

Reasons or Fittingness First?

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Conor McHugh and Jonathan Way argue that we should put fittingness rather than reasons first because we can provide an account of the evaluative in terms of the normative only if we put fittingness rather than reasons first. I argue that it is no more difficult to provide an account of the evaluative in terms of the normative if we put reasons rather than fittingness first.

Many different attitudes including beliefs, desires, and admiration can be fitting or un-fitting. For instance: it is fitting for us to admire virtuous people because admiration fits their admirable qualities; but it is not fitting for us to admire evil people because admiration does not fit their qualities; and it is fitting for us to believe that the earth is billions of years old because this belief fits our evidence.¹ In ‘Fittingness First’ Conor McHugh and Jonathan Way argue that we should see ‘fittingness as the basic normative property from which the rest of the normative and the evaluative domain is constructed’.² Call this view *FF*. If we accept *FF*, then we hold that the property of being a normative reason can be reductively analyzed in terms of fittingness. McHugh and Way’s argument for *FF* is that we should accept *FF* rather than an alternative to *FF*, namely the reasons-first (*RF*) view. According to *RF*, ‘reasons are the basic normative unit, and the rest of the normative and evaluative domain [including fittingness] can be understood in terms of reasons’.³

McHugh and Way argue that

- (1) If we accept *FF*, we can plausibly analyze the evaluative in terms of the normative.
- (2) If we accept *RF*, we *cannot* plausibly analyze the evaluative in terms of the normative.
- (3) We should accept an account of the basic normative property that enables us to analyze the evaluative in terms of the normative.

So,

¹ For further discussion of the nature of fittingness see McHugh and Way (2016: 595-602).

² *ibid.* 576

³ *ibid.*

(4) We should accept *FF* rather than *RF*.⁴

I'll assume that (3) holds.⁵ McHugh and Way's argument for (1) and (2) concerns the wrong kind of reason (WKR) problem. If we accept *RF* and analyze the evaluative in terms of the normative, we accept

The Buck-Passing Account of Value (BPA). For *X* to be good is for there to be sufficient reason for everyone to have pro-attitudes towards *X* (such as to desire or admire *X*).⁶

But BPA seems to produce too much value because there are cases in which we seem to have sufficient reason to have a pro-attitude towards *X* but in which *X* is not of value. For instance, suppose that an evil demon will punish us if we do not admire it. We have sufficient reason to admire the demon. So, BPA entails that the demon is of value. But the demon is not of value. So, BPA produces too much value. The WKR problem is the problem of revising BPA in a way that ensures that it does not produce too much value in cases like this one.⁷

Regarding (1), McHugh and Way argue that if we accept *FF*, we can endorse

The Fitting-Attitude Account of Value (FA). For *X* to be of value is for *X* to be a fitting object of pro-attitudes.⁸

And FA does not face the WKR problem, or any similar too much value problem, that BPA faces. This is because it does not seem that it is fitting to admire the demon when the demon will punish

⁴ *ibid.* 580-584. There is an alternative to both *FF* and *RF*, namely a no-priority view according to which the property of being a normative reason cannot be reductively analysed in terms of fittingness but neither can the property of fittingness be reductively analysed in terms of the property of being a normative reason. However, if McHugh and Way's argument were successful, we would have good reason to accept *FF* rather than such a no-priority view. For McHugh and Way argue that we can explain the following necessary connection, which requires explanation, only if we accept *FF*:

Response Condition. *R* is a reason for us to ϕ only if *R* is the sort of thing that we could ϕ on the basis of.

See §2 below

⁵ See *ibid.* 577-580.

⁶ *ibid.* 577.

⁷ See Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2004).

⁸ McHugh and Way (2016: 583)

us if we do not admire it. So, although BPA seems to produce too much value in the evil demon case FA does not.⁹ So,

(1) If we accept *FF*, we can plausibly analyze the evaluative in terms of the normative.

As McHugh and Way explain, there are two types of responses to the WKR problem for BPA. The first response attempts to *solve* the WKR problem by, first, distinguishing between right kind of reasons for pro-attitudes, which are both reasons for everyone to have pro-attitudes towards an object and features of that object that make it of value, and wrong kind of reasons, which are reasons for everyone to have pro-attitudes towards an object but are not features of that object that make it good. And then, second, revising BPA to analyze value in terms of right kind of reasons for pro-attitudes.¹⁰ The second response attempts to *dissolve* the WKR problem by arguing that although there seem to be reasons for us to (for instance) admire the demon when it will punish us if we do not, this seeming is illusory for there are *really* no reasons *to admire* the demon but only reasons for us to *want to admire* the demon and *to bring it about that we* admire the demon.¹¹ McHugh and Way argue that there are serious problems with both types of responses to the WKR problem. And because of these serious problems there is a good case that

(2.1) We cannot *solve* the WKR problem; and

(2.2) We cannot *dissolve* the WKR problem.

And if both (2.1) and (2.2) hold, then it follows that

(2) If we accept *RF*, we cannot plausibly analyze the evaluative in terms of the normative.

In this paper I show that McHugh and Way's case for (2) either does not establish (2) or establishes (2) but at the cost of undermining (1). Either way, McHugh and Way do not show that we have reason to accept *FF* rather than *RF* and do not show that it is more difficult to provide an account of the evaluative in terms of the normative if we put reasons rather than fittingness first.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.* 581

¹¹ *ibid.* 580-581

I

Firstly, McHugh and Way's case for (2.1)—that is, the claim that we cannot *solve* the WKR problem—is not as strong as it might seem. McHugh and Way claim that all attempts to *solve* the WKR problem by distinguishing between right and wrong kinds of reasons for pro-attitudes are either (i) circular, (ii) vulnerable to counter-examples, or (iii) so complicated that they make BPA far less attractive.¹² But one type of extant solution to the WKR problem—to which there is no response in the literature—does not seem to fit into any of the above three categories. This extant solution holds that we should distinguish between right and wrong kinds of reasons for pro-attitudes in terms of additional consequences.¹³

We can *characterize* the additional consequences of our ϕ -ing in the following way:

Additional Consequences. Additional consequences of our ϕ -ing are consequences of our ϕ -ing that would not have obtained if we did not ϕ and are consequences of our ϕ -ing in addition to our ϕ -ing.

To understand *Additional Consequences*, suppose that I inadvertently leave the refrigerator open all day whilst I'm at work. There are several consequences of my doing this including:

- (a) The fact that the milk will no longer be cold when I get home;
- (b) The fact that I have left the refrigerator open all day, since everything is a consequence of itself; and
- (c) The fact that $2+2=4$, which is a logical consequence of everything.

Additional Consequences' characterization of additional consequences intuitively entails that (a) is an additional consequence of my leaving the refrigerator open all day but (b) and (c) are not additional consequences of my leaving the refrigerator open all day. To be clear, A 's ϕ -ing is not an *additional*

¹² *ibid.* 581

¹³ See [REDACTED 1] and Samuelsson (2013).

consequence of A 's ϕ -ing according to *Additional Consequences*, although A 's ϕ -ing is a (mere) consequence of A 's ϕ -ing.¹⁴

Now take *a fact about the additional consequences of an act* to be a fact about an act and its additional consequences. One way of stating a fact about the additional consequences of an act ϕ , for instance, is to claim that if we ϕ d, then X would happen where X is an additional consequence of our ϕ -ing. For instance, the claim, 'if I leave the refrigerator open all day, the milk will no longer be cold when I get home' states a fact about the additional consequences of my leaving the refrigerator open all day. This is because it is an additional consequence of my leaving the refrigerator open all day that the milk will no longer be cold when I get home.

It seems that

- (I) Wrong kinds of reasons for us to have pro-attitudes are reasons for us to have pro-attitudes that are provided or enabled by facts about the additional consequences of our having these pro-attitudes.

For instance, it seems that the fact that *provides* us with a reason to admire a demon when it will punish us if we do not admire it is that we will avoid punishment if we admire the demon. And if this fact is the fact that provides the reason for us to admire the demon, then it is a fact about the additional consequences of our admiring the demon that provides the reason for us to admire it. For the fact that we will avoid punishment if we admire the demon is a fact about the additional consequences of our admiring the demon (since our avoiding punishment is an additional consequence of our admiring the demon).

Some hold that a wrong kind of reason to admire the demon when it will punish us if we do not admire it is provided by the property that the demon has of being such that by admiring it we will avoid punishment.¹⁵ And it might not be obvious that the fact that the demon has the

¹⁴ It has been put to me that we should not accept a solution to the WKR problem that relies on *Additional Consequences* because *Additional Consequences* is a definition of additional consequences made in counterfactual terms and counterfactual analyses generally fail or commit the conditional fallacy. However, *Additional Consequences* is a characterization of a notion that we have a grasp on rather than a definition of that notion. And just as we should not reject the view that certain things cause other things just because the counterfactual account of causation is false, we should not reject the view that there are distinct additional consequences of acts just because a counterfactual account of additional consequences is false.

¹⁵ See Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2004: 406-408).

property of being such that by admiring it we will avoid punishment is a fact about the additional consequences of our admiring the demon. But the reason to admire the demon that is provided by the property that the demon has of being such that by admiring it we would avoid punishment is *enabled* by a fact about the additional consequences of our admiring the demon. A consideration *E* enables a reason *R* if *E* makes it the case that *R* provides a reason without *E* thereby providing a reason itself. For instance, the fact that my promise was not made under duress is not a reason for me to keep my promise. But I would have no reason to keep my promise if my promise was made under duress, so the fact that my promise was not made under duress enables the reason for me to keep my promise.¹⁶ Now if the property that the demon has of being such that by admiring it we would avoid punishment is a reason for us to admire it, then this reason is enabled by the fact, which *is* a fact about the additional consequences of our admiring the demon, that by admiring it we would avoid punishment. This is because the fact that the demon is such that by admiring it we would avoid punishment would not be a reason to admire the demon if it were not the case that an additional consequence of our admiring the demon were our avoiding punishment.

Similarly, some might claim that when the demon will punish us if we do not admire it, the fact that the demon will punish us if we do not admire it makes other facts about the demon into reasons to admire it that would not have otherwise been (sufficient) reasons to admire it such as the fact that the demon is powerful.¹⁷ In this case the (sufficient) reason for us to admire the demon is not provided by a fact that is a fact about the additional consequences of our admiring the demon. For the fact that the demon is powerful is not a fact about the additional consequences of our admiring the demon. But in this case the (sufficient) reason to admire the demon (that the demon is powerful) is enabled by a fact about the additional consequences of our admiring the demon. This is because the fact that is a reason to admire the demon (that the demon is powerful) would not be a (sufficient) reason for us to admire the demon if it weren't the case that by admiring the demon we avoid punishment by the demon. (And the fact that by admiring the demon we would avoid punishment is a fact about the additional consequences of our admiring the demon).

It also seems that

¹⁶ See Dancy (2004: 39).

¹⁷ See [REDACTED 2].

(II) Right kinds of reasons for us to have pro-attitudes are not reasons for us to have pro-attitudes that are provided or enabled by facts about the additional consequences of our having these pro-attitudes.

Our reasons of the right kind to admire kind, generous, and creative people are not provided by facts about the additional consequences of our admiring them and our reasons of the right kind to desire things that are good are not provided by facts about the additional consequences of our desiring these things: the kindness and creativity of kind and creative people provide us with reasons to admire them and the nature of freedom, equality, achievement, and pleasure provide us with reasons to desire these things. And our reasons of the right kind to admire kind and generous people and to desire freedom, equality, and pleasure are not enabled by facts about the additional consequences of our admiring and desiring these things; for we would have reasons of the right kind to admire kind and generous people and to desire freedom, equality, and pleasure even if there were no good additional consequences to our admiring and desiring these things.

Given (I) and (II) we can solve the WKR problem by holding:

WKR Additional Consequences. R is a wrong kind of reason for A to have pro-attitude P iff R is provided or enabled by a fact about the additional consequences of A's having P.¹⁸

And holding

BPA RKR. For X to be good is for there to be sufficient *right kind of reason* for us to have pro-attitudes towards X.¹⁹

The combination of *WKR Additional Consequences* and *BPA RKR* provides an intuitive solution to the WKR problem. Intuitively it seems that what distinguishes the reason to admire the demon from right kind of reasons, such as reasons to admire heroic people, is that demon-related reasons are pragmatic reasons for pro-attitudes; it seems that they are reasons to have these pro-attitudes because of the good consequences of having these attitudes.²⁰ *WKR Additional Consequences* preserves this intuitive view. The combination of *WKR Additional Consequences* and *BPA RKR* does

¹⁸ It seems that a parallel account of wrong kind of reasons for con-attitudes is plausible.

¹⁹ Take right kind of reasons for pro-attitudes to be considerations that are reasons for everyone to have pro-attitudes and that are not WKR for pro-attitudes.

²⁰ See Danielsson and Olson (2007: 512-514) and Way (2012: 491).

not render the buck-passing account circular and is not remotely ad-hoc or artificial. And elsewhere I (and others) have defended views along the lines of the combination of *WKR Additional Consequences* and *BPA RKR* from several objections that have been made to somewhat similar proposals.²¹ So, it seems that McHugh and Way do not establish that

(2.1) We cannot *solve* the WKR problem.

And if McHugh and Way do not establish (2.1), then they do not establish that

(2) If we accept *RF*, we cannot plausibly analyze the evaluative in terms of the normative.

In the remainder of this section I will discuss three objections to the combination of *WKR Additional Consequences* and *BPA RKR*.²² Firstly, it might be argued that *WKR Additional Consequences* produces no right kind of reasons for pro-attitudes because we would not have reasons to desire pleasure, for instance, if it were not the case that by desiring pleasure we desire something that we have reason to desire. And the fact that by desiring pleasure we desire something that we have reason to desire is a fact about the additional consequences of our desiring pleasure.

However, call the relevant two facts here

D1. By desiring pleasure we would be desiring something that we have reason to desire; and

D2. There is a reason for us to desire pleasure.

D1 does not enable *D2*. This is because enablers seem to be the kind of thing that figure in a positive explanation of why a consideration is (or was) a reason for us to ϕ .²³ But *D1* does not figure in an explanation of *D2* because *D1* is just another way of stating *D2*.

²¹ See [REDACTED 1] and Samuelsson (2013).

²² Remember that *WKR Additional Consequences* is only an account of wrong kind of reasons for pro-attitudes. Where, as I explained in the introduction above, wrong kind of reasons for pro-attitudes are reasons for everyone to have pro-attitudes towards an object but are not features of that object that make it good.

²³ See, for instance, Väyrynen (forthcoming).

Secondly, it might seem that *WKR Additional Consequences* overgenerates wrong kind of reasons for pro-attitudes; that is, it might seem that *WKR Additional Consequences* entails that some reasons that are right kind of reasons for pro-attitudes are in fact wrong kind of reasons for pro-attitudes. Consider the following two cases

Suppose that if I admire Modest Millie, she will find out and become embarrassed. It is perfectly plausible that this is an admirable feature of hers. It is a [right kind of] reason to admire her.

Suppose that if I disapprove of Angry Andrea she will fly into a rage and throw her shoe through the plate glass window. This is a perfectly fine, right kind of reason to disapprove of her.

These right kind of reasons to have pro-/con-attitudes are provided or enabled by facts about the additional consequences of our having these attitudes. So, some right kind of reasons to have pro-attitudes and con-attitudes are provided or enabled by facts about the additional consequences of our having these pro-/con-attitudes. So, *WKR Additional Consequences* is false.²⁴

It seems to me that we can overcome this objection by adopting

*WKR Additional Consequences**. R is a wrong kind of reason for *A* to have pro-attitude *P* iff R is provided or enabled by a fact about the additional consequences of *A* in particular's having *P*.

To clarify, for a reason R for *A* to ϕ to be provided or enabled by a fact *F* about the additional consequences of *A* in particular's ϕ -ing is for (i) R to be provided or enabled by *F* and (ii) R's status as a reason for *A* to ϕ to be contingent on *F*'s being a fact about the additional consequences of *A*'s ϕ -ing rather than someone else's ϕ -ing. Perhaps the easiest way of understanding what I have in mind here is to see that there is a reason for me to admire the demon when it will punish someone if I do not admire it only because the demon will punish someone if I do not admire it; there would be no reason for me to admire the demon if the demon's punishing someone were only tied to someone's else's admiring/failing to admire it. So, in this case (i) the reason for me to admire the demon is provided or enabled by the fact that

P. The demon will punish someone if I do not admire it.

²⁴ An anonymous referee put this objection to me via these cases, which I quote from their report.

And (ii) the fact that there is a reason for me to admire the demon in this case is contingent upon *P*'s being a fact about the additional consequences of *my* admiring the demon/failing to admire it rather than *someone else's* admiring it/failing to admire it.

Now the fact that there is a reason for me to admire Modest Mille cannot be contingent upon the fact that she will become embarrassed if *I*—rather than someone else—admire her. For Millie is admirable regardless of whether she will become embarrassed if *I*—in particular—admire her or not; Millie would be just as admirable if she became embarrassed by someone else (like me, or who occupies a position regarding her similar to mine) admiring her. And in this case the right kind of reason for me to admire her is not provided or enabled by a fact about the additional consequences of *my* admiring her in particular. So, *WKR Additional Consequences** does not entail that some right kind of reasons to admire modest Millie are in fact wrong kind of reasons to admire her.²⁵ The same move can be made regarding Andrea's case: we have reason to disapprove of Andrea regardless of whether Andrea will fly into a rage if *we in particular* disapprove of her or not, for Andrea would merit our disapproval to just the same degree if her rage would be prompted by someone else. So, the right kind of reason to disapprove of Andrea is not provided or enabled by a fact about the additional consequences of *our* disapproving of Andrea in particular. So, *WKR Additional Consequences** does not overgenerate wrong kinds of reasons.

Revising *WKR Additional Consequences* to *WKR Additional Consequences** does not involve revising *WKR Additional Consequences* very much; I think of *WKR Additional Consequences** as really only a clarification of *WKR Additional Consequences*. And *WKR Additional Consequences** fits with all other cases of right and wrong kinds of reasons to have pro-attitudes: the wrong kind of reason for *A* to desire a saucer of mud for its own sake when a demon will punish someone if *A* does not desire the saucer of mud is provided or enabled by a fact about the additional consequences

²⁵ Suppose that Millie would be embarrassed only by John's admiring her but that this fact about her is still a right kind of reason to admire her. *WKR Additional Consequences** does not entail that John's reason to admire Millie is a wrong kind of reason to admire her because John's reason to admire her is not contingent on the fact that Millie would be embarrassed by his (John's) admiring her; John would have just as good a reason to admire Millie even if she would only be embarrassed by Don's admiring her (in particular) rather than John's admiring her (in particular). (Suppose that John is Millie's father, or that John is the most virtuous person in the world such that it is particularly admirable for Millie to be embarrassed by his admiring her. However, that John is Millie's father/the most virtuous person in the world does not provide or enable the reason for John to admire her. For in these cases the fact that Millie would be embarrassed by her father's admiring her is just as good a reason for everyone to admire her regardless of whether they are her father and the fact that Millie would be embarrassed by the admiration of the most virtuous person in the world is just as strong a reason for everyone who is not the most virtuous person in the world to admire Millie). See also [REDACTED 2].

of A in particular's desiring a saucer of mud for its own sake; and our right kind of reasons to desire happiness and friendship and to admire the virtuous are not provided by facts about the additional consequences of our desiring happiness and friendship and our admiring the virtuous (respectively). So, we can overcome the problem with *WKR Additional Consequences* presented by cases like Millie's and Andrea's by revising it to *WKR Additional Consequences**.²⁶

Thirdly, [REDACTED] has presented me with the following objection to the combination of *WKR Additional Consequences** and *BPA RKR*. Suppose that I have promised to admire the demon. In this case, the fact that I promised to admire the demon is a reason for me to admire the demon but the demon is not of value. And the fact that I promised to admire the demon is not a fact about the additional consequences of my admiring the demon. And so, it seems that the combination of *WKR Additional Consequences** and *BPA RKR* implausibly entails that the demon is of value in this case.

Although cases like [REDACTED]'s do present a problem for the combination of *WKR Additional Consequences** and *BPA RKR* it doesn't seem to me that this problem is insurmountable. To see this first note that the notion of an *additional consequence* should not be restricted to the notion of an *additional causal consequence*. One reason for not restricting additional consequences of ϕ -ing to additional causal consequences of ϕ -ing is that when I explained the notion of an additional consequence of ϕ -ing I explained this notion in relation to not only other causal consequences of ϕ -ing but also other non-causal consequences of ϕ -ing. For, as I explained, one non-additional consequence of my leaving the refrigerator open all day is that $2+2=4$ because $2+2=4$ is a consequence of everything. But $2+2=4$ is not a *causal* consequence of everything; $2+2=4$ is rather a *logical* consequence of everything. Another reason for not understanding

²⁶ Consider the following case:

Destroy. A demon will destroy the entire world unless everyone in the world (including me) admires it.

It might seem that in *Destroy* the reason for me to admire the demon is not provided by a fact about the additional consequences of my admiring the demon *in particular*. So, *WKR Additional Consequences** entails that my reason to admire the demon in *Destroy* is a WKR.

However, above I explained that a reason R for A to ϕ is provided or enabled by a fact F about the additional consequences of A in particular's ϕ -ing iff (i) R is provided or enabled by F and (ii) R 's status as a reason for A to ϕ is contingent on F 's being a fact about the additional consequences of A 's ϕ -ing rather than someone else's ϕ -ing. And in *Destroy* the reason for me to admire the demon is contingent upon the fact that the demon will destroy the world if I do not admire it; if the demon would destroy the world if and only if my friends did not admire it—if the demon didn't care about whether I admired it or not—there would be no reason for me to admire the demon. So, *WKR Additional Consequences** does not entail that my reason to admire the demon in *Destroy* is not a WKR.

additional consequences as merely *additional causal consequences* is that some consequences of acts that seem to intuitively be additional consequences are not causal consequences. For instance, suppose that Jill marries Jack. It seems that an additional consequence of Jill's marrying Jack is that Jack is no longer a bachelor. But this additional consequence of Jill's marrying Jack is not a causal consequence of Jill's marrying Jack, for what it is to no longer be a bachelor is just to no longer be an un-married man. In light of the Jack and Jill case I suggest that

Non-Causal Additional Consequences. *Y* is a non-causal additional consequence of *X* if *Y* is not a causal consequence of *X*, *Y* is a consequence of *X*, *Y* would not have obtained if it were not for *X*, and *Y* is not identical to *X*.

Now with *Non-Causal Additional Consequences* in mind, let's return to [REDACTED's] promise to admire the demon case. Given *Non-Causal Additional Consequences*, the reason for me to admire the demon when I have promised to admire the demon is *enabled by* a fact about the additional consequences of my admiring the demon. This is because one of the non-causal additional consequences of my admiring the demon if I have promised to admire the demon is that I keep my promise. For the fact that I keep my promise to admire the demon is (i) a consequence of my admiring the demon, (ii) a fact that would not have obtained had I not admired the demon, and (iii) a fact that is not identical to the fact that I admire the demon. And the combination of *Non-Causal Additional Consequences* and the fact that that I keep my promise to admire the demon is (i-iii) entails that my keeping my promise is a non-causal additional consequence of my admiring the demon. So, the fact that by admiring the demon I would keep my promise is a fact about the additional consequences of my admiring the demon. And the fact that by admiring the demon I would keep my promise must at least enable the reason for me to admire the demon because if by admiring the demon I would not keep my promise, I would have no reason to admire the demon. So, it does not follow from the combination of *WKR Additional Consequences** and *BPA RKR* that if we have promised to admire the demon, then the demon is of value because our reason to admire the demon when we have promised to admire it is enabled by facts about the additional consequences of our admiring the demon.

Perhaps some will find *Non-Causal Additional Consequences* unattractive or counter-intuitive. But I cannot see any serious problems with *Non-Causal Additional Consequences*. Whereas holding *Non-Causal Additional Consequences* allows us to solve the wrong kind of reason problem, which

provides us with a clear theoretical benefit. And where the theoretical benefit is high and the costs are low, we should take the theoretical benefit over the costs. So, I do not think that the costs of my response to [REDACTED's] objection are too high for the combination of *WKR Additional Consequences** and *BPA RKR* to bear. Finally, much of my response to [REDACTED's] objection has simply followed from holding that non-causal consequences of ϕ -ing can be additional consequences of ϕ -ing. So, those who want to reject the combination of *WKR Additional Consequences** and *BPA RKR* because they do not find what I've said in response to [REDACTED's] objection plausible must explain why non-causal additional consequences of ϕ -ing cannot be additional consequences of ϕ -ing and I cannot see how such an explanation could be provided. So, it seems to me that satisfactory responses to all the objections to the combination of *WKR Additional Consequences** and *BPA RKR* that I have been presented with and that I can imagine can be provided.

II

My second and main issue with McHugh and Way's argument concerns their case for

(2.2) We cannot *dissolve* the WKR problem.

In support of (2.2) McHugh and Way argue that attempts to dissolve the WKR problem by claiming that there is no reason to admire the demon when it will punish us if we do not admire it face a serious explanatory debt that they cannot discharge. Namely attempts to dissolve the WKR problem owe us an account of *why* it is that there is no reason to admire the demon when the demon will punish us if we do not admire it. As McHugh and Way explain, one attractive explanation of why there is no reason to admire the demon is that the supposed reason to admire the demon in this case—that the demon will punish us if we do not admire it—is not a consideration on the basis of which *we could* admire the demon. And,

Response Condition. R is a reason for us to ϕ only if R is the sort of thing that we could ϕ on the basis of.

So, there is no reason for us to admire the demon because we cannot admire the demon for the reason that it will punish us if we do not admire it and *Response Condition* holds.²⁷

But according to McHugh and Way, if attempts to dissolve the WKR problem need to explain why there is no reason to admire the demon and they explain this by reference to *Response Condition*, then attempts to dissolve the WKR problem need to explain *Response Condition*. The obvious candidate for explaining why *Response Condition* holds is that *Response Condition* states a fact about the nature of reasons. But McHugh and Way claim that if reasons are basic, as proponents of *RF* hold, then it is hard to see how anything about their nature could explain *Response Condition*. So, according to McHugh and Way, if we hold *RF* and we try to explain *Response Condition* via recourse to the nature of reasons, we do not really explain *Response Condition* at all but merely posit a brute truth about reasons. But *Response Condition* states a necessary connection, which calls for explanation, between reasons to ϕ and considerations on the basis of which we can ϕ . And, according to McHugh and Way, it is an extremely serious cost of a view, which renders that view implausible, if it relies on a necessary connection—which calls for explanation—that it cannot explain.²⁸

However, if we accept *FA* (the fitting attitude account of value) and *FF* (the view that fittingness is the basic normative property) and claim that it is not fitting for us to admire a demon when it will punish us if we do not admire it, then we are committed to another necessary connection that calls for explanation, namely

Not Pragmatic. Necessarily, when ϕ -ing is a pro-attitude, such as admiration, the (good or bad) consequences of ϕ -ing do not bear on the fittingness of ϕ -ing.

So, it seems that

(A) The combination of *FF* and *FA* entails a necessary connection that demands explanation, namely *Not Pragmatic*.

(A) seems to hold because *FA* is plausible only if *Not Pragmatic* holds. For if *Not Pragmatic* does not hold, then *FA* will generate too much value, as there will be cases in which *X* is not of value but

²⁷ McHugh and Way (2016: 582)

²⁸ *ibid.*

it is fitting to have pro-attitudes towards X due to the good consequences of having pro-attitudes towards X . (For instance, if *Not Pragmatic* does not hold, there will be cases in which a demon is not of value but in which it is fitting for us to admire this demon due to the benefits that a demon will confer upon us for admiring it).

Now,

(B) Either proponents of FF can explain *Not Pragmatic* or they cannot;

And it seems to me that

(C) If proponents of FF can explain *Not Pragmatic*, then proponents of RF must similarly be able to explain *Response Condition*.

(C) seems plausible because just as it seems that the only way for proponents of RF to explain *Response Condition* is via recourse to a brute truth about the nature of reasons it seems that the only way for proponents of FF to explain *Not Pragmatic* is via recourse to a brute truth about the nature of fittingness.

But if proponents of FF can plausibly explain *Not Pragmatic* via recourse to a brute truth about the nature of fittingness, then proponents of RF must similarly be able to plausibly explain *Response Condition* via recourse to a brute truth about the nature of reasons. So, if proponents of FF can explain *Not Pragmatic*, then McHugh and Way do not establish that

(2) If we accept RF , we *cannot* plausibly analyse the evaluative in terms of the normative.

However,

(D) If proponents of FF *cannot* explain *Not Pragmatic*, then proponents of RF cannot explain *Response Condition*; but to the extent that RF is implausible because it cannot explain *Response Condition* FF is implausible because it cannot explain *Not Pragmatic*.

(D) seems plausible because, as I argued in support of (A), the combination of FF and FA is plausible only if *Not Pragmatic* holds. So, if the fact that RF and BPA entail but cannot explain a

necessary connection that calls for explanation (namely *Response Condition*) undermines *RF*, then similarly the fact that *FF* and *FA* entail but cannot explain a necessary connection that calls for explanation (namely *Not Pragmatic*) must undermine *FF*.

But given (D), if proponents of *FF* cannot explain *Not Pragmatic*, then either (1) is false or McHugh and Way's argument for (2) does not succeed. Remember that McHugh and Way claim that (2) holds because, firstly, since BPA is plausible only if *Response Condition* holds we should hold that

RF Must Explain. Proponents of *RF* must be able to explain *Response Condition* in order to plausibly analyse the evaluative in terms of the normative.

And, secondly, proponents of *RF* cannot explain *Response Condition*. But consider

FF Must Explain. Proponents of *FF* must be able to explain *Not Pragmatic* in order to plausibly analyse the evaluative in terms of the normative.

It seems that if *RF Must Explain* holds, then *FF Must Explain* must analogously hold. Since, the case for *RF Must Explain* is that BPA is plausible only if *Response Condition* holds. And the analogous case can be made for *FF Must Explain* since *FA* is plausible only if *Not Pragmatic* holds. So, if *RF Must Explain* holds, then *FF Must Explain* holds. And if proponents of *FF* cannot explain *Not Pragmatic* and *FF Must Explain* holds, then it is false that

(1) If we accept *FF*, we can plausibly analyze the evaluative in terms of the normative.

(The only way to resist the conclusion that (1) is false if proponents of *FF* cannot explain *Not Pragmatic* would be to hold that *FF Must Explain* is false. But if *FF Must Explain* is false, then *RF Must Explain* is false. And in this case McHugh and Way fail to establish (2)). So, it follows from (A), (B), (C), and (D) that

(E) McHugh and Way do not establish that both of the two core premises of their argument—namely (1) and (2)—hold.

Or, put more generally, my argument for (E) shows that an inability to explain a necessary connection does not trouble *RF*'s account of the evaluative in terms of the normative in a way that

an inability to explain a necessary connection does not trouble *FF*'s account of the evaluative in terms of the normative.

I'll now consider several objections to my argument for (E). It might be claimed that the connection between *FF*, *FA*, and *Not Pragmatic* is not the same as the connection between *RF*, *BPA*, and *Response Condition*. Namely, it might be claimed that an explanation of why there is no reason to admire the demon is required, so proponents of *BPA* must posit *Response Condition* to explain why there is no such reason. But an explanation of why it is not fitting to admire the demon is not required. So proponents of *FF* and *FA* do not need to posit *Not Pragmatic* and so do not need to explain *Not Pragmatic*.

However, if *Not Pragmatic* does not hold, *FA* will produce too much value because there will be other cases in which it is fitting to admire something because of the benefits of admiring it but in which that thing which it is fitting to admire is not of value. Furthermore, proponents of *FA* will come very close to asserting *Not Pragmatic* in order to show that *FA* does not produce too much value in cases where evil demons will punish us unless we have pro-attitudes towards them. And if *Not Pragmatic* did not hold, it would be hard to understand why it is not fitting for us to admire the demon when the demon will punish us if we do not admire it; for if *Not Pragmatic* does not hold, then it is sometimes fitting to admire things because of the benefits of admiring them. So, proponents of *FF* and *FA* do need to posit *Not Pragmatic*.

It might be argued that if we accept *FF*, we can explain *Not Pragmatic* via the standards or constitutive norms of attitudes that determine when it is fitting to have those attitudes.²⁹ On this view,

Non-instrumental Standards. For all pro-attitudes *P*, the property of being an object that it is instrumentally valuable to have *P* in response to is not specified by *P*'s standard as a property that is such that if an object has it, then it is fitting to have *P* in response to that object.

And *Non-instrumental Standards* explains *Not Pragmatic* consistent with *FF*.

²⁹ Cf. *ibid.* 599.

However, to explain *Not Pragmatic* by invoking *Non-instrumental Standards* is to claim that attitudes have internal standards and *Not Pragmatic* consists in a brute fact about these standards. But if it is acceptable for proponents of *FF* to explain *Not Pragmatic* by positing a brute fact, then it is acceptable for proponents of *RF* to explain *Response Condition* by positing a brute fact. And proponents of *RF* can explain *Response Condition* just as well as an explanation of *Not Pragmatic* in terms of *Non-instrumental Standards* explains *Not Pragmatic* by claiming that it is a brute fact about the nature of a normative reason, or the standards that govern the reasons that there are, that R is a reason to ϕ only if R is the sort of thing that we could ϕ on the basis of. And so, facts about the nature of normative reasons or the standards that govern the reasons that there are explain *Response Condition*.³⁰

In correspondence McHugh and Way have told me that they think that there is an asymmetry between *Not Pragmatic* and *Response Condition* because (i) *Response Condition* is a theoretical claim about the nature of reasons but *Not Pragmatic* is a generalization of first-order claims about normative reasons and (ii) *Not Pragmatic* is not controversial but *Response Condition* is somewhat controversial. However, regarding (i), it seems that *Response Condition* could be quite easily understood as a generalization of first-order claims about normative reasons, namely that in every case in which R is a consideration that we cannot ϕ on the basis of, R is not a reason to ϕ . And similarly, it seems that *Not Pragmatic* could easily be construed as a claim about the nature of fittingness. So, the claim that there is an asymmetry here appears unstable. Regarding (ii), as McHugh and Way note, some are tempted to think that it is in some way fitting to admire the demon, so *Not Pragmatic* is not entirely uncontroversial.³¹ Furthermore, *Response Condition* is very popular. And those who hold *Response Condition* plausibly claim that people deny *Response Condition* only because they mistake reasons *to want to* ϕ , reasons *to bring about one's* ϕ -ing, or reasons *why it would be good to* ϕ for reasons to ϕ .³²

In this section I've been discussing McHugh and Way's case for

(2.2) We cannot *dissolve* the WKR problem.

³⁰ See *ibid.* 582.

³¹ *ibid.* 600-602

³² See Way (2012), Skorupski (2010: ch. 4), and [REDACTED 2].

I've shown that either McHugh and Way fail to establish (2.2) in which case they fail to establish (2) in their argument for accepting *FF* over *RF*. Or McHugh and Way do establish (2.2) in which case they do not establish (1) in their argument for accepting *FF* over *RF*. Either way, McHugh and Way do not establish that we should accept *FF* rather than *RF*.³³

III

A key premise in McHugh and Way's argument that we should accept *FF* rather than *RF* is that

(2) If we accept *RF*, we cannot plausibly analyze the evaluative in terms of the normative.

McHugh and Way only show that (2) holds if they show that both

(2.1) We cannot *solve* the WKR problem; and

(2.2) We cannot *dissolve* the WKR problem.

But as I showed in §1, it does not seem that McHugh and Way provide a good case for (2.1). And, as I explained in §2, McHugh and Way's case for (2.2) only shows that (2.2) holds if the other key premise in their argument does not hold; that is, McHugh and Way's case for (2.2) only shows that (2.2) holds if it is not the case that

(1) If we accept *FF*, we can plausibly analyze the evaluative in terms of the normative.

³³ In passing McHugh and Way (2016: 594-595) claim that *FF* is more explanatorily powerful than *RF* because if we accept a particular version of *FF* that they propose, then we can explain *Response Condition*. However, given my argument in this section, even if McHugh and Way's particular version of *FF* can explain *Response Condition* this does not show that this version of *FF* is more explanatorily powerful than *RF*. For if proponents of *RF* cannot explain *Response Condition*, then proponents of *FF* cannot explain *Not Pragmatic*.

Furthermore, if we accept *RF*, we may be able to explain *Not Pragmatic*. Given the distinction that I explained in §1 between reasons for *A* to have pro-attitude *P* that are provided or enabled by facts about the additional consequences of *A*'s having pro-attitude *P* in particular and those that are not, we can hold that

Fittingness as Non-Pragmatic Reasons: When ϕ is a pro-attitude attitude, what it is for *A*'s ϕ -ing to be fitting to degree *D* is for there to be reasons for *A* to ϕ of strength *D* that are not provided or enabled by facts about the additional consequences of *A*'s ϕ -ing in particular.

With *Fittingness as Non-Pragmatic Reasons*, *RF* explains *Not Pragmatic*. So, *FF* is not more explanatorily powerful than *RF* because if *RF* cannot explain *Response Condition*, then *FF* cannot explain *Not Pragmatic* and in this case *RF* and *FF* are merely equally explanatorily powerful: *RF* can explain *Not Pragmatic* but not *Response Condition* and *FF* can explain *Response Condition* but not *Not Pragmatic*.

So, I've shown that it is no more difficult to provide an account of the evaluative in terms of the normative if we put reasons rather than fittingness first and I've shown that McHugh and Way do not establish that we should put fittingness rather than reasons first.

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