. One of our options is to make some concessions. We can agree that it would best if we could have a theory of reasons that could meet all of the constraints that we find intuitive. However, if such a theory proves impossible, it might seem acceptable to prioritize preserving the most important ones. Still, there are issues with this strategy. Suppose we are inclined to give up the Normative Constraint. It's hard to see how we could then get a theory of reasons off the ground, at least following standard philosophical methods. Theorizing about reasons presupposes that we have enough facility with the concept to be able to recognize at least some reasons in the wild. And this often seems to involve recognizing normative properties of those reasons, even we are considering them primarily in an explanatory context.

Take the example we gave earlier about the gin drinker. The thought experiment is employed to modifying our thoughts about whether reasons must be actual explanations or whether they can be potential explanations under some set of idealized conditions. Still, when we appeal to the intuitive claim that the gin drinker does not have a reason to drink from the glass if it actually contains petrol, we seem to be assessing what there is reason to do in a way that involves normativity. If we cannot do this, then this thought experiment and many others would tell us nothing.

Maybe we should take this as a consideration in favor of instead abandoning the Explanatory and Motivational constraints. Once we do that, all we will have to guide us will be thoughts about the normativity of reasons. It will then be difficult to tell what is a reason and what isn't without committing ourselves to first-order normative theorizing. No problem, someone might

say. We can simply employ the same discriminatory capacity that we used in the gin-drinker case. If it was not problematic there, why should it be here? The issue is that in many, perhaps most, cases, that capacity does not seem to issue in the same results for different individuals. We have only to look at how vehemently people disagree about morality to see this. Working just in terms of the Normative Constraint is therefore unlikely to resolve disagreement. It will simply push back the level at which philosophers disagree. And all this is on top of the fact that we didn't want to abandon these constraints in the first place because it really does seem like reasons can explain and can motivate.

What can we do to extricate ourselves from these issues and work towards a more comprehensive and unified understanding of reasons? My suggestion, to which we will now turn, is that we adopt a new and somewhat unconventional methodology. This methodology is that of pragmatic genealogy. In the next chapter, we will examine exactly what is involved in engaging in it. For now, we can just say that pragmatic genealogies involve building diachronic models that relate and develop their objects in terms of their function in fulfilling individual and social needs. One of the advantages of taking the pragmatic approach is that it can begin by taking relatively little for granted, and therefore can hopefully avoid reducing to the conflict of intuitions that previously waylaid us. Thus, I am hopeful that by taking a step back from the contemporary context and showing how the notion of a reason functions in an abstract social situation, we can gain insight into what it is suited to do and what it is not.[47]

[47]Functional analysis has recently become more widespread in philosophy. For example, Dogramaci (2019) uses a functional approach to make a novel anti-skeptical argument and Dogramaci (2015) uses functional analysis to argue for a substantive view about what rational norms there are.

Chapter 2:
Pragmatic Genealogy

2.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, we surveyed the landscape of the theory of reasons in order to answer three central questions. We saw that intuitive considerations about reasons lead us to posit Normative, Explanatory, and Motivational Constraints on accounts of them. These constraints are difficult to jointly satisfy. Indeed, we argued that there is no view currently available that is up to the task. If we additionally accept my claim that what concessions one is inclined to make depends primarily on one's general intuitive predispositions and background commitments, then it makes sense to attempt to end this dialectical deadlock by searching for a radically different way of approaching the problems, instead of the relying on the standard toolkit of conceptual analysis, intuition pumping, etc… To that end, I advocate that we employ the methodology of pragmatic genealogy to study the nature of reasons, where this is understood to involve creating a developmental model that describes the evolution of a concept in a way that brings out the functional needs that the concept addresses.

The nature of pragmatic genealogy is not yet widely known, though recently several prominent mainstream philosophers have begun to employ it. It is also the case that the academic uses of the term genealogy are often ambiguous between a variety of different possible methodologies. For this reason, this chapter will be dedicated to discussing precisely what I have in mind for the pragmatic approach that we will take. In Section Two, I will briefly discuss genealogy generally and how it has been understood in philosophical contexts. In Section Three, I will turn to the specific examination of pragmatic genealogy, explaining how it is distinct from other approaches and what it is adept at doing. I will motivate our adopting such an approach

by drawing parallels between our own dialectical situation and another situation in which pragmatic genealogy was useful. We will then conclude with some reflection on how we will apply this approach in Chapter Three, where we will build our own genealogy of reasons.

2.2 Genealogy as Philosophy

In order to situate pragmatic genealogy in relation to other philosophical methods, and in particular in relation to other kinds of genealogies, let's begin by briefly considering genealogy generally. Genealogy is a term with a huge variety of usage. In ordinary language, it refers to the study of ancestry or to a particular pedigree.[48] Within the Academy, the term has had significant uptake. Unsurprisingly, then, it has been used in a variety of different senses to refer to importantly distinct methodologies. All these bear some family resemblance to each other insofar as they are concerned with the development and history of the object of inquiry.

The history of understanding genealogy as a type of philosophical methodology is generally thought to begin with Nietzsche. In *The Genealogy of Morality,* he attempts to trace the development of European moral norms.[49] Nietzsche understands these norms as outgrowths of the ascetic impulse of Christianity. Recognizing the historical diversity of ethical practices, he is then concerned to explain their success at beating out competing norms. The somewhat paradoxical answer he gives is that for certain types of people the seemingly anti-self ascetic impulse is actually in their best prudential interest.[50]

The exact nature of Nietzsche's substantive views does not really concern us. However, philosophers following him have retained the idea that a genealogy is a kind of origin story,

[48] See entry on "Genealogy" in Online Oxford English Dictionary (2010).
[49] Nietzsche (1998).
[50] See Leiter (2014) for an overview of Nietzsche's *Genealogy*.

one that looks backwards in order to tell us how we got to where we are now.[51] Some philosophers understand an extremely broad category of arguments as falling under the scope of genealogy. For instance, Amia Srinivasan considers the familiar Cartesian skeptical argument to be a species of genealogy.[52] This is because those arguments give us a possible causal history of how we come to have our perceptual experiences. This causal history is supposed to then be a potential explanation for many of our beliefs.[53] Most genealogists, however, seem to understand genealogy as having a narrower range. The core meaning of genealogy is generally centered around diachronic psychological and sociological accounts of conceptual objects or practices that trace their development.[54]

Whether we understand it as a genealogical account or not, the skeptical argument illustrates one thing genealogies are often associated with doing— debunking. The skeptic's possible history is meant to count against many of our current beliefs. This is because it involves being systematically deceived by an outside source. The thought is that the connection between developmental history and philosophy is such that for at least some beliefs and practices, some histories would undermine our continuing to hold those beliefs or adhere to those practices.

This was the case with Nietzsche's original genealogy, as well as with more recent genealogical arguments like Sharon Street's well-known Darwinian Dilemma.[55] It should be noted,

[51] The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy (S. Blackburn 2008) says the following: "Genealogy is part historical reconstruction of the way certain concepts have come to have the shape they do, and part a 'rational reconstruction' or story about the function they serve, which may or may not correspond to historical evolution."
[52]Srinivasan (2019, p. 134-135).
[53] Descartes (2017). See Pryor (2000) for a useful discussion of contemporary skeptical arguments.
[54] One point on which the impetus to geology might be contested is whether the relevant phenomena can be usefully understood in social/psychological terms. It might be thought that some concepts, like the concept of knowledge or the concept of a reason, are so fundamental or natural, that they are completely independent of such explanations. However, as with the view that reasons are not analyzable, it seems to me that the case for this depends on the inability to provide a compelling genealogy.
[55] Street (2006). Street's argument, which incorporates evolutionary biology, shows how genealogy can be appealing as a methodology for scientifically inclined philosophers.

however, that the philosophical work done by genealogies is not always negative. David Hume's genealogy of justice and Bernard Williams's genealogy of truthfulness both claim to show that their objects do in fact have the right sort of history. Their purported result is that based on this history we can be secure in our continued endorsement of those objects.[56]

Given this understanding of genealogy, the question becomes how employing it can help us. We are not trying to debunk reasons. We are trying to understand them better in a way that will allow us to address the questions that we want to answer. For this, we would want to be able to see how genealogy could serve as a legitimate alternative to conceptual analysis. To make clear the value of genealogy to us, we need to now turn to a special subset of genealogical methodology: pragmatic genealogy.

2.3 Pragmatic Genealogy as Developmental Functional Analysis

The helpful name of *pragmatic genealogy* has been coined to refer to a family of genealogies that foreground abstract functional analysis.[57] For our purposes, it is helpful to note that the contemporary use of the method developed in response to a dialectical situation somewhat like the one that we find ourselves in. In the wake of Edmund Gettier's powerful arguments that knowledge could not be justified true belief, many philosophers tried to offer new analyses of knowledge.[58] Many of these analyses seemed to capture something important about the concept but suffered from defects and counterexamples. With no consensus and no clear way of achieving one apparent, epistemology seemed to be inextricably muddled.

[56] Hume (2006, 3.2.2) and Williams (2002).
[57] As best I can tell, the term is due to Matthieu Queloz.
[58] Gettier (1963). See Ichikawa and Steup (2018) for a broad summary of debates about analyzing knowledge.

For the philosopher Edward Craig, the way out of this muddle was to shift the focus from questions about what knowledge is in the here and now, to questions about what it is that a concept like knowledge does.[59] His innovation was to isolate a potential function for knowledge. He understood this to be the function of flagging reliable information bearers.[60] Craig emphasized that the need that underlay this function would be present even in very basic sorts of social situations. Pretty much universally, people would have a need for this function to be fulfilled. He then argued that a "proto-concept" of knowledge would evolve as an apt response to this need. The proto-concept would then develop in response to an additional need for the concept to be less indexed to particular individuals because knowledge needed to be reliably usable by all members of the community.[61] At the end of this process of objectivization, according to Craig, stood the contemporary concept of knowledge that we were concerned with analyzing.

By understanding the concept of knowledge as tied to a particular need and then further shaped by additional features of an abstract social situation, Craig thought he could come to an understanding of how the concept worked across a broad variety of contexts. Importantly, he thought that this way of approaching epistemology did not require him to place strict necessary and sufficient conditions on that analysis.[62] Despite this, with the functional information he gained, Craig believed he could weigh in substantively on contemporary issues in epistemology. Another virtue of this approach was that it was pluralistic. Craig did not think that his pragmatic genealogy was necessarily in competition with standard philosophical

[59] Craig (1990).
[60] Craig (1990, p. 11).
[61] Craig (1990, ch. 10).
[62] Craig (1990, p. 5).

analysis. Rather, he viewed it as an important supplement to more standard philosophical approaches that could be deployed to get things back on track when debate had stalled.

Since Craig, pragmatic genealogies have gained in popularity. Some of the oldest genealogies can now even retroactively be considered to be of the pragmatic variety. For instance, David Hume's aforementioned account of justice analyzes it in terms of the functional role that the concept and the related notion of property can play in fulfilling basic human needs.[63] Among contemporary analytic philosophers, Bernard Williams's *Truth and Truthfulness* is probably the most well-known example of pragmatic genealogy.[64] Other prominent philosophers like Miranda Fricker, Richard Joyce, and Philip Kitcher have also been interpreted as offering pragmatic accounts of various phenomena.[65]

The work of these philosophers provides a model for would-be pragmatic genealogists. A pragmatic genealogy begins by singling out an object of contemporary importance. The pragmatic genealogist then considers a primitive sort of social situation, which for convenience we can refer to as a state of nature. In this state of nature, the object under investigation is lacking, but basic human needs are present. The pragmatic genealogist asks: do any of these needs make it the case that the community members would have to develop a concept or practice similar to the object of investigation? The sort of needs that the pragmatic genealogist hopes to find here are those that are at least semi-universal, such that the model will have wide applicability because any human being in a similar social situation would have the same needs.

[63] Hume (2006, 3.2.2).
[64] Williams (2002).
[65] Fricker (2007), Joyce (2006), and Kitcher (2011).

The pragmatic genealogist then describes in functional terms how a proto-object emerges and develops as an apt response to the needs of the humans in the state of nature. Sometimes the genealogy ends here, having produced an account that has a good claim to isolate the function of the phenomenon under investigation. However, if the developed object is not sufficiently identical to the contemporary object of inquiry, the genealogist may introduce additional, less basic details to the situation. The needs that must be addressed by the proto-object take on more and more of a local character, in a way that reflects the contingency of our conceptual and practical resources and allows us to explain how and why they vary across history.

2.4 Conclusion

I initially suspected that pragmatic genealogy might be of use in this context because of the analogy with the dialectic of epistemology in Craig's day. In Chapter Five, I will argue that there is a deeper reason why pragmatic genealogy is an especially appropriate choice for the study of reasons. However, before we get to that, I will give my attempt at a genealogy of reasons. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

For the purposes of that genealogy, I will not progress beyond the state of nature. Pragmatic genealogies that ultimately need to employ real history and anthropology are those of objects that are extremely specific or that exhibit a large amount of cross-temporal/societal variation. For instance, Bernard Williams devotes a substantial amount of space in his genealogy of the virtues of truth to considering social conditions in Ancient Greece, Enlightenment Europe, and contemporary Academia.[66] This is because societies have understood what truthfulness consists in and the importance of being truthful in substantially different ways. To understand

[66] Williams (2002, ch. 1, 7, & 8).

how we view it in our historically located present, it is thus necessary to look at how that present outlook was shaped by past societies whose cultural legacy we to some extent inhabit.

In contrast, pragmatic genealogies of objects that are broadly present and relatively functionally static across societies do not need to incorporate local differences into their analysis. The concept of knowledge is like this, and for that reason Craig's account of knowledge is significantly less historically specific. It seems to me that the notion of a reason falls into this category as well. As I hope to show, the concept of a reason is so fundamental to basic human activities that no one could make do without it. Certainly, no organized social group could, no matter how minimal in size. As such, I do not think it important to try to engage local needs. To attempt to do so would be to open our genealogy up to unnecessary objections based on potential factual inaccuracy.

Chapter 3:
Reasons and The State of Nature

3.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, we discussed the methodology of pragmatic genealogy as an alternative to standard philosophical approaches. We saw that pragmatic genealogy attempts to isolate the function of its object and then to situate that function within an evolving social situation. Although we have discussed some of the benefits of the genealogical approach, much of the justification for our taking it up in this case will consist in our being able to successfully carry it out. In order to tell whether a pragmatic genealogy can be helpful in understanding reasons, we first need to come up with one.

In part, this is because one of the means by which we will assess a pragmatic genealogy is by asking whether the end result of its developmental story sufficiently resembles the object we are concerned to investigate. Some philosophers have argued that reasons are too basic a notion to submit to further analysis.[67] We can disprove this by providing one. We can provide additional support for adopting this analysis by showing how it is that it helps us settle some important debates. In this chapter, we will complete the first portion of that project by developing a pragmatic genealogy of reasons. We will do this by isolating needs that human have within an abstract state of nature and showing how meeting these demands something that plays the same basic role as our concept of a reason.

[67] Parfit (1997, p.121).

It might be helpful at this point to give a brief overview of the general structure that genealogy will take. Roughly, we can divide the state of nature that we will be considering into three portions. In the first portion, which comprises the following two sections, the individual is isolated from any broader community. In the second, which is made up of Sections Four and Five, the individual is part of a larger community. In each of these two cases, we will examine a problem that arises from the fact this individual(s) will have competing beliefs, desires, and ends, and that at least some of the time these will be inconsistent or jointly unsatisfiable. This gives rise to a need to determine what is to be done or believed. The concept of reasons emerges as a way to coordinate actions/beliefs in response to this, first in the individual and then in the group, in a way that is efficient. In the final portion of the genealogy, Section Six, we will see how various other factors lead to the "objectivization" of the concept of reason, which detaches it to some degree from its initially close association with individual ends.

3.2 Individual Practical Deliberation

Let's begin our genealogy by imagining a very basic way of life, that of one individual member of the human species. For the sake of having a name, let us call this individual Sapien. Though Sapien must have had parents, and perhaps had other family members, we will leave them and all other human beings out of the story for the moment. We can also imagine that Sapien is in an environment that might be typical in human pre-history, one in which the world around Sapien is wild, undomesticated, and relatively unknown.

Now, let's presuppose some basic facts about Sapien. The first fact is that Sapien has a collection of drives, impulses that consistently motivate Sapien to continually pursue some objects. The specific content of these drives will not ultimately matter, but at the most basic it will involve a drive to continue living. At a slightly more complex level, they will be drives for

things like food, shelter, etc… Note that by attributing these drives to Sapien, we are not also attributing to Sapien any particular conception of their own psychology. It may be the case that Sapien's conceptual vocabulary is not adequate to reflexively recognize these drives.

These impulses give rise to various desires in Sapien's psychology related to their objects—desires of which Sapien will have some awareness. At their most obvious, drives will simply issue in straightforward desires for their objects. But it is not necessarily the case that the relationship will be this straightforward. It may not always be apparent exactly what sort of drive lies behind a desire. Fortunately, there will be no need for us to delve further into the issue. It will be sufficient for our purposes from now on to deal principally with Sapien's desires, which I will sometimes also speak of as representing Sapien's ends.

Assuming that Sapien is in this respect similar to all other humans, Sapien will have not just the very basic desires we described, but also other desires and pro-attitudes that bear on the general activity of living life. Some of these may reflect innate tendencies. Many will be acquired in the process of living, as Sapien is exposed to a broad enough spectrum of experiences that it becomes clear that there is more than one possible way of going about that business. Again, we need not conceptually inflate what is involved here. These desires need not be overly sophisticated or relate specifically to a systematically endorsed conception of how life should be lived. At bottom, they could be motivation together with bare preference.[68] For instance, these desires could involve a preference for being active during a certain period of the day, for hunting a specific kind of animal, for eating one sort of berry rather than another.

[68] I take desires to automatically involve a disposition to make the world fit with their representation of it. This understanding is at least as old as Anscombe (2000, §32). See Smith (1994, Ch. 4) for more detailed discussion.

In virtue of having these desires, Sapien will be motivated to bring about a state of affairs where they are satisfied, i.e., where Sapien gets the objects of the desires. However, the trouble with having a collection of desires is that it is unlikely that they will all be mutually satisfiable. There is at the very minimum a cost in terms of labor for pursuing any desire. It is possible that through happenstance, the world will already be such as to satisfy some of Sapien's desires or become such without any additional effort. However, this is not the normal case. Generally, to satisfy desires, Sapien will have to actively pursue them. Such pursuit will involve the investment of at least some time and at least some effort. It is unlikely that Sapien will have the time and labor to pursue all of these desires, although this may be possible if the set of them is minimal. For instance, if all that is desired is food, water, and shelter, then either Sapien will be able to satisfy these desires or will die. But the issue arises quickly if Sapien has desires beyond this, and basically all human beings do.

Even if Sapien did have a minimal set of desires, there is still a question of how to bring about their satisfaction. Should Sapien spend the majority of time hunting or gathering? What kind of shelter should be built? What plants gathered? What water source or sources should be used? How should Sapien address the issue of deciding what to do? One option is to do everything instinctually. But are human instincts generally up to this task? It seems to me that the answer is no. Unlike many animals, humans seem to be instinctually undersupplied. We have evolved to use tools and to be adaptable to a high variety of situations and environments, but this seems to come at the expense of merely being able to follow innate biological scripts. As such, our instincts are generally most helpful with our most basic desires.

Even with regard to these basic needs, instinct often does more to motivate us than to help us fulfill those motivations. We may instinctively leap back from sudden movement, but if we do

not have water or food, we have no instinctually guided method of finding it. Perhaps the answer then is not instinct, but habituation. Humans have the capacity to learn things and learn them in a way that renders them available to us without much conscious thought. Consider an exceptional athlete, who does not have to consciously control her various movements. It might be the case then that Sapien could work towards satisfying various desires by learned processes ingrained through this sort of habituation. The trouble with this is that it has no way of getting off the ground by itself. Before something can be habituated, it must be done deliberately, consciously, and a choice must be made to do it rather than something else. Nor is habituation helpful in new contexts where the means to satisfying desires or their contents shift.

None of this is to deny that instinct and habituation play a large role in human life. In the day to day, we do lots of things that we have done many times before. It would be overwhelming if we had to devote much cognitive energy to these tasks. Still, for all human beings there will be times when something else is needed. What I believe is needed is the ability to deliberate about what to do, i.e., to consider the options, the extent to which they are compatible with each other, and then to settle on doing some combination of them in some particular order or way. I do not mean to take a stance here about the frequency with which humans deliberate. It will be compatible with what I have to say that they deliberate extremely often or somewhat rarely. All I am claiming is that humans will need to deliberate, rather than act through instinct or habituation, at least sometimes.

For deliberation to be possible, Sapien need not have a fully determinate and complete decision procedure— it may be that there are cases in which choosing between desires is undecidable or there may be multiple ways of deciding— but there must be some basic way of weighing options against each other. Sapien must develop a notion of what it is for one option to fair

better in deliberation than another option or to be on par with it. The option that fairs the best will then be the option favored by deliberation, and all things the same, the one Sapien will pursue. What would go into such a notion? Most importantly, the relative strength of the desires in question. We can think about this in terms of preferences. It is natural whenever one wants two things to want one of them more than the other such that if given a choice between the two, one would pick the one they want more.

Sapien's deliberative process should respect this asymmetry in desires, such that if Sapien deliberates between two options, the only difference between the two being that the desire for one is stronger than the desire for the other, Sapien will choose in favor of the strongest desire (note that Sapien's desires about how much effort to expend can factor in here). If the deliberative process does not respect this, then it will be unsatisfactory in the sense that Sapien will characteristically not be motivated to go along with the outcome. This itself would be a bit perverse, but it would also threaten Sapien's most basic well-being. Biology relies on the great strength of the desires for food and water to ensure that they are adequately pursued. If a person has not drank for several days, they will not want much besides water, and it would threaten their safety if deliberating on their desires systematically leads them to pursue something else.

Let's say that in response to these needs Sapien develops a notion of what it is for something to fair better in deliberation. Call this notion RP_0. When Sapien has a desire for X, we will say there is an RP_0 in favor of X or that there is to some extent RP_0 to do X. RP_0 will have built into it a strength that is proportional to the relevant psychological and motivational strength of the desire it is based on. When deliberating, Sapien can weigh the RP_0 in favor of different options against each other and select the option that is most supported. This option will be designated as the deliberatively endorsed outcome. Note that this need not mean that that the

strongest single desire will win out deliberatively. It may be overcome by a combination of less strong desires that are mutually satisfiable.

3.3 Individual Theoretical Deliberation

Now let us introduce another complication into our picture of Sapien. Up until now, we have focused on Sapien's need to determine what to do. But grounded in this need is another need, one for accurate information about the world. Whatever Sapien's projects ultimately are, the pursuit of them will be unsuccessful if Sapien does not have at least some basic information about the world. To satisfy the desire to eat, Sapien will need to know where food is and have knowledge of how to get to it. If Sapien has specific preferences for a kind of food, then knowledge of where that is will be needed as well. As such, Sapien will also need a way of deciding what to believe.

As in the case of action, Sapien could believe on instinct. Indeed, it seems as if humans instinctively gain beliefs after having certain experiences. For instance, they generally automatically gain a belief that something is in front of them when they perceive something in front of them. Still, instinct is not sufficient for all cases. For example, with some beliefs about causality, it is not immediately clear what the relationship between two observed phenomena is. There are also cases in which experience will be misleading. A paradigm, but trivial instance would be optical illusions. A more substantive instance, in the present context, might involve falsely assimilating two experiences on the basis of a superficial similarity.

Suppose that Sapien is a fan of a kind of red berry which is very delicious. Suppose also that there is a nearly identical different variety of berry that makes one very sick. If Sapien has experience with both of them, on the basis of their physical similarity, it is easy to form a belief

that the delicious berry also makes one sick. But this will be due to a lack of reflective attention. This general potential for mistakes in instinctual beliefs is widespread, especially regarding beliefs based in past experience, which is mediated through an unreliable memory.

Perhaps then the answer here is to improve the instincts through habituation. As in the case of action, this may often be helpful. We can learn to immediately recognize and correct for optical illusions. But as in the case of action, we need some way of first figuring out how to adjust our beliefs in order to improve our instincts, and we need a way of coping with new situations. Again, what Sapien needs is a way of reflectively deciding which beliefs to endorse, such that the endorsed beliefs can figure as information used in action. What this again calls for is deliberation, this time deliberation about beliefs. Here, however, the standard for what it is for a belief to come out well in deliberation cannot appeal to the desires that Sapien has. This is because for the beliefs to be useful and to fulfill their role in facilitating action, they need to be true. They need to accurately represent the world to Sapien. But there is no reliable connection between Sapien's wants and the way the world actually is. In light of this then, Sapien has need of another notion as a measure of doing well in deliberation about beliefs. Call this RT_0.

In the case of belief, deliberative evaluation has to involve something that is connected to how the world is. As a result, the best thing for Sapien to rely on will be perceptual experience. If Sapien has a set of beliefs about how the world is, then part of what will be involved in those beliefs faring well deliberatively is for Sapien to have had experience of the world as those beliefs represent it. However, the weight of those experiences needs to be qualified. Sapien needs to be able to accord them more or less force in deliberation, depending on how well beliefs produced by those experiences can help Sapien achieve their ends. The characteristic way in which Sapien will know if the qualities of an experience aid in this is if they have done

so in the past.[69] For example, if Sapien observes something while only half paying attention, then past experience would lead them to count this less in favor of a belief than if Sapien had been paying full attention. Similarly, an experience that happened long ago would have less deliberative weight than one that occurred recently because distant memories are often not accurate representations.

All this will be built into RT_0. There is RT_0 in favor of a belief when Sapien has an experience of the world as that belief represents it and the strength of RT_0 depends on the quality of that experience in the way just described. Deliberating on the basis of RT_0 gives Sapien a way to reject beliefs that are inconsistent with each other by preferring the one with the stronger RT_0. Generally, Sapien will also reject beliefs with no RT_0 in support of them because these have not historically been helpful in achieving ends. Indeed, it could be the case that even some degree of RT_0 is not sufficient to sustain a belief under deliberation, though we do not need to say anything about where the cutoff point here might actually be. We might also build in the notion of giving a proposition up for candidacy as a belief derivative RT_0 if it is the case that the belief is consistent with other beliefs that have been previously supported through deliberation. In that situation, the RT_0 would have to be proportional to, though significantly less than, the RT_0 of the beliefs with which it is consistent.

Taking a moment to recap, we have now seen that in relation to a set of basic characteristics of human life that we have laid out, an isolated individual has a need to deliberate in two kinds of ways: about what is to be done and about what to believe. We saw that for this deliberation to be possible, that individual needs a notion that serves the function of counting in favor of particular actions or beliefs. We developed two candidate notions for this, calling them RP_0

[69] As such, the ability to deliberate theoretically improves through time.

and RT_0. Both RP_0 and RT_0 play the same functional role in determining different kinds of deliberation.

3.4 Communal Practical Deliberation

Let us move away from Sapien as an isolated individual. Instead, let us now imagine a simple sort of social scenario. A small group of individuals basically like Sapien are living together in a community. A few things about this situation. First, not all of the community members are directly related to each other. As such, we cannot expect familial relations to exert psychological force in all of their interactions. Second, the community need not be definitely located within space and time any more than Sapien was definitely located. But it is definitely somewhere rather than nowhere and at some time, rather than outside it.[70]

For simplicity, let us also say that the people in this community are isolated. They have no contact with people outside it and may have no conception of there even being such people. All of their interactions with other human beings are with other members of the community. With the introduction of a community also comes the introduction of a language that can be mutually understood. This is also, at least, a language that we could potentially learn were we to live among them and take up their various forms of life. This is important, since if these people's language were such that we could not even potentially learn it, we might be inclined to think that their concepts would be likewise alienated from us. Then it could be argued, whatever way they have of carving up the world is so different from ours that nothing in it could be of philosophical interest to us.

[70] The set-up of the state of nature community draws largely from Williams (2002, Ch. 3).

Now, let's turn again to an analysis of needs. What kind of needs do those who live in this community have? Because they are human beings like Sapien, they all have a set of desires and other pro-attitudes towards things that they would like to acquire or bring about. Some of these desires will be widely shared because of facts about human biology. These include desires for the things necessary to continue living. Everyone, or at least almost everyone, will want adequate food, water, and shelter. But because humans living together develop cultures, there will also be broadly shared needs relating to this. For instance, depending on the specific contents of the community's culture, there may be a widespread desire for a certain kind of burial.

Beyond this, there will again be desires with a wider range of individual variation. We saw these also in Sapien. Some community members may be partial to certain objects, certain kinds of food, or to spending time in the company of particular other community members. Because there is room for a good deal of difference here, there is also room for a good deal of conflict. There is no guarantee that it will be the case that all the desires had by members of the community will be mutually satisfiable. Indeed, it is a virtual guarantee that they often will not be.

Because members of the community will have various ends that they would like to see brought about, like Sapien they will be motivated to seek various ways to either bring about those ends themselves or have them brought about by others. Unlike Sapien, however, they now must contend not only with conflict with their other ends, but with conflict with the ends of others. If everyone is seeking to bring about their ends, then at least some of the time there will be competing ends seeking to exert influence in the same domain.

I see two ways in which this interpersonal conflict can be resolved. One is that the ends of one party manages to dominate the others. This can happen through the use of physical force, but it could also be the result of having a superior non-violent means-end strategy. The other way is that some of the parties involved give up or modify their pursuit of their present ends in a way that renders their activity compatible or complimentary to the ends of some other involved party. This may sometimes, but does not have to, involve changing what desires one or more parties to the conflict actually has. Again, one way to get community members to do this will be to exert coercive pressure, sometimes involving force or the threat of force.

The pursuit of domination has significant costs and barriers. It is not always possible or easy to come up with a superior strategy for bringing about one's ends over someone else's, especially when those ends are difficult to realize in themselves. Imagine that two members of the community are both interested in gathering a certain vegetable that grows in the surrounding area. There is a limited supply of the vegetable and both parties would like to have as much of it for themselves as possible. However, the only reliable way to find where it grows is to search near water sources. If this is known to both parties, then neither can out-compete the other in terms of finding the vegetable. Perhaps then one could devise a more efficient means to harvest and transport it, but this is likely to involve a great deal of prior investment, in terms of devising, testing, and building new equipment. Sometimes, the cost of effort may be worth it. In many instances, however, it will not be. Even if there is a possibly superior strategy, it may not be intellectually or practically within the reach of either vegetable hunter.

An alternative is for one vegetable hunter to use physical force to prevent the other from being able to search or harvest. However, the use of force has the potential itself to be extremely costly. Any time that force is used, the user risks several things. The most obvious risk is that

of injury or death, which is not limited to cases in which the aggressor outright loses the confrontation. Even if one side succeeds in forcibly dominating the other, they may sustain injuries in the process. Another important risk is the breakdown of social cohesion. Since both parties are members of the same community, they will have to go on living around each other in the future. But now, it seems unlikely that they will be able to get along. Indeed, it is likely that both will have developed emotional prejudices against the other as a result of their conflict. Neither party will be able to easily call on the other for assistance and cooperation in the future.

Moreover, because of personal and familial ties within the community, the polarization may spread. The family and friends of the aggrieved may cease to work with the family and friends of the aggressor. There is even the possibility of future violent retaliation, and at the extreme, the fracturing of the community into multiple parts. As such, the community has a need, in so far as it also has a need to preserve itself, to minimize such conflicts. If members of the community also have an interest in maintaining it, and as they benefit from increased efficiency from potential cooperation, they do, then they can derive a need from this as well.

The alternative to outright domination is to reconcile the ends of the parties. This will take the form of at least one giving up their pursuit of their ends or modifying it such that every party can be mutually satisfied. It might sometimes be possible with violence or the threat of violence, but that has the potential to be costly in the way that we just discussed. It will be more efficient to get the other parties to modify their ends through some other means. One possibility here is just bare social pressure. The fact that many members of one's community do or do not want one to do something is often sufficient to exert a kind of psychological force over one's own activities. But peer pressure can be unreliable and the possibility of it presupposes that the community or at least a portion of it is broadly united. But why should this be the case on any

particular issue, much less on enough of them to be able to address the general problem of conflict that the community faces? Further, like the use of physical force, social force can breed resentment and make future collaboration more difficult.

What is needed instead is a way of modifying the ends of others without risking the costs of force. In other words, what the members of the community need is a way to persuade each other to do some things and not others. One way this could be set up is to institute a rigid command structure, whereby some members of the community are simply entitled to overrule the ends of other members of the community and every member of the community accepts this. But this way of doing things would face the problem of not being reliably related to achieving optimal outcomes. Of course, it might be thought that we can give no account of what an optimal outcome in a communal situation is until we have a broader normative theory of what is good and bad. As such, here I just want to focus on measuring outcomes from the perspective of the community members in the way we considered Sapien's desires and preferences.

Since there is conflict between the desired ends of the community members, it will be necessary for some of them to give up or modify their ends. This is inescapable. However, it seems intuitive that one measure that will matter to those community members in resolving this difficulty is how many desires they will have to give up the pursuit of and to what degree they will have to modify them. We took this to be something that matters to lone individuals in deliberation, and it is unclear why it should cease to matter now. Generally, then, we can say that community members would prefer to give up fewer and weaker desires. So, they want a system of settling conflicts that at least usually facilitates them having to give up as few strong ends as possible.[71] But if just some privileged class of members is given persuasive authority,

[71] Korsgaard (2008) describes a similar maximizing procedure for desires.

and this authority is not related to anything other than the social standing of these individuals, there will be no guarantee that other community members will only have to minimally modify their ends. Instead, what is more likely is that they will be asked to make a great deal of modification, having all their ends subsumed into the pursuit of whatever it is that the commanders happen to think is worth pursuing.

Obviously, the community members will not want to enter into this state of affairs. It will have trouble getting off the ground. But suppose that somehow it does. Will they have any reason to complain then? If the commands are psychologically thorough, and they actually induce the members of the community to change their motivational states, then it seems as if they will not. Once they have given up the desires that conflict, they can no longer protest from the point of view of those desires. However, it is probably not the case that this is how human beings work, psychologically speaking. Being commanded by someone in a position of authority can sometimes get us to change what we want, but often it leaves a substantive vestige of our previous preference. And when that command is not backed up by anything further, nothing can be appealed to so as to ease the dissatisfaction of not having these preferences satisfied or even recognized.

Fortunately for the members of this community, there is a better way. Every one of them will already have a notion of deliberation, deployed in determining what to do in their individual life and mediated by RP_0. They can address the issue of communal conflict by extending that system of deliberation outside themselves and making it public. To deliberate about something with someone else is to jointly engage in a process of deciding what should be done. What this would involve is the expression of what every party to the deliberation would like to be done, and then the mutual consideration of what should in fact be done. We could assimilate this to

the first-person model by treating the union of the sets of desire for all the deliberating parties as if it were the set of desires of one person.

There is an important disanalogies in this model, however. Suppose that two community members are publicly deliberating about what to do. They make their desires known along with their relevant strengths. Now, suppose that the situation is such that making the fewest and least significant alterations to the total set of desires involves one party giving up a large portion of their own desires, while preserving all the desires of the other person. Such a scenario could occur when one party has many relatively weak pro-attitudes which are inconsistent with stronger attitudes that the other party possess. In this case, one side of the deliberation will have no personal interest in entering into deliberation at all, since they will be an outright loser. Moreover, because deliberation appeals to nothing that they care about, it will be functionally unable to persuade them to alter their preferences. It is a situation which, in effect, asks them to give up their desires merely because someone else has different ones.

As a result, once individuals are deliberating together as part of a community, they also need to expand the notion of RP_0. Let's call the new, expanded notion RP_1. If RP_1 is to count in favor of something during deliberation, then it must be at least able to potentially persuade the other parties to deliberation. I see two ways in which this could work. One is that RP_1 appeals to desires that are shared between the two parties. If both members desire to bring about some state of affairs, then deliberation that favors endorsing the pursuit of that desire will be persuasive. On the other hand, if a desire is only had by one party, then they might be persuaded to give it up, but only if as a result some other of their desires were satisfied. Presumably, these desires would be at least as strong as the desire that they gave up.

The final picture of RP_1 that we are left with here is one that is in many ways like RP_0. There is *pro tonto* RP_1 in favor of doing something whenever any party to the deliberation has a desire to do that thing or for the state of affairs the doing it would bring about. However, unlike RP_0, there is only ultimately RP_1 in favor of doing something if either all parties involved have RP_0 in favor of it or if it involves endorsing at least two distinct one-sided desires, with RP_0 in favor of them from the individual perspective.

3.5 Communal Theoretical Deliberation

Deciding what to do is not the only thing that our community will have to worry about. As with the individual case, if they are to successfully pursue any plan of action, they will have a need for accurate knowledge about the world. Bernard Williams has argued that in a similar type of social situation, community members will have need for a public pool of information.[72] Similarly, Edward Craig has said they will have a need to flag community members as reliable sources of information.[73] Relatedly, if particular community members routinely receive information from other members of the community, then they will need ways of evaluating this information.

Again, believing on trust, instinct, or improved instinct (habit) may sometimes be adequate, but in a communal pool of information there will always be the possibility of inaccurate information and of being deceived or misled in new ways. It will be advantageous for each individual member of the community to have some way of evaluating whether the information drawn from that pool should be trusted. It will also be useful for the community as a whole to be able to evaluate pieces of information. Moreover, there will almost certainly be cases when

[72] Williams (2002, p. 36).
[73] Craig (1990, p. 11).

information within the pool conflicts, such that it will not be possible for two things reported by community members to be true at the same time. Such conflicts must be resolved if action is to be based on that information.

The community, then, must once again return to deliberation to develop an accurate, shared picture of the world. In deliberation about information provided by others, however, community members need to consider whether the individual that provided the information is in a position to have had accurate information about it. At a base level, this involves positional considerations.[74] In virtue of being in one place rather than another some people have access to information that others do not. We also need to evaluate non-positional aspects of the quality of information sources. As we noted in the individual case, the amount of attention paid during an experience and the degree to which that experience is mediated through memory can affect the likelihood of it being accurate. However, once we expand to the interpersonal case, we will see there are also entirely new considerations that must be taken into account as well.

To deal with this, let's introduce, as we did with deliberation about what to do, a second notion related to faring well in deliberation about what to believe. Call this RT_1. One thing that needs to be built into RT_1 is the fact that individuals can be insincere or deliberately misleading in reporting information. It will count in favor of believing what they say if we can trust them not to be. Probably the way this can best be determined is on the basis of the individual's past history of reporting things that later turned out to be true. If a belief is added to the communal pool by a person who has a history of adding accurate things to the pool, then the RT_1 in its favor will be stronger, and it will fare better in deliberation.

[74] Williams (2002, p. 36).

We also need to take into account our judgement of an individual's ability to form true beliefs from their own experiences. This may differ from that individual's own assessment of their ability. Partly, this may be because the psychological force of experience may lead them to overestimate its veracity. Additionally, we often have no practical choice other than to believe much of what we see. We can do no better than our own understanding of our own experiences, even if we happen to be an individual who routinely misinterprets them. But from the public perspective, the option of trusting such individuals remains open. Thus, if someone who is routinely mistaken, but not intentionally so, adds something to the communal pool of information, we should treat this more skeptically. Such considerations can be area-relative, allowing for the possibility of experts in given domains, but they can also be general. And again, probably the best way of judging how much weight to give someone's reporting along this dimension is to look at their history. We might also look at the history of other bad reporters and ask whether there are any significant analogies between them in terms of faculties or character.

3.6 The Objectivization of Reasons

The introduction of RP_1 and RT_1 in response to the needs experienced by individuals living in a community does not mark the end of the conceptual development of our proto-concepts of reasons in the state of nature. As Edward Craig points out in his analysis of knowledge, concepts that originally develop in response to some urgent functional need may continue to evolve after their introduction in response to the emerging variety of contexts in which they are deployed. In the case of knowledge, Craig argues the proto-concept whose function is to flag information bearers will develop in response to the fact that the individuals needs of the persons that Craig is considering are situated within a community.[75]

[75] Craig (1990, p. 88-91).

Being so situated places a variety of additional constraints on functionality. For instance, individuals may often want others to recommend to them good informants who they are not themselves able to recognize as such. As these processes proceed, the concept of knowledge becomes less and less indexed to the needs of particular individuals, i.e., to the subjective nature of what it means to be a good informant for a particular person for that person's current purposes. Instead, the concept takes on a general nature of what it means to be a good informant to anyone regardless of purposes. Naturally, this makes the standards of what can count as knowledge significantly more rigorous. Craig argues that at the end of this process of objectivization of the proto-concept lies the contemporary concept of knowledge, which for us reflects very high standards and a low-degree of subjective indexing.

It seems to me that a similar process of objectivization would take place with the two proto-concepts of reasons that we have been describing. At this point, RP_1 and RT_1 answer to the needs of particular individuals. They are indexed to the particular desires, beliefs, and experiences that those individuals have. But part of what differentiates them from RP_0 and RT_0 is that these needs are situated within communal life. As with knowledge, however, it will often turn out to be the case that community members have need to make uses of the proto-concepts of reasons in ways that are less individual-dependent. A central driver for this fact is that individuals are both fallible in the process of actual deliberation and possessed of differential skill at deliberating. As community members gain experience deliberating both on their own and publicly, they will come to recognize that they will sometimes deliberate incorrectly. Everyone will sometimes mistakenly endorse through deliberation a belief that turns out to be false or an action that turns out to not help satisfy the ends of the agent(s). Though this fallibility is universal, what matters for our purposes is that it will be differentially distributed. In some

cases, this may be relatively random. Someone may just happen to do better. In other cases, it will be because someone else has more experience in the given area or is just generally a higher quality deliberator.

This places individual deliberators in the community in the situation where they will sometimes, probably often, come to believe that something is true where they should have mistrusted the information for reasons that other members of the community would have picked up on, or they will endorse an action after deliberation where more of what they cared about would have been achievable if they had followed the course of action endorsed by someone else. This widespread fact generates an interest in every member of the community in being able to be persuaded by others, somewhat paradoxically, in situations when they themselves, on the grounds of deliberation, would not share the judgement of those others. The pressure, as with knowledge, is for RP_1 and RT_1 to become less subjectively indexed to individuals. Let's call these further developed concepts RP and RT.

The consequence of this is that RP and RT will sometimes count in favor of doing or believing something that someone else thinks you should. I do not think we can here give hard and fast conditions for when this will be the case, but it will be marked out by the fact that this person is especially reliable and trustworthy as a deliberator. Often, that will be because this person's deliberative conclusions have served you or others you know well in the past. Thus, the objectivization of reasons builds in the possibility of expertise.

The more that RP and RT develop along this additional dimension, the more "objective" the concepts may come to seem. This is because the connection between what there is RP to do or RT to believe will be less obviously connected to the desires and experiences of the individual

participant in deliberation. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that there is a limit to this possibility of objectivization. Since the very possibility of an objective RP and RT fulfilling their function is still tied, albeit indirectly, to the desires and ends of the individuals, it cannot be the case that objectivization proceeds in such a way that the individual is characteristically directed away from their own ends and needs. If it were not the case that others could help us deliberate for our own ends, then RP and RT would remain subjective. More will be said on this in Chapter Five.

3.7 Conclusion

To summarize what has occurred so far, we have seen that the need for deliberation that is present in the life of an individual evolves once that individual is placed into a community. The most important changes are that community members now must settle the possibility of interpersonal conflict, and that the generally most efficient way for them to do this is through persuasion. But since the goal of deliberation now includes persuasion, it needs to be built into the concept of what it is for something to do well in deliberation that it be persuasive. This necessitates expanding RP_0 and RT_0 into RP_1 and RT_1.

As with RP_0 and RT_0, the connection between RP_1 and RT_1 is that they both function to address two aspects of a challenge arising from the need of human beings in a community to decide what to do and then to be able to do it. Both fulfill this function by mediating deliberation. As time passes, and community members become more practiced in deliberation, a process of objectivization will occur. In this process RP_1 and RT_1 will become less indexed to individuals, thought they will not completely shake this connection. At the end of this process lie RP and RT, which I now offer as corresponding to the notions of practical reasons and theoretical reasons that we have been concerned to investigate. The notion of a reason in general will then

be built out of the commonality between these two more basic notions, namely something that counts in favor of something else in deliberation. It may be thought that this common notion of a reason would not emerge only at the last step. It could be that it emerges earlier. However, on account of considerations that we will discuss in the next chapter, I do not think the exact temporal placement of this step matters overly much. What is significant for our purposes is that it does emerge.

Having now offered a pragmatic genealogy of the concept of a reason, we are well-placed to tackle the three guiding questions that we have been considering. However, before taking up that challenge in the final chapter, I want first to respond to some potential objections. Many of the things that we have taken for granted about pragmatic genealogy and some of the specific assumptions that we have made in this one may seem problematic to some philosophers. In the next chapter, I will attempt to lay these worries to rest so that in Chapter Five we may focus on bringing our project to a satisfying conclusion.

Chapter 4:
Responses to Objections

4.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, I presented my pragmatic genealogy of the concept of reasons. As I wanted to foreground the positive aspect of the project, it made sense to place the actual genealogy before an extended technical philosophical discussion about possible objections to pragmatic genealogy as a methodology. In this chapter, I now want to turn to that discussion and address some worries that one might reasonably have. These worries come in three varieties.

The first are worries that effect genealogies generally, as accounts that aim to developmentally situate objects of philosophical investigation. The central question here is how the developmental history of a phenomena can have philosophical relevance in the present. The second are worries that effect pragmatic genealogies generally, for instance whether the use of a state of nature type model is legitimate. The third are worries about our pragmatic genealogy— that we have failed to isolate the right function for reasons, either because they have a different function or because functional analysis is misplaced.

4.2 Objections to Genealogy in General

Some analytic philosophers might object to genealogy because they are skeptical of the claim that history is relevant to philosophy, the thought being that however it is we have come to have some concept, practice, or belief is irrelevant to the question of how we should analyze or justify it in the present. Such analysis or justification is thought to turn only on properties that exist in the present, e.g., whether the belief is true or the practice valuable. At best, a

genealogy would be extraneous. At worst, it would pervert our understanding of its object by capitalizing on illicit theoretic prejudices. The charge that this is the case has come to be termed the *genetic fallacy*.[76] It comprises a set of related worries about the philosophical relevance of origins.

One prominent form of the genetic fallacy adapts a familiar distinction from the philosophy of science between the context of discovery and the context of justification.[77] In science, a discovery in the form of a hypothesis can be made in a way that is accidental and does not relate to the reasons that support that hypothesis. But when we are questioning the truth of that hypothesis, the events that lead to its discovery are irrelevant. We can similarly distinguish between the context of formation for a belief or practice and the context of justification.[78] For instance, if the process by which we come to hold altruistic moral beliefs is tied to something objectionable, like reasons of prudential self-interest, this does not seem to show that altruism itself is bad. At most, it may show that we ourselves are objectionable in some way.

Genealogists have long been sensitive to this worry. Nietzsche in his discussion of punishment notes that the fact that we used to punish for some particular reason in the past does not make it the case that we still punish people for that reason.[79] But if he recognizes this, why is it that he thought that it was worth writing a genealogy? The answers that interpreters have provided to this question go some way towards showing how the genetic fallacy can be overcome.[80]

[76] *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy (Simon Blackburn 2008)* describes the Genetic Fallacy as "The alleged mistake of arguing that something is to be rejected because of its suspicious origins. More widely, any mistake of inferring something about the nature of some topic from a proposition about its origins." There are a variety of reasons for thinking that genetic reasoning is a fallacy. For reference to a number of discussions, see Queloz (2018a, FN. 12).
[77] Schickore (2018, Section 5).
[78] Terminology and framing here adapted from Queloz (2018a, p. 5).
[79] Nietzsche (1998, II.13).
[80] I discuss some of these commentators for the distinct purpose of interpreting Nietzsche's text in my exam essay (2020) [reference omitted for marking anonymity reasons].

Alexander Prescott-Couch suggests that the philosophical force of Nietzsche's genealogy comes from showing that morality is a special kind of entity, one that he calls a *historical individual*. A historical individual is a socially situated entity whose criterion of identity is not given according to essential conditions obtaining in the present, but by a certain kind of temporal or spatial continuity, generally causal, with past ancestors that instantiate the practice.[81] Once we understand the history of the object to be intrinsic to its individuation, we can use that history to make substantive claims about what it is.

For instance, Prescott-Couch cites Christmas as a contemporary example of a historical individual.[82] As a modern practice, Christmas combines several traditions from a variety of cultures. It began as a winter festival for European Pagans that was then co-opted by the early Catholic Church. The practices we associate with it have various origins. Santa Claus is a Greek saint, while Christmas trees are German. The emphasis on shopping is undoubtedly American. Symbolically, Christmas is just as varied. Through time it has been a religious celebration, a cultural and familial one, and a commercial event, with none of the succeeding roles wholly displacing their predecessors. With this history, it would be a mistake to look for anything like a single function or unifying purpose for the idea of Christmas. Similarly, Prescott-Couch argues, in examining the history of morality, we can see that it would be miraculous if it admitted of anything like a general justification. But this is something philosophy has historically seemed to aim at, so Nietzsche's genealogy could show us in this way that we should give up that philosophical quest.

[81] Prescott-Couch (2014; 2015b, p. 243).
[82] Prescott-Couch (2014, p. 157-8). See also Prescott-Couch (2015a).

In contrast, Peter Kail argues that Nietzsche's genealogical account is philosophically useful because it provides us with information about the reliability of our moral beliefs.[83] In explaining the temporal development of moral practices and beliefs, Nietzsche gives us a causal explanation of why we have them. But, once we have this in hand, we can ask whether that causal explanation is really one that we can expect to track the normative truth. Kail likens this to questioning the truth status of an everyday belief that we take to have an unacceptable causal history. An example might be believing it is 3 because that is what the clock reads, but the clock turns out to be broken. In that case, once we discover that the clock is broken, we withdraw endorsement from the belief.

Similarly, once Nietzsche shows us that the processes by which we come to have our moral beliefs extend outside our personal history and that these processes are wholly unrelated to the truth of those beliefs, we should suspend our endorsement of those beliefs.[84] If Kail is right, then genealogy can fulfill a debunking objective without necessary recourse to functional explanation. Indeed, all it need do is provide an accurate descriptive account of morality's development.

On a final suggestion for overcoming the genetic fallacy, favored by Raymond Geuss and Michel Foucault, genealogy serves the role of highlighting the historical contingency of its object.[85] By tracing the various causal factors that produce our beliefs, genealogy can reveal the ways in which our beliefs and practices are shaped by situation specific factors that could easily have been either absent or otherwise. In this way, it reveals the sense in which our

[83] Kail (2011).
[84] Reliablists like Goldman (2012) could then view genealogy as a sort of applied epistemology because it tells us which of our belief forming processes can count as knowledge.
[85] Geuss (1994) and Foucault (1984).

possessing one set of concepts, beliefs, or practices, rather than another is a matter of historical luck.

It may be the case that there are some concepts or practices that require a certain kind of specific history in order to be affirmed. Matthieu Queloz gives the helpful example of the outcome of a democratic process, which depends for its authority on the history of that process reflecting the choices of the relevant citizenry.[86] If it was revealed that the voting was somehow rigged, then the authority of the whole practice would be undermined. Another way in which this sort of genealogical knowledge can be put to work is more practical. It can shake our certainty in the conceptual apparatus of the present. By reminding us that our forms of life are mutable, we might be encouraged to reshape the future.[87]

It thus seems that there are various ways in which information about origins might serve a philosophical purpose. Do any of these vindicate the philosophical aim of our genealogy of reasons? Unfortunately, I think the answer is no. The problem is that, in contrast to some other varieties of genealogy, our pragmatic account cannot be literally construed as describing actual historical processes. Recall that we admitted up front that the state of nature that we described does not have a definite spatio-temporal location.

This problem is ubiquitous for pragmatic genealogies. Critics of Craig's work have pointed out that his state of nature could not have happened because there could be no actual human society without the concept of knowledge.[88] It is too fundamental for us to think that even relatively

[86] Queloz (2018a, p. 6-7).
[87] Srinivasan (2019, p. 134-135).
[88] Williamson (2002, p. 31 fn. 3). See Queloz (2019) for discussion of how genealogy can still be useful if knowledge is taken as basic.

primitive forms of social organization could arise antecedently to it. It seems to me that this may also be the case with reasons. Reasons are so fundamental to deliberation and the needs that deliberation addresses are so fundamental that the state of nature we depict does not have a plausible claim to have actually existed.

Naturally, this might seem to be problematic. However, it's something that previous pragmatic genealogists have taken in stride. In *Truth and Truthfulness,* Bernard Williams explicitly acknowledged that the state of nature he described could not have existed.[89] He did not find this to be especially troubling because Williams's aim was not to depict a real historical process, but rather to foreground a certain kind of relationship between needs, functions, and concepts. In line with this, Matthieu Queloz has suggested that we understand pragmatic genealogies as abstract models.[90] These models bring out the relationship between the concepts under investigation and human needs by using the temporal axes to show stepwise how it is that those needs support the emergence of the subject of the genealogy. The temporal dimension of the model coincides with the direction of justification, even if it does not necessarily coincide with the causal order of the processes by which that object actually emerged. The use of such a model makes it easy to understand and evaluate the social basis of functional relationships whose complexity makes them difficult to unravel synchronically.

4.3 Objections to Pragmatic Genealogy

Understanding pragmatic genealogies as idealized models gives us a way of overcoming the charge often leveled that they succumb to the genetic fallacy. However, this leaves pragmatic genealogy open to other objections. Pragmatic genealogies relate functions to needs in ways

[89] Williams (2002, p. 27).
[90] Queloz (2018a, p. 16). Other philosophers have argued for distinct ways of interpreting pragmatic genealogies. Since we have built our own, we can simply stipulate that this is the conception we follow.

that characteristically give reasons that support or endorse those functions.[91] Nicholas Smyth argues that to be successful models, it then must be the case that the needs which pragmatic genealogies depict as the grounds for the original emergence and development remain in the present.[92] Since such needs depend on social, biological, and psychological conditions, those conditions must therefore remain relevantly the same as well. If the conditions under which a concept is formed are relevantly disanalogous to the conditions under which it is currently being used, then even if the pragmatic genealogy correctly depicts the original relationship between concept, function, and need, it does not tell us anything of contemporary use.

When a pragmatic genealogy models conditions that no longer relevantly obtain in the way just described, we can say that the model suffers from *continuity failure*.[93] Avoiding continuity failure has seemed to be important for the philosophical success of pragmatic genealogy. This is because many pragmatic genealogists have sought, as at least a partial aim, to vindicate their object of investigation by revealing it to discharge some especially useful need. For instance, Hume's genealogy of justice can be taken to reveal such a need for a concept of property.[94] In this way, then, the continued use of the practice or concept is normatively grounded. But that normative grounding falls away as soon as the needs presented in the genealogy disappear.

Later in this chapter, as well as in the next one, we will make use of the vindicatory power of pragmatic genealogy. It is therefore important for us to rescue its philosophical force here. However, before doing so, let us note that up to now the primary way we have described the point of our pragmatic genealogy is as a way of coming to a functional analysis of the concept

[91] Kail (2011, p. 231-2).
[92] Smyth (2017, p. 1131-3).
[93] Smyth (2017, p. 1131-3).
[94] Hume (2006, 3.2.2).

of reasons. It is therefore worth asking to what extent does continuity failure threaten this ability of a pragmatic genealogy.

I think continuity failure does pose a problem for pragmatic genealogy *qua* functional analysis. This is because an important part of the evidence for accepting a particular pragmatic genealogy as depicting the correct functional relationship is that it issues in something at least closely resembling the concept that we currently use. But suppose that we tell a genealogical story based on a functional analysis that gets us something resembling our current concept, but with a vestigial function. Then, the question becomes, why do we still have that concept at all? If a concept does not serve a useful purpose, then we probably would not expect it to remain stable over time.

Perhaps there could be some reason outdated concepts are preserved. Culture moves slowly, and, as we will shortly discuss, it may be that even though something no longer serves a useful general function, it may still serve the practical interests of some subset group. Still, in this latter case, it would be more natural to think not so much that we have given a correct account of the function of the phenomena under investigation, but that we have failed to recognize the true, essentially local function. In the former case, with concepts like reasons or knowledge that have been around for quite a long time, we should have expected them to disappear or change drastically if they did not have a guiding purpose. Perhaps it is the case that they have, and this has simply gone unnoticed, but the burden of proof rests on whoever would make that claim.

The general conclusion is that continuity failure is bad both from the perspective of trying to vindicate the phenomena under investigation and from the perspective of trying to analyze its

function. Fortunately, the pragmatic genealogist has recourse to some responses. Matthieu Queloz has distinguished two ways in which pragmatic genealogies can avoid continuity failure.[95] The first is that pragmatic genealogists can focus on the abstract, rather than the concrete.[96] The state of nature models used by Williams and Craig (and us) are not temporally located, so it does not make sense to say that they actually depict conditions in the past.

Rather, the way they work in abstraction allows them to pick needs in a relatively context-indifferent way. As a result, we need not understand the state of nature as depicting the way a concept functioned for our distant ancestors. Rather, we can see it as a way of modeling how that function relates to needs that we have in the here and now. The force of this point is that it is a mistake to seek a one-to-one correspondence between the time axes in a pragmatic genealogical model and the time axes in the world that we live in. Once this mistake has been corrected, Queloz recognizes that the question is not whether the model exhibits continuity failure, but whether it accurately models the relevant features of the situations in which we are trying to apply it.[97]

The second way in which Queloz argues pragmatic genealogies can avoid continuity failure is by focusing on universal needs. Insofar as positing universal needs requires us to take a stance on the substantive content of human nature, philosophers might have some reticence.[98] There are a few background considerations that might be though to support this skepticism. One is that whenever we make broad pronouncements about human nature, we should worry about the potential to overgeneralize from the particulars of our situation. Often, because things seem

[95] Queloz (2018a, p. 15-6).
[96] Queloz (2018a, p. 16-7).
[97] Queloz (2018a, p. 17).
[98] Queloz (2018a, p. 16) recognizes this but does not spend time examining the justification.

to us to just be a certain way, we do not recognize that they could have been otherwise. Indeed, shaking this confidence is supposed to be the virtue of some types of genealogical inquiry.

Moreover, the history of cultural interaction has taught us that investigators are often biased towards positive evaluations of their own cultural contingencies and negative evaluations of those of other groups. At the extreme of end of this objection, one might even reject the idea that human nature has any important substantive content, i.e., content that is innate and invariant enough to arise in all humans and significant enough to affect the forms of life that philosophers are concerned to investigate. Instead, it could be thought that all the important work done in shaping our concepts and practices is done by cultures.

Even if one is not inclined to wholesale skepticism about human nature, we might still have some worries about our ability to know it. It seems very plausible that if we were to gain substantive knowledge of human nature, it would not be through philosophical means, but through disciplines in the biological and social sciences. This would tie pragmatic genealogy to areas of inquiry like history, anthropology, psychology, etc… in a way that might worry those who think philosophy should not be an empirical endeavor. Moreover, even if one is less skeptical about this, it is generally accepted that our knowledge in the social sciences is fallible and frequently subject to revision. As such, it might seem a shaky ground for the foundation of a genealogy.

Queloz's response to these challenges is compelling. First, he argues that the kinds of needs pragmatic genealogists focus on are not specific first-order needs. They do not depend on humans having any particular attitudes or desires innately. Rather, the needs that pragmatic genealogists rely on are needs that result just from the fact that all humans have some collection

of first-order needs. Queloz calls these needs that supervene on more basic necessities *structural needs*. For instance, in Bernard Williams's pragmatic genealogy, it is a structural need that humans require a method of information sharing. This requirement is grounded in the more basic fact that all these humans have various desires and projects that they want to accomplish. But this will, as a matter of course, require access to various kinds of information, like the location of food or shelter. But because of the limitations of time and space, there will often be others who are better positioned with regard to that information than you are. So, it would be necessary and beneficial for you to be able to have their information. However, since they are also in a reciprocal situation there will be a general need to have a common pool of information that facilitates this exchange.

Similarly, in our genealogical account, the need for a way to determine the outcome of deliberation is grounded in the fact that, regardless of their specific content, almost everyone is bound to have beliefs and desires that conflict with each other. It is because they are not tied to specific first-order circumstances that structural needs remain invariant across an extremely wide variety of situations. This makes it very hard to deny that the necessary conditions fail to be continuous across time, because we, like our past ancestors, do still have desires and basic needs.

This seems to me to be sufficient as well to address the worry that pragmatic genealogists appeal to human nature in some problematic way. First, because structural needs emerge from a broad variety of basic needs, we do not excessively run the risk of overgeneralizing our own culture. Even if one denies that there are any shared basic needs, this is not an issue, so long as one does not also believe that there are people without basic needs at all. But to hold this would be so implausible as to be not worth discussing. And, as Queloz points out, all philosophy must

take something for granted.[99] If we cannot avoid this, structural needs seem to be a relatively safe bet.

Second, the relationship between pragmatic genealogy and the sciences turns out to be, at least at the basic level, less tight than might have been thought. At the point of state of nature modeling, we do not need the substantive information that we would gain from those sciences, although we can use it to add a concrete flavor to the model that makes it easier to follow. Still, there may be a place where empirical information gained through the social sciences can be helpful to the genealogist. This is when that genealogist is concerned to conjoin the state of nature model to more local conditions in order to show how a basic proto-phenomenon might develop in culturally contingent circumstances. Williams does this in *Truth and Truthfulness* when he discusses how the virtues of truth develop in relation to the emergence of the discipline of history in Ancient Greece.[100]

When a genealogist brings in local constraints, they shift from a focus on structural needs to first-order needs, which are highly culturally contingent. Their knowledge of these first order needs will then depend on empirical historical inquiry. However, such inquiry does not run the risk of generating a continuity failure because the genealogist is no longer concerned with being able to produce a generally applicable model of the concept, but rather one located at a specific space and time. There is still the possibility of relying on faulty information, but that appears to simply be a risk that must be run. Of course, we do not need to be particularly concerned about this aspect of genealogy. Ours works entirely at the broad level of structural needs.

[99] Queloz (2018a, p. 21).
[100] Williams (2002, ch. 7).

4.4 Objections Specific to Our Genealogy

The major challenges that can be raised against our genealogy of reasons have to do with the functional analysis that we have given. One form that this objection can take is to claim that reasons do answer to a broad structural need or needs, but that we have failed in identifying them. In the other form, one might deny that the concept of reasons actually answers to a structural need at all. A compelling way to put this would be to suggest that reasons are actually the products of the prudential interests, often pernicious ones, of particular individuals or groups in power.

Let's deal with the first possibility first. We analyzed the concept of reasons as arising from a need to be able to settle public and private deliberation, which in turn arose from the fact that we are all faced with conflicting desires and information. Since the aptness of our genealogy in describing the concept as we use it provides evidence for accepting it, anyone suggesting that another function would be more suitable bears the burden of proof. A specific possibility must be offered and it must be made clear why it is preferable to our analysis.

Is there such an alternative? The most prominent work on understanding the functioning of reasoning has been done by the psychologists Hugo Mercier and Dan Sperber in their book *The Enigma of Reason*.[101] Mercier and Sperber argue that for most of the history of psychology, psychologists have understood reasoning as being a general capacity with a specific function: to increase knowledge and therefore aid in decision making.[102] However, they draw on the large reservoir of empirical work in psychology that shows reason to be fairly easy to fool.[103]

[101] Mercier and Sperber (2017).
[102] Mercier and Sperber (2017, p. 178-80).
[103] Mercier and Sperber (2017, Ch. 1-2.). See Kahneman (2012) for comprehensive discussion of bias in reasoning.

If reason has the function of increasing knowledge, then it appears that there are lots of cases in which it fails to do this. From the perspective of evolutionary psychology, then, Mercier and Sperber suggest that reason and reasons must have evolved to serve some other function or functions.[104] They argue that we can then explain the experimental data by showing that reason is good at what it evolved to do. It just happened to be the case that we were previously mistaken about what exactly that was.

Mercier and Sperber pick out two important alternative functions that they think reasons fulfill. One they call the *Justificatory Function*.[105] Under this function, reason helps us to solve the coordination problem that results from our mutually lacking knowledge of what others will do. Mercier and Sperber point out that although we can make some predictions about others' behavior based off social norms and mind-reading inferences, this is often not sufficiently informative for us to make reliable predictions. Reasons serve to supplement this information because when we do something and give reasons that justify it, we thereby commit ourselves to these reasons and being guided by them in similar situations in the future. When we engage in talk about reasons with others, we learn what to expect from them and potentially influence their behavior. All of this makes social coordination easier.

The second function that Mercier and Sperber pick out for reasons they call the *Argumentative Function*.[106] The Argumentative Function of reasons hinges on their ability to facilitate a kind of beneficial communication. Mercier and Sperber point out that from a pragmatic perspective we exist in a state of epistemic vigilance where we are wary of accepting information that

[104] Mercier and Sperber (2017, p. 182).
[105] Mercier and Sperber (2017, p. 183-6).
[106] Mercier and Sperber (2017, p. 193-99).

others tell us because there are costs to believing false information.[107] Now, imagine a situation in which person A wants to communicate some proposition P to person B. Mercier and Sperber hold that it will be beneficial to person A to get person B to believe P, but in order to do this A needs to somehow overcome B's epistemic vigilance. From the perspective of person B, it will be beneficial to believe P only if P really is true. When A can provide reasons to B, B's epistemic vigilance is overcome. And A can provide these reasons just when there is higher likelihood of P being true.

The case for the Justificatory and Argumentative functions rests on their being able to isolate a practical benefit for reasons and reasoning. However, Sinan Dogramaci has pointed out that it is not at all clear that they achieve this.[108] In the case of the Argumentative Function, the question is why it is beneficial in the first place for person A to get person B to accept their antecedent beliefs regardless of the truth of those beliefs. He acknowledges that it would be beneficial for A to be able to control what B believes, but that is not what the Argumentative Function enables. Indeed, in many cases it seems like B coming to share the same beliefs as A will actually be disadvantageous to B.[109] For example, B may have beliefs about the location of scarce resources and A coming to share those beliefs may increase competition.

As for the Justificatory Function, Dogramaci understands Mercier and Sperber as seeing the reasons that are used as justification as typically being just the best reasons we can come up with at the time of debate, rather than the reasons for which we believe or act. However, Dogramaci argues that a Justificatory Function could only plausibly be helpful for facilitating

[107] The way that Mercier and Sperber frame the Argumentative Function is as specific to theoretical reasons. However, there is a natural extension of it to practical reasons, whereby the relevant vigilance is the reluctance to take actions that turn out to leave one worse off.
[108] Dogramaci (2020).
[109] Dogramaci (2020, p. 5-8).

coordination if the reasons that we advertise ourselves as having are typically the reasons we act and believe for.[110] This seems right, since we cannot coordinate based on false expectations. But when we amend the Justificatory Function in this way, I think it turns out to be entirely compatible with the functional analysis we have already given. We already see reasons as helping to facilitate a kind of social coordination, one that allows individuals with conflicting desires and beliefs to peacefully find a mutually beneficial understanding. If we construe our genealogy as simply exploring the more fundamental needs that ground a need for coordination, we can view it as a way of elaborating the Justificatory Function, rather than as a competitor.

With the concern of an alternative function out of the way, let us turn now to the suggestion that it is not functions at all that govern the concept of reason. This sort of criticism will be familiar to those acquainted with the "masters of suspicion"— Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche.[111] The so-called suspicion that unites these thinkers is their unwillingness to take social and cognitive phenomena at face value. Through each thinker runs the idea that normative systems are shaped by the individual interests of those who create and sustain them, often at the expense of other members of society.

Like pragmatic genealogy, this strategy of suspicions offers a functional analysis of contemporary phenomena. However, unlike the conventional pragmatic genealogies that we have been exploring, it ties that function to an interest rather than a need. Interests, in the stipulative sense of the term we are now using, are bound to specific and generally historically contingent groups. They are by nature the interests of some and not others. It is not a general

[110] Dogramaci (2020, p. 11-13).
[111] The phrase is I believe due to Paul Ricoeur (1970).

or universal requirement for the functioning of a society that the interests of any particular group within it be satisfied. For this reason, interests lack the vindicatory power of structural needs. They instead lend themselves to a kind of debunking functional analysis, where those outside of the interested group see they could do without continuing to endorse the concept or object.

For instance, a Marxist might argue that liberalism is inextricably tied to advancing the interests of the capitalist class. Through some combination of indoctrination and oppression, this class may succeed in getting members of the proletariat to endorse their preferred normative theory. The ideology of capitalism may even be so pervasive that the proletariat are unaware that they have been duped into supporting a system that disadvantages them. Similarly, in *The Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche argues that contemporary morality can trace its origins to a "slave revolt" in antiquity, at which point the warrior aristocratic values were replaced by values that benefited and exalted a different class of individuals, the priests. The warriors are then brought to accept these values, and their own demoted status, through psychological manipulation.[112]

Applying a strategy of suspicion to our own pragmatic genealogy, we might ask whether the theory of rationality and the concept of reasons are actual a conceptual tool that serves just the interest of some particular class of individuals. The first candidate that might come to mind is academics. Academics are always going about telling others what they should and should not do. When they are questioned as to what grounds their authority to do this, they generally appeal to superior knowledge of what reasons there are. So, it might seem that the theory of reasons supports academic supremacy. Another possibility is broader. It might be that reasons

[112] Nietzsche (1998).

serve the elites of Western societies generally. Notoriously, many Western societies have engaged in colonization of other societies and have attempted to supplant the culture of those societies. Perhaps the role of reasons is to provide a justification for these colonial activities in a way that disguises morally objectionable acts in the clothes of rationality.

I think there are two reasons why we should resist this interpretation. One will have to wait until the next chapter, where it will become clear in our discussion of reasons and normativity. The other one is because the suspicion interpretation fails to make a crucial distinction. That distinction is between what is done in accordance with reasons and what is done merely under the guise of purported reasons. The latter of these is compatible with claiming that one has reason to do something when one really does not. For instance, it may have been part of the justification of the British Empire that its control over its colonies was best for the inhabitants of those countries, in accordance with a sort of paternalistic utilitarianism. But it seems more likely that this claim of justification was false than that there is something wrong with the idea of a rational justification itself. However, the concept of reasons is only subject to this objection if we take this latter route. Even supposing that we did, we would then have to answer the question of from what grounds we could offer any criticism without appealing to reasons for or against. That seems to me to be obviously impossible.

4.5 Conclusion

It is my hope at this point to have addressed many of the prominent objections to our approach that may have occurred to the reader.[113] I make no claim to have responded to every possible

[113] One in particular that I have not addressed is why we need a functional analysis with a time axis, instead of a synchronic "paradigm-based" functional analysis (See Queloz (2020) for discussion and defensive of pragmatic genealogy). This is because even if some of the conceits of genealogy are superfluous, this does not harm the truth status of our argument.

objection, but I believe that I have defended pragmatic genealogy as a methodology sufficiently to proceed. In the next and last chapter, we will finally see the pay-off of our work. There we will use our genealogy to address the central questions about reasons that we set out to answer. I will also argue that our choice of pragmatic genealogy has turned out to be especially fortuitous. There are structural features of the methodology that make it well-suited to addressing our situation.

Chapter 5:
Three Answers

5.1 Introduction

We began in Chapter One by considering three problems in the theory of reasons. We asked what kind of entities reasons are, why we should care about responding to them, and what kind of relationship reasons have to motivation. We saw that an intuitive investigation into the first question led us to three desiderata that we would expect any account of reasons to be able to satisfy. We phrased these in terms of Normative, Explanatory, and Motivational Constraints. As it turned out, satisfying the Normative Constraint was intrinsically linked to addressing the question of why we should care about responding to reasons and addressing the Motivational and Explanatory Constraints was linked to addressing the relationship between reasons and motivation.[114]

The trouble started when we began examining proposed accounts of what reasons are. All these accounts seemed unable to jointly satisfy the important constraints that we had posited. Instead, there seemed to be a trade-off between meeting the Normative Constraint and meeting the Motivational and Explanatory Constraints. Faced with this situation, we considered what we should do. Instead of discarding one of these commitments, I suggested that we instead try reframing the problem by employing a new philosophical methodology: pragmatic genealogy. In Chapter Two, we examined the general nature of this approach before employing it in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four, we responded to a variety of objections that could be raised against pragmatic genealogy. Now, all that work comes to fruition.

[114] See Ch. 1.2.

In this chapter, we will argue that our pragmatic genealogy does help us answer our three guiding questions. In Section Two, we will show how we can apply our pragmatic analysis to generate an account of reasons that I call Functionalist Pluralism. This account can give us useful information about what reasons are, while avoiding the issues faced by Factualist, Psychologist, and Disjunctivist accounts of reasons. In Section Three, we will use the function of practical reasons to draw conclusions about their relationship with motivation. It will turn out that this relationship is complex, reflecting both Internalist and Externalist intuitions. In Section Four, we will show how a pragmatic genealogy can vindicate the normativity of reasons. We will also further address an objection from the previous section, concerning the claim that reasons might serve only an isolated interest. In Section Five, we verify that Functionalist Pluralism is capable of meeting our three constraints. We will conclude with some reflections about the aptness of pragmatic genealogy for the study of reasons.

5.2 What Are Reasons Reconsidered

Recall the various positions on the nature of reasons that we considered at length in Chapter One. Psychologism held that reasons were psychological states.[115] Factualism held that reasons were facts of some sort.[116] The former was able to meet the Explanatory and Motivational Constraints, but not the Normative Constraint. The situation was reversed for the latter.[117] Now recall the pragmatic model that we have developed. According to that model, the primary function of reasons is to enable public and private deliberation in order to help agents coordinate desires and beliefs in the manner necessary to efficiently achieve their ends. Let us

[115] Wiland (2012, Ch. 2 & 3).
[116] Wiland (2012, Ch. 4).
[117] See Ch. 1.3.

consider whether there is any information that we have gained from that model that lends support to one side of the debate over the other.

There are aspects of our pragmatic model that appear to support Psychologism and there are aspects that appear to support Factualism. We began in the early stages of our pragmatic genealogy by defining a general structural need, i.e., the need to resolve conflict between desires and beliefs in the individual in order to determine what to do/believe.[118] The existence of that need did not depend on the agent having any definite other needs or desires. Rather it supervened just on the fact that every agent will have some needs and desires.[119] We then saw initial proto-concepts of reasons RP_0 and RT_0 emerge in response to that need. We said that there was RP_0 in favor of an action in some way proportional to the strength of the desires that it would help satisfy. We said that there was RT_0 in favor of a belief if the agent had an experience relating to that belief that reliably helped the agent achieve their ends.

Since desires and experiences are both psychological states, at this stage, our genealogy seems to naturally lead us towards Psychologism. However, we must be careful not to infer too much. Though constraints are placed on RP_0 and RT_0 by psychological states, the pragmatic genealogy does not explicitly require that we reduce or identify proto-reasons with those states. We must also keep in mind that it is the further developed concepts RP and RT that are meant to correspond to our present concept of reasons.

In the next stage of our pragmatic genealogy, we situated the agent within a community. This generated additional needs to be satisfied. It became necessary to not just settle conflicts in

[118] See Ch. 3.2 & 3.3.
[119] Queloz (2018a, p. 18) discusses the nature of structural needs.

desires, ends, and beliefs internal to the individual, but also between persons as well. To do this efficiently through deliberation, we needed to posit the development of RP_0 and RT_0 into RP_1 and RT_1.[120] At this second state, the proto-concepts are still constrained by psychological experiences. What matters for settling deliberation is what members of the community want and what kind of evidence they have experiential access to.

However, introducing more than one subjective perspective makes the relationship between psychological states and reasons become more complex. This is because it also introduces the necessity of interpersonal communication. To publicly deliberate, members of the community must be able to communicate with each other effectively. A prerequisite for this in the case of deliberation is that all parties must recognize each other as engaging in the deliberative practice. They must recognize the other parties as putting forward reasons, or at least sincere candidates for reasons. Public deliberation cannot proceed without this basic recognition. It may even be a cause of additional social conflict, since in malicious cases it may reflect the fact that some parties are trying to manipulate or dominate the other either by offering insincere and false reasons or by automatically discounting the ends of other parties.

There is one aspect of communication that might be seen as lending support to a non-Psychologist understanding of reasons. Since reasons in public deliberation are communicated through language, it would be beneficial to have a way for that language to signal that what is being offered is meant to be a reason. A natural way of doing this, since the hope of the person offering it is that the reason will be persuasive to others, is to speak in a way that does not index the reason to any particular individual and makes clear that what is being said is meant to have some force over other people.

[120] See Ch. 3.4 & 3.5.

If advertising reasons in this way is useful, then it would make sense for public deliberators to often phrase their talk of reasons in a way that makes appeal to what is shared between them. However, there is generally less guarantee that individuals share the same or similar sorts of psychological states, than that they share general access to many ordinary facts pertaining to the external world. This is the case with facts about the immediate environment. However, it often extends beyond this. Think about all the common knowledge that is taken for granted anytime two individuals speak to each other. When trying to engage in a psychological exchange to facilitate coordination, it is natural to emphasize what can be presupposed to be shared between these individuals.

This observation does not amount to a particularly strong case for regarding reasons as facts. Although it does give talk that represents them this way a rhetorical purpose, if not an especially essential one. Moreover, it will be easy for Psychologists to say that this is actually evidence for their case. For the core functionality of reasons remains tied to psychological states, but we now have an account of why we might talk in a way that misrepresents that. In that sense, this could amount to a sort of error theory of Factualism.

I would find this fairly compelling, if that were all that was to be said for Factualism. However, the aspect of our genealogy that seems to most strongly support that view comes in only at the last stage. This is the transition from RP_1 and RT_1 to RP and RT, the concepts that were meant to correspond to our present notion of practical and theoretical reasons.[121] That transition corresponded to an objectivization of the earlier proto-concepts. This process occurred in

[121] See Ch. 3.6.

response to a communal need for the concepts of theoretical and practical reasons to become less index to the subjective states of particular individuals.

A major factor driving objectivization was the fact that individuals are fallible in their deliberation and differentially skilled. As a result, they will come to recognize that they would often do better to be persuaded by others in deliberation than to always follow their own judgement. This leads to sometimes treating as reasons things which, from the perspective of the individual, have no immediately clear relationship to serving the ends of that individual. The relevant conclusion to draw from this is that in such cases, it cannot be the psychological states of the agents that function as reasons. By hypothesis, the agent is unaware of the connection between the reason and their own psychological states. If the agent is unaware of these states, they cannot figure into deliberation.

Does this imply that we ought to understand reasons as facts after all? We might be inclined to conclude this since RP and RT represent the most mature phase of development for the concept of reasons. However, all that pragmatic genealogy definitively establishes is that sometimes it cannot be the agent's psychological states that are that agent's reasons. It does not establish that this is always the case. And we should emphasize that though RP and RT represent a development from the earlier two stages, in order to remain conceptually stable, they must still be able to discharge the same functions as the earlier concepts. Especially in the case of individual deliberation, this seemed to preserve a role for mental states as reasons.

To recap, there are aspects of our genealogy that seem to suggest to us that reasons are psychological states. There are aspects of our genealogy that seem to suggest that they are facts. Neither of these, however, is established definitively. Are we now just in the same position that

we were before? I think the answer to this is no. Just as we reframed our approached to the theory of reasons, we should reframe the way that we are thinking about what reasons are.

Up to this point, we have been expecting to receive an answer to that question that identifies reasons with one independently identifiable class of entity. I'm not quite sure that it would be correct to says that we were expecting to pick out a natural kind, but it does seem that we were looking for a class that could be understood as unified prior to our beginning to theorize about reasons. What I now suggest is that this was a mistake. When we center our understanding of reasons around fulfilling a function, we need to ask ourselves what kind of entities can fulfill that function. If it turns out that there are a variety of different classes of entity that can do so, then we should accept all these classes as capable of being reasons.

The result of allowing anything that can serve the function of a reason to be a reason is a stance I call Functionalist Pluralism. This position can accommodate both Psychologism and Factualism. The function of reasons is to enable coordination of beliefs and desire through intrapersonal and interpersonal deliberation in order to achieve the ends of the agent efficiently. Sometimes, this deliberation may call for facts. We saw that this is often the case when deliberating publicly because facts are useful from the perspective of interpersonal communication. Still, since we do often deliberate publicly using desire-based language, it seems plausible to say that this will not always be the case. At other times, deliberation may call for psychological states. We should not, however, feel pressure to conclude that facts and psychological states are the only things capable of being reasons. They are just what we have been most concerned with up to this point. Our new view holds that anything that that fulfills the function we outlined is able to be a reason.

There are two aspects of this position that may seem to conflict with what we have previously said. One of these is that an account that analyzes reasons would be preferable to an account that holds that reasons are unanalyzable. It may seem like there is a sense in which our account of reasons does hold them as unanalyzable. After all, Parfit and Scanlon admit that reasons count in favor of things, so an analysis of reasons might not be simply equivalent to articulating their practical role.[122] A significant difference in depth of explanation, however, is that Primitivists simply presuppose that reasons count in favor of something. We show that reasons have the practical role they do in relation to a specific structural need. This analysis allows us to address questions that Primitivists must simply dismiss. For example, we will shortly see that we can explain the normativity of reasons in relation to this need.

A second charge that could be raised against Functionalist Pluralism is that it does not give us a unified account of reasons. In Chapter One, we said that we would only accept a disjunctive or bifurcated account if it was impossible to offer a unified one. Well, it might be said, the account of reasons that we are here endorsing is surely disjunctive. It allows both facts and psychological states to count as reasons, as well as anything else that performs the requisite function. In virtue of this, Pluralism may even be worse off, since it has the potential to be even more disunified than an account that only supposes reasons are two different things.

However, there is a key difference between our Functionalist Pluralism and the disjunctive accounts we previously discussed. Those accounts analyzed reasons into conceptually distinct kinds because they were unable to find a corresponding class of entity that could serve as the basis for a unified account of reasons. The disadvantage of this approach was that in radically separating theoretical and practical reasons or normative and motivational reasons, we lost the

[122] Parfit (2011, p. 63) and Scanlon (1998, p. 17).

ability to give an insightful account of what it is that united them together in being reasons. Our functional analysis still allows us to give that united account. We can say what it is to be a reason. It is to fulfill the practical function of reasons in deliberation. We can then further specify how different kinds of reasons do this and contrast them with each other. So, Functionalist Pluralism does not come at the expense of unity or explanatory power.

5.3 Reasons and Motivation

Let us now apply our model to a second central question. We were concerned with determining the nature of the connection between reasons and motivation. Internalists about reasons held that there was some sort of tight necessary connection here. In a strong form, we might articulate this connection by saying that an agent only has a reason if that reason could presently motivate the action.[123] In a weaker, and more widely held form, we might say that an agent only has a reason if that reason would motivate the agent under some set of circumstance. These circumstances usually involve having the right sorts of relevant information or deliberating fully. In contrast, Externalists about reasons held that there was no connection of this sort between motivation and reasons. Something can be a reason even if could not possibly motivate the agent, now or in some other idealized counterfactual.

Again, our pragmatic model has something to say in favor of both counts. On the one hand, at both the individual and communal stages of deliberation, reasons for action are constrained by motivational states of the agent— that agent's desires or pro-attitudes. However, as we progress through the model this relationship becomes more complex. At first, it is straightforwardly a kind of internal balancing of what one wants with what is realizable and cost-effective. In the communal case, however, the balancing becomes more complex because it does not involve

[123] See Finlay and Schroeder (2017) for a detailed overview of Internalism and Externalism.

just the desires of one person. In that case, the parties consider reasons relevant to their ends together to jointly determine what should be done. The outcome of this deliberation is supposed to be the most efficient way of allowing each party to be at least partly satisfied. We discussed this satisfaction in terms of having to make the fewest and most minimal concession with regard to what each party desires.

It can be tempting to view the communal case as just a basic generalization of the first-person case, where we treat the community as if it were an individual. However, it is important not to forget that there are distinct agents involved. If we abstract away from this difference, we risk misconstruing the limiting cases of deliberatively enabled coordination. Because the function of this deliberation is to enable coordination that allows each agent to efficiently realize their ends, it cannot be that public deliberation characteristically leaves some party's ends unsatisfied. For that party, deliberation would not fulfill any need. They would therefore not have a need to enter into it. The more widespread this became, the more unstable the concept of reasons would become.

So, communal deliberation with reasons is at least bounded by the fact that typically some of the ends, in terms of desires, of each party must be appealed to. It cannot regularly ask any party to give something for nothing. There are several ways in which the outcome of deliberation can be mutually advantageous. One is that no party must fully give up any desires, but instead all are able to coordinate in a way that allows them to satisfy some ends. Another is that one or more parties do have to give up some ends in exchange for the possibility of satisfying other ends. It is also possible for a mixture of these two outcomes to take place, in which some ends are merely modified, while others are given up.

We might sum this up by saying that it is a paradigmatic feature of deliberation involving reasons for action that it appeals to the desires of both sides, even if the most minimal way of changing desires would involve one side giving up their entire position. The more ends appealed to on each side, the more likely it is that the deliberative process can be mutually persuasive and therefore fulfill the function of resolving potential conflict. The best chance for this will be if the outcome that the deliberation endorses provides, give or take, basically the same amount of satisfaction on both sides.

This model makes clear that the relationship between reason and motivation is not always as straightforward as the Internalist might take it to be. In cases of individual deliberation, it is indeed typically the case that the agent must have at least some desire that supports the outcome of deliberation. It would therefore also have to typically be the case that after deliberation, the agent would be motivated to act in accordance with the weight of reasons. In cases of communal deliberation, we saw that an agent will sometimes give up some of their desires. If what is under consideration is a complex action or plan, then this sort of compromise may mean that an individual has reasons to carry out parts of the action or plan that are not directly related to the content of any particular desire.

There are two caveats that we need to add to this. One is that when all that is under consideration is a simple action, i.e., action not significantly temporally extended and consisting of multiple interconnected but distinct parts, then it will be the case that the individual generally must have a desire that, after deliberation, is related in terms of content to the simple action. This is because in such cases there is no possibility of a complex trade-off, where a desire consistent with the agent's other desires is sacrificed entirely. For the agent to

do this, something must generally be gained in exchange, but since the action has no other parts that could provide this, it cannot be the case.

The other caveat is that there is still a sense in which the Internalist can claim victory in complex communal deliberation. For although the agent need not have a desire that is directly related to all facets of a complex action, the agent must usually have some desire that motivates the agent, after deliberation, towards the project as a whole. Since the nature of deliberation places pressure on an individual's reasons to be motivationally connected to a constitutive part of the project, there is a sense in which we can say the agent is motivationally connected to the whole.

It should be noted that our claims just now to a strong connection between reasons and motivation were qualified, appealing to what typically or characteristically must be the case. This is because our pragmatic genealogy reveals to us that although the original function of practical reasons is grounded in individual motivational states, in a communal context the concept will undergo objectivization because it is sometimes beneficial for an agent to be persuaded by others, even when they are unaware how this serves their ends. Typically, in the circumstances where this obtains, even if the agent is unaware of what motivational ends a reason serves, it will still be the case that there is a connection. That is the point of the fact that under certain circumstances, e.g., when the other person is very smart, it will be characteristically beneficial from the perspective of the agent's desires, to be persuaded on faith.

The possibility of external reasons appears, however, in the uncharacteristic instances in which the agent is persuaded in these circumstances, but it turns out to be the case that the outcome

endorsed by the reason was not beneficial from the perspective of the agent's desires. Because of the overall stability of the concept, these do genuinely count as reasons. Still, this cannot be the norm since this would mean that there would have been no drive towards objectivization in the first place. The concept of reasons would remain subjectively indexed. These are the marginal cases— exceptions that prove the rule. However, there existence makes it impossible to claim an unqualified victory for Internalism. Even though it is generally true that in order to have a reason, one must be able to be motivated by that reason (and there is a principled explanation for this), it is not true without exception. As a result, we do not have a neat, concise proposition that we can use to describe the relationship between motivation and reasons. Our genealogy reveals the relationship to be messier than that.

5.4 The Normativity of Reasons

Our final question is why the recommendations of reasons are supposed to have a force over us. Why is it the case that we *should* do what there is most reason to do? One way that we can answer this question is by giving an account of reasons that reduces or relates them to something that we already accept as normative. We saw in Chapter One that this was the strategy that many Factualist accounts took.[124] In a sense, this is the strategy that we will be employing as well. However, we will not be arguing that we ought to care about reasons in virtue of some other metaphysically prior entity like value that is itself inherently normative.

Instead, we will argue that we can vindicate regarding reasons as normative by tying them to a practical need. Indeed, this ability to engage in normative vindication is often seen as one of the hallmarks of pragmatic genealogy. It results from the fact that pragmatic genealogies describe their objects as emerging from structural needs, where these are typically both

[124] Broome (2006) and Kearns and Star (2009).

universal (or as universal as it is possible to be) and extremely basic to human practical activity. Thus, pragmatic genealogies rescue the normative endorsement of their objects by showing that we cannot do without them.

To see this, let us look in detail at an example of the vindicatory power of pragmatic genealogy. In doing so, we will also be able to provide an additional response to an objection from Chapter Four. That objection was that reasons might not have developed in response to a structural need, but rather in response to the interests of a specific in-group. I think that our genealogy itself gives us reason to reject the prudential interest analysis of reasons, and I will say a bit more about this below, after discussing how it vindicates normativity. Now, let's turn to the example.

Vindication is the primary aim of Bernard Williams's argument in *Truth and Truthfulness*. Williams takes as his target a group of people that he calls the "Deniers."[125] Deniers are characterized by their denial that truth and the practices associated with it, like truth-telling, are of any significance. Williams think that the first part of this stance is just a mistake. No philosophy can get off the ground without some notion of truth. Indeed, he even suggests that the possibility of using language presuppose knowing many propositions to be true.[126] Still, he thinks that the second portion of the Deniers' stance, that being truthful is important, is worth arguing against.

Williams begins by situating his investigation as an inquiry into the value of truthfulness. He then considers a primitive, abstract social situation, in which humans live in small

[125] Williams (2002, p. 10).
[126] Williams (2002, p. 10).

communities.[127] As we discussed previously, Williams thinks that humans in this situation will have a structural need for access to a variety of accurate information. Again, this need is supported by their all having their own ends, fueled by individual desires and wants. However, it is also a structural feature of the situation that some individuals have better access to some information than others. Sometimes this may be because some individuals are smarter, more observant, more sensitive, etc… but Williams is concerned with a more fundamental asymmetry. This asymmetry exists simply in virtue of individuals occupying different locations in space and time. Williams calls it a *purely positional advantage*.[128]

We have encountered positional advantages before. They play a major role in our everyday lives, but also in the daily life of the subjects of William's genealogy. For instance, some members of the community may be in a better position to know where food is, merely in virtue of having walked by food. Or they may be better positioned to know the location of a potential threat because they are in a watchtower or at the top of a tree. Because everyone has a different set of informational needs necessary to service their ends and because there is always at least a purely positional disparity in access to this information, it will be beneficial to everyone for there to be a common pool of information to draw from. Williams then points out two important virtues of character related to truthfulness that are necessary for this pool to fulfill its function. One, sincerity, is that individuals must be inclined to publicly express their genuine beliefs. The other, accuracy, is that individuals must in the first place gather correct beliefs.

Since these two virtues of truthfulness are necessary to fulfilling a functional need inherent in all social communities above a certain size, Williams thinks it vindicates the importance of

[127] Williams (2002, Ch. 3).
[128] Williams (2002, p. 36).

truthfulness against the Deniers.[129] Because the structural need he describes is broad enough that it is a need in all communities, there is no community that can get by, as the Deniers suggest, without valuing truthfulness.

Our genealogy mirrors the structure of Williams's. We have shown that there is a set of extremely basic needs that deliberation in terms of reasons is necessary to satisfy. Indeed, we go even further than Williams. Williams's account is limited to social communities. In our pragmatic genealogy, we showed that the needs that ultimately give rise to the concept of reasons emerge even in lone, isolated individuals. Granted, if we were not communal creatures, the concept would not have developed as it did. Still, this shows that the fundamental needs grounding reasons are utterly inescapable. It just is the case that insofar as we care about anything else, we must care about reasons. Nor can we go about any practical activity without regarding them as normative.

But once we recognize this fact, we can also see the futility of the special interest account of reasons. On the one hand, if that account were true, we would not expect reasons to be so broadly beneficial. On the other hand, even if some sense in which the position that reasons privilege a select group could be defended, there is nothing to be done about this. The other needs that reasons satisfy are too important to jettison the concept. Our genealogy shows that we cannot get rid of reasons, so it is pointless to hope to.

[129] Williams (2002, p. 46-8) makes an important point in addition to this. He argues that if we conceive of the virtues of accuracy and sincerity in purely functional terms, we leave out something because these virtues depend for their effectiveness on being construed as intrinsically valuable. From the perspective of any individual, there are often "free-rider" cases in which it will be better for everyone else to be accurate and sincere and for them not to be. In order to prevent the serial withholding of information, people must conceive of the virtues of truthfulness as important for their own sake. See Queloz (2018b) for further discussion of self-effacing functions.

5.5 Meeting the Constraints

From the answers we have just given to our guiding questions, it is not too difficult to see how our Functionalist Pluralist account of reasons could meet the three constraints that we laid out in Chapter One. However, it is worth being clear about this since it constitutes a major advantage of our approach. As we just discussed the normativity of reasons, we will begin with the Normative Constraint.

The Normative Constraint asked us to explain where the force of reasons comes from and articulate a response to the question of why we should care about them. The answer is that it comes from the structural need that it is the function of reasons to discharge. This need is extremely basic, so the normativity of reasons can be expected to be binding on essentially everyone. To not respond to the reasons one has is to sabotage one's ability to meet one's own needs.

Now let us examine the Motivational and Explanatory Constraints. The former of these was deeply related to an earlier discussion in this chapter. The Motivational Constraint asks us to explain how it is possible for reasons to characteristically motivate agents. The answer that we can give to this is that reasons characteristically motivate agents because what counts as a reason, according to Functionalist Pluralism, is conditioned by the agent's motivational psychology. Agents are typically motivated by reasons because reasons typically serve the end of helping agents achieve their desires, which are undisputed sources of motivation. The caveat to this is that Functionalist Pluralism does not rescue a necessary connection between reasons and motivation. We saw in Section Three that though they represent margin cases, external reasons are possible.

Since we did not previously discuss it in this chapter, we need to put a bit more effort into detailing how Functionalist Pluralism meets the Explanatory Constraint. The Explanatory Constraint requires us to explain how it is that reasons can be rationalizing explanations for actions and beliefs. Since this constraint has two components, let's address each part separately. We can see how it is possible for practical reasons to explain action as a corollary of meeting the Motivational Constraint. Reasons are typically able to motivate agents. As per Davidson, motives are able to provide causal explanations for actions.[130] Therefore, reasons are typically able to provide causal explanations for actions. Again, we note that this comes with a caveat, in which reasons are not able to provide causal explanations in the case of defective external reasons.

Now, let's consider how theoretical reasons can explain beliefs. We said in Chapter One that the kind of rational explanation we are looking for with regard to beliefs is not an explanation in terms of what causes us to adopt the belief, but rather what justifies us in doing so.[131] This coheres with our other observation that beliefs are formed involuntarily. Since the aim of belief is truth, what we want is to have an explanation of beliefs in terms of reasons that relates them favorably to truth.

According to Factualist Pluralism, reasons for belief are entities that count towards having a belief in deliberation. The need for such entities resulted from the fact that we need beliefs about the world in order to achieve our ends. However, we do not need just any beliefs. These beliefs have to be true if they are to be helpful. Therefore, Factualist Pluralism requires that reasons for belief correlate with the likelihood of the belief being true. In Chapter Three, we

[130] Davidson (2001).
[131] See Ch 1.2.

primarily examined this in terms of experiences that are qualitatively similar to experiences that have accurately represented the world in the past and testimony that is both trustworthy and accurate. Since, according to Factualist Pluralism, reasons for belief must have this positive relationship to truth, we can see how they can serve as rationalizing explanations.

5.6 Conclusion

Having now shown how a pragmatic genealogy allows us to answer our three important questions and offer an account of reasons that meets all the necessary constraints, I would like to conclude this last chapter by reflecting on the aptness of pragmatic genealogy for this project. I said in an earlier chapter that I was initially drawn to pragmatic genealogy by the analogy that I saw between the dialectical condition of the theory of reasons and the state of epistemology at the time that Edward Craig was writing. However, it now seems to me that we can articulate a more principled reason for why pragmatic genealogy is an especially appropriate methodology to apply in our circumstance.

As we have seen, the crux of our issue in the theory of reasons was that we were having trouble developing an account that was at once both normative and explanatory. But by their essential nature, pragmatic genealogies are models that link normativity and function. When pragmatic genealogies are vindicatory, they link an object of investigation to a legitimate structural need. They therefore at once explain the function of that object and rescue its normativity. By then identifying the function of reasons as involving entities with the potential to explain actions, e.g., desires, and beliefs, e.g., quality experiences and testimony, we were thus able to forge a link between reasons explanation and normativity. Our choice of function allowed us to bridge the gap that we had been struggling with using standard means. The overall lesson that we might draw from this is that whenever we need to bridge an explanatory and normative gap,

we should consider an appeal to pragmatic genealogy. Of course, this does not mean pragmatic genealogy will be appropriate in every circumstance, but it does suggest that it may be more widely applicable than is now recognized.

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