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A Defence of Anti-Psychologism About Reasons

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Graduate Program in Philosophy

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Doctor of Philosophy

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A DEFENCE OF ANTI-PSYCHOLOGISM ABOUT REASONS

by

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Abstract

In my dissertation my concern is the ongoing debate regarding the relationship between the reasons for which an agent acted (motivating reasons) and the reasons which count in favour of that action (normative reasons). Motivating reasons are generally taken to be psychological states of the agent. Normative reasons are generally taken to be facts or truths. Agents look to be capable for acting for the reasons that favour an action, which would require that motivating reasons are capable of being the same kind of thing as normative reasons – a requirement in conflict with what is generally taken to be the case regarding normative and motivating reasons. I resolve this conflict by arguing that, when an agent is acting in the light of true beliefs, an agent's reasons (both motivating and normative) are anti-psychological facts, whereas when an agent acts in the light of false beliefs, the agent's reasons are the beliefs that the agent is acting in light of.

I examine Bernard Williams' "reasons internalism" and Michael Smith's Humean account of motivating reasons. Both argue, although to different ends, that motivating reasons are psychological states. I disagree. Neither position provides adequate grounds for thinking motivating reasons must be psychological states. More importantly, I argue, based on Smith's position, that the right account of the psychological states that make up motivation is not identical to our theory of motivating reasons. I then discuss Dancy's argument for an anti-psychological account of reasons, according to which no reasons are necessarily psychological states of the agent. While there is much to like about Dancy's anti-psychologism, his position is unable to account for agents acting in the light of false beliefs. Drawing on McDowell's epistemological disjunctivism, I conclude that the correct account of reasons is that when an agent is acting in the light of true beliefs, an agent's reasons are anti-psychological, whereas when an agent acts in the light of false beliefs, the agent's reasons are psychological.

Keywords

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A Defence of Anti-Psychologism About Reasons: Introduction

This work is about moral motivation, and in particular the nature of the reasons which motivate agents to act morally. The problem I intend to discuss and resolve is the manner in which normative facts can be taken to play a role in explaining the actions of agents, when action explanations are in terms of motivating reasons, which are usually taken to be psychological states. This topic has over the last twenty-five years generated a lot of interest. It has significant ramifications for work in meta-ethics, and for what kind of thing morality is taken to be. The position I intend to argue for is generally sympathetic to Jonathan Dancy's anti-psychologism, according to which the reasons that explain the actions of agents are not necessarily psychological states of those agents. The aim of this work is to argue that Dancy's position is inadequate in its current form because it lacks an adequate explanation for actions taken by agents acting in the light of false beliefs. While I agree with Dancy that reasons are anti-psychological in some contexts, I argue that in a significant number of non-arbitrary circumstances the best explanation of an agent's actions is psychological, not non-psychological. The position I will establish, while capturing the strengths of Dancy's anti-psychologism, is a unique contribution to the existing philosophical literature. My position diverges from Dancy's position both by providing a unique justification for non-psychological reasons, and by holding that the reasons agents act when acting in the light of a false belief are in those contexts psychological, not anti-psychological.

There are two kinds of reasons for action that philosophical discussion of moral motivation is concerned with. On the one hand, there are motivating (also called explanatory) reasons and, on the other, normative (also called justifying) reasons.[1] This distinction is often taken to be a distinction between two different kinds of things (namely, motivating and normative reasons). However, not everyone holds that there are

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[1]   See, for example, Frenkena (1958), Smith (1994: 94-96), Dancy (2000: 1-7), Heuer (2004: 44, 45), and Miller (2008a: 224-225). I will stick with the motivating/normative reasons terminology.

two different kinds of things at play here, and some contend instead that in the case of motivating and normative reasons there is one basic thing, which can be put to the two different uses of justifying and explaining an agent's actions. This distinction between normative and motivating reasons, as well as the question of what kind of distinction is being made regarding reasons, plays a central role in much of the related literature, and will play a central role in my dissertation.

Briefly, motivating reasons are those reasons that explain an agent's action; that is, they explain why an agent did what she did. For example, one might say that a person's thirst gave her a reason (motivated her) to get a glass of water. Her fear of spiders explained why she avoided the basement. The dominant philosophical view on motivating reasons is a conjunction of the Humean theory of motivation, according to which a motivating state is a combination of an independently intelligible belief and an independently intelligible desire[2,3] – and the claim that motivating states just are motivating reasons. According to this picture, an agent's motivating reason is the combination of belief and desire that motivated her to act. Motivating reasons are pairs of psychological states, according to the Humean theory of motivation. Normative reasons, on the other hand, are those reasons that justify an agent's actions, or according to which agents should/ought to act. The fact that causing others pain is *ceteris paribus* wrong, for example, is commonly presumed to provide everyone with a normative reason not to do so. Such a reason is

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[2]   Note that Dancy (2001), Jackson and Pettit (1995), and Nagel (1970), amongst others, have assumed that under the Humean account desire is dominant in the belief-desire pairing that in combination are a motivating state, as desire seems to be the active, or 'ert', psychological entity, based on desire's mind-to-world direction of fit (for more on direction of fit, c.f. Anscombe (1957), Schueler (1993), Smith (1994), Little (1997), Dancy (1993 and 2000), amongst others). While the dominance of desire is traditionally a component of any Humean theory of motivation due to the role it plays in Hume's own theory, Smith (2003) correctly points out that the dominance of desire is not a necessary component of a contemporary Humean theory of motivation. This is because the term 'Humean' has become a term of art, used to pick out all those theories of motivation that entail that motivating states necessitate a conjunction of belief and desire, and does not indicate an adherence to any position that Hume himself might have held (in much the same way a platonist about mathematical entities does not, in the realm of the philosophy of mathematics, need to be taken as holding a position Plato would have held). While most Humean theories of motivation do entail things beyond this minimal claim, it is not necessary they do so to count as Humean and thus an argument to the effect that desires cannot be active in such a way a Humean theory of motivation usually necessarily requires only restricts possible Humean theories of motivation, rather than eliminating them.

[3]   See Smith (1994: 92, 93), Parfit (1997: 105) and Dancy (2001: 10) for some different ways of articulating the Humean Theory of Motivation.

normative, in that it justifies our actions or determines how we should act, even if it is not in fact motivating.

If motivating reasons are psychological states and normative reasons are facts, as accounted for in a general way by some normative ethical theories[4] then according to most ethical theories,[5] where normative facts are not very closely related to psychological states, the distinction drawn between motivating and normative reasons is going to be an ontological one. On this view, since psychological states and facts (even facts about psychological states) are different kinds of things, so too are motivating reasons and normative reasons. Normative reasons, which are facts about how we should act, cannot be motivating reasons, which are our existing non-normative psychological states (our motivation to act – our actual inclination to do one thing or another). Since our motivation itself is not directly normative, although it may have some normative implications, normative reasons cannot be motivating reasons. Normative facts, like the wrongness of harming others for pleasure, cannot be motivating reasons and can only play a motivating role in the object of a belief.

This distinction between normative reasons and motivating reasons is a problem for moral realists. Moral realism is committed to the view that normative reasons are facts. Since motivating reasons are psychological states, normative reasons cannot motivate in their own right. However, if normative reasons cannot motivate, then it is unclear in what sense they are actually reasons. Williams uses this as the basis of his argument against moral realism, by arguing that normative facts could not bear the right kinds of relationship to our motivating states that would allow normative facts to count as reasons. Since normative facts should count as reasons to act if there are such facts, Williams

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[4]   In the same way, for example, that specific physical facts are accounted for in a general way by physical theories. Note the analogy between physical theories and ethical theories holds true irrespective of the ontological status of normative facts (if normative facts are merely fictions, for example).

[5]   If, as Williams (1981) argues, normative reasons are such that they are psychological states, the conclusion I draw here does not apply. But one should note, as Williams intends, that there are consequences for our moral theories (and of course our theories of normativity more broadly, as well) if we take such an approach to normative reasons.

concludes that there are no normative facts. I will argue that his conclusion is not justified.

This broad picture – the outlined view on motivating reasons conjoined with this particular account of normative reasons, such that there is an ontological difference in kind between motivating and normative reasons – is what I will call the dominant philosophical view on reasons.[6] The modern distinction between motivating and normative reasons has its roots in Frankena's examination of Hutchenson's (1728) distinction between 'exciting' and 'justifying' reasons. Frankena, after an examination of reasons from Hutchenson, proceeds to note,

> Thus a motive is one kind of reason for action, but not all reasons for action are motives. Perhaps we should distinguish between reasons for acting and reasons for regarding an action as right or justified. It is possible to identify reasons for acting with motives, i.e. with considerations which will or may move one to action … but it is not plausible to identify motives with reasons for regarding an action as morally right or obligatory. (1958: 44)

The dominant philosophical view on reasons, rooted in Frankena's conception of reasons, is rejected by some philosophers,[7] but supported by others.[8]

In *The Moral Problem* (1994) Michael Smith offers a refined version of this position. His position is arguably the best account of the dominant philosophical view on reasons, in part because of how his position arises out of his remarkably adept resolution of a particular challenge to moral realists raised by Williams (1981). Additionally, Smith's position takes into account or defuses criticisms of the dominant philosophical view on

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[6]   The Stanford encyclopedia article on reasons for action, for example, states "Arguably talk in terms of a distinction between *normative* and *motivating* reasons is now the dominant practice, adhered to as it is by, *inter alia*, three especially influential writers on practical reason, Michael Smith, Jonathan Dancy and ... Parfit" (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reasons-just-vs-expl/#NorVsMotRea). Note that of these three, only Smith adopts something like the dominant philosophical view on reasons.

[7]   See Nagel (1970), Platts (1980), and Dancy (1993, 2000), for example.

[8]   See Williams (1981), Smith (1994), and Blackburn (2010), for example.

reasons raised by anti-Humeans (specifically Platts (1980), Nagel (1970), and McDowell (1978), among others). Smith's theory of motivation accounts for much of what makes anti-Humean theories of motivation appealing, and is capable of providing a moral realist account of ethics.[9] At the same time, Smith's account maintains consistency with the Humean account of motivation that underlies the dominant philosophical view of reasons. I will take his position to be representative of the dominant philosophical view on reasons, and will discuss it in that capacity.

Dancy, in contrast to Smith and the dominant philosophical view on reasons, does not draw a distinction in kind between normative reasons and motivating reasons, arguing there are "two questions that we use the single notion of a reason to answer" (2000:2). In this sense, Dancy is similar to Williams, who does not draw a distinction of kind between normative reasons and motivating reasons, instead seeing the properties of being motivating and being normative as two essential facets or characteristics of a single kind of thing (although both philosophers do recognize that there are both some reasons that are only normative and some reasons that are only motivating). While Smith is the only philosopher I discuss at length who does draw a distinction between normative and motivating reasons as being two distinct kinds of things, it should be noted that drawing this distinction is much more common in the literature than not. That Dancy does not do so is part of what makes his position so interesting. His particular theory of reason explanations is original and valuable to examine, despite having its share of problems. Since both Williams and Dancy discuss reasons at times without distinguishing between normative and motivating reasons but making statements they take to apply to all reasons of both kinds, I will do so as well on occasion, but only when doing so is to be taken to be applied to reasons both in a motivating and a normative sense.

There are three further distinctions I would like to make before proceeding. The first of the three further distinctions pertinent to my discussion is made by Dancy in *Practical*

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      Moral realism is the view that there are moral propositions, some of which are true, about the rightness and wrongness of our actions, and these propositions are true with respect to objective features of the world. Cognitivism is the view that our moral judgements have propositional content and can be reasoned about and are not merely emotive (or any other kind of non-cognitive) in content (Smith (1994: 9)).

Reality, and it is the distinction between psychologism, on the one hand, and anti-psychologism, on the other.[10] The distinction between psychologism and anti-psychologism as it is applied to normative and motivating reasons is to some degree independent of the distinction between normative and motivating reasons, although many philosophers argue that motivating reasons are psychologistic in nature and normative reasons are anti-psychologistic in nature.[11] Psychologism about reasons (both normative and motivating) is the view that what counts as a reason of either kind for a particular agent is necessarily a psychological state of that agent. So, for example, the Humean theory of motivation, which is a psychologistic theory of motivation, contends that an agent's motivating reasons are based in her desires existing in some relation to her beliefs. The Humean theory of motivation is psychologistic because the motivating reasons for an agent according to the Humean theory are her psychological states. The desire for a beer and the belief that there is a beer in the fridge are conjointly the motivating reason for the agent to look in the fridge for a beer. Anti-psychologism, which Dancy espouses, holds that neither motivating nor normative reasons are necessarily psychological states, although they can be. Anti-psychologically, I could be described as getting you a beer because you desire one, for example. Psychological states count as reasons under an anti-psychological account of reasons when they are, as reasons, in principle considerations anyone could have acted on, not just the agent who had the mental state. According to a thorough-going anti-psychologism, our reasons for action, be they normative or motivating, are generally facts: we stay inside because it's raining, we clean up because it's dusty and people are coming over, we go to the grocery store because we need onions for supper, and so on.

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[10]   Not that Dancy invented the distinction, although he has put it to novel use. McDowell (1998) discussed psychologism in regards to reasons before Dancy, and of course the term has been used widely outside of ethics long before McDowell and Dancy.

[11]   For example, Dancy (2000) contends that all reasons, both normative and motivating, are anti-psychologistic while Williams (1981) contends that all reasons are psychologistic. Smith (1994), on the other hand, holds to a Humean, and thus psychologistic, account of motivating reasons while arguing that normative reasons are closer to what Dancy classifies as anti-psychologistic. It should be noted that Dancy's main concern is with motivating reasons, not normative reasons, as anti-psychological. He introduces the psychologism/anti-psychologism distinction in *Practical Reality* in specific regards to motivating reasons. I would suggest that this is merely because anti-psychologism about reasons is much more interesting in regards to motivating reasons, not because anti-psychologism about reasons is not relevant to normative reasons.

Initially in my dissertation, I will only be discussing psychologistic accounts of reasons, and the distinction between psychologism and anti-psychologim will not be as relevant. However, I ultimately intend to argue that in at least some cases, reasons are anti-psychological in nature, and thus in the latter half of my dissertation, this distinction will be very important.

The second distinction I wish to make is between motivating reasons and motivating states. This distinction arises from the distinction between psychologism and anti-psychologism. Anti-psychologistic positions about motivating reasons do not claim that there are no motivating psychological states. Such positions do not need to deny that, for example, the Humean theory of motivation adequately explains how motivating psychological states work. Rather, such positions argue that those states are not motivating reasons. Consequently, anti-psychologism requires drawing a distinction between our theory of motivating states, on the one hand, which is our psychological theory about how motivation works in an agent's psychology, and our theory of motivating reasons, on the other hand, which is our theory about what is the best explanation of why an agent did what she did. This distinction will be useful in arguing for anti-psychologism about reasons, as I will still need a method for discussing the motivating psychological states of agents, even when advocating a position that holds that motivating reasons are anti-psychological.

The last distinction I will utilize is between objective and subjective reasons. Objective reasons are facts that are independent of any agent's psychological states. Objective reasons are reasons for all agents. Objective reasons are not relative to individual agents. Conversely, according to a subjective account of reasons, reasons are determined by or identical with an agent's psychological states. Indeed, an extreme subjective account of reasons might hold that even if two individuals have psychological states with the same content and this leads them to act in the same way, they can be said to have different reasons, since among the individuating criteria for a reason is which person it is a reason for. Subjective reasons are dependent on the actual or potential beliefs of an agent, and as a result are going to be reasons only for the specific agent with the appropriate psychological states. Sarah would have, not *a* reason to buy onions, but *Sarah's* reason to

buy onions, and not Jim's reason to buy onions. Dancy does admit that having certain beliefs rationally requires one to engage in certain actions, but argues that this does not contradict his contention that reasons are not relative to an agent's beliefs ("there are no subjective requirements of rationality, though there are objective requirements on combinations of beliefs and actions"[12] (2000: 64)). The objective requirement on combinations of beliefs and actions would give anyone with an appropriate combination of beliefs and actions an objective reason to act. Under an objective account of reasons, if it is a fact that killing is wrong, there is a (universal) reason not to kill. Under a subjective account of reasons, there are only the particular reasons particular persons have not to kill. It is, of course, quite possible to consider reasons as existing at some more moderate point between whole objectivity and subjectivity. Reasons need not be either wholly objective or subjective, but can lie somewhere in the middle.

That there are objective normative reasons for action is a necessary component of any moral realist position. Since moral realist positions are going to overwhelmingly hold this position, an argument that establishes that there are no objective reasons generally undermines moral realism. I will argue, contrary to Williams, that there are objective moral reasons, and that his claim that normative reasons need to be connected to our subjective motivating states does not give us reason to doubt this. The distinction between objective and subjective reasons is also important because of the impact of this distinction on the issue of whether or not reasons are psychological or anti-psychological. If either normative or motivating reasons are objective, then those reasons are also anti-psychological. Psychological reasons are necessarily subjective reasons, since the reasons are only (as psychological reasons) reasons for the particular agent who has the psychological state. While you may have reasons to satisfy my desires, under the Humean theory of motivation, my desire for a beer subjectively gives me a reason to get a beer that no one else has. Psychological reasons explain the agent's actions in terms of the motivating states that moved the agent to act, and as such are subjective. The mental machinery that leads me to get a bottle of beer from the fridge is unique to me. Since

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[12]   Such requirements would be objective, but yet still agent-relative, in that they are reasons for the agent with that specific combination of psychological states to act. Agent-relative reasons are opposed to agent-neutral reasons, which are reasons for everyone, and are not agent specific.

psychological reasons[13] cannot be objective, if reasons are objective, they are anti-psychological. Given the importance of this distinction, it will be a recurring issue throughout my dissertation.

To sum things up, there are four central and related distinctions that will feature in my dissertation and, even when not explicitly expressed, will shape what is being discussed. The first distinction is between normative reasons, which serve to justify an agent's actions, and motivating reasons, which serve to explain an agent's actions. The predominant view in the area of moral motivation is that this is a distinction in kind. Following Dancy, however, I argue that the same reason that can be used to justify an action can also be used to explain an action. The same reason can be both motivating and normative, although it is not necessarily both at the same time. The second distinction is between psychological and anti-psychological reasons. Psychological reasons are necessarily psychological states of the agent, whereas anti-psychological reasons are not. The third distinction is between motivating reasons and motivating states. Motivating states are the psychological states of the agent that make up her being motivated, whereas motivating reasons are the reasons that explain why the agent did what she did. Motivating reasons may be motivating states, but I will argue that motivating reasons and motivating states do not necessarily coincide. The final distinction is between objective and subjective reasons. This distinction is important because if reasons are objective, then reasons are anti-psychological, but if reasons are subjective, reasons are not anti-psychological.

The goal of my dissertation is to provide a unique compromise that captures the strengths of an anti-psychologistic position while providing a better account of the role of the agent's subjective standpoint than Dancy's anti-psychologism is able to. In order to do

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[13] Note that I am talking here about psychological reasons, not psychological states. A psychological state could arguably be an objective reason. If the world revolved around you, your every whim might give others objective reasons to act. However, as a psychological reason, your psychological states are reasons only for you. The Humean would argue that, even if the world revolving around you gives me an objective reason to satisfy your every desires, the only reason that explains why I act to satisfy your desires is some conjunction of my own belief and desire (perhaps the desire to do what I should, and the belief that I should satisfy your desires, for example). Consequently, for the Humean, my actions are still explained by psychological reasons.

this, I will examine the development of the issues surrounding Dancy's position, in order to demonstrate both the problems with and the importance of an anti-psychologistic position about reasons for action. I will discuss the positions of Williams, Smith and Dancy. Williams argues that all reasons are psychological, and that reasons are necessarily connected to the psychological states of the agent. I will argue, contra Williams, that reasons are not necessarily psychological, in that at least some reasons are anti-psychological. Dancy holds that an agent's reasons are independent of an agent's psychological states, but I will argue that as a result he is unable to adequately account for the particular perspective of the agent. This becomes apparent in the tension that results when he tries to provide an anti-psychological account of how agents act in the light of false beliefs. Smith presents a balanced compromise between Dancy's anti-psychologism and Williams' agent-centred approach. However, there are a number of problems with his approach. Most notably, he is committed to the position that our motivating states are necessarily our motivating reasons. I will argue that our motivating reasons are not necessarily our motivating states and that as a result Smith's approach to motivating and normative reasons should be rejected.

There is a tension between the apparently subjective nature of motivating reasons and the apparently objective nature of normative reasons, resulting from the fact that we expect there to be some kind of relationship between these two kinds of reasons. In my dissertation, I will explore and resolve this tension. Like Smith, I intend to advocate for the middle ground between Williams' emphasis on the individual and Dancy's emphasis on the anti-psychological. My position is (following Dancy) that reasons can be anti-psychologistic in that the world, not the agent's psychological states, can determine what counts as a (motivating and justifying) reason for the agent. Part of the justification for claiming this is that our theory of motivating reasons need not be identical to our theory of motivating states. Unlike Dancy, however, I intend to argue that sometimes the best explanation for an agent's actions is that agent's psychological states. I will argue that reasons are still dependent on the psychological states of the particular agent that they are reasons for, since it is the psychological states of the agent that determine which features of the world are relevant for considering which action to engage in and, when the agent's beliefs are false, it is invariably the agent's beliefs that play a role in explaining the

actions of the agent. I will develop this position through an examination of reason explanations coupled with a reliance on McDowell's disjunctive conception of perceptual experience, according to which beliefs are individuated by facts about the world. Dancy's account of how to explain an agent's actions when the agent acts in the light of a false belief is inadequate. Through my discussion of McDowell's disjunction conception of perception, I will develop an original position according to which an agent's actions, when the agent acts in the light of false beliefs, are best explained psychologically, but when an agent has true beliefs, the agent's actions are best explained anti-psychologically.

In the first chapter of my dissertation, I will examine the position Williams' argues for in "Internal and External Reasons". Much of the current discussion of the tension between the subjective nature of motivating reasons and the objective nature of normative reasons stems from issues raised in Williams' "Internal and External Reasons" (1981). Williams' intuition is that all (normative) reasons are necessarily connected to an agent's motivational states, and thus are subjective and psychologistic in nature. His position attempts to create problems for moral realism. The purported problem for moral realism is that reasons, according to Williams, cannot be (or cannot only be) normative in the sense outlined above, and cannot be objective, as reasons must serve to explain an agent's actions and thus must be connected to an agent's psychological states. I will argue that Williams is mistaken to assume that it is impossible for objective reasons to play an explanatory role in an agent's actions. Williams' own theory of reasons, according to which we ascribe reasons to an agent as if they had soundly deliberated from their existing subjective motivational set, can be justifiably extended to include objective reasons, such as Dancy's anti-psychological approach to reasons, in ways that Williams had not intended.

In the second chapter, I will discuss Smith's *The Moral Problem*, and his particular solution to the dilemma Williams poses to moral realists. Smith's position is notable in that it is capable of accommodating the Humean theory of motivation and an objective account of normative reasons. Given its philosophical success, I take Smith's position to be an excellent example of the dominant philosophical view of reasons. I will examine

and critique Smith's Humean approach to motivating reasons, raising particular problems for his emphasis on desire as having a necessary role in motivation. While his approach to resolving the tension between the different explanatory roles of motivating and normative reasons has much to commend it, his theory of reasons is ultimately unsatisfactory. To this end, I will argue that our theory of motivating reasons and our theory of motivating (psychological) states are not the same thing. As a result, Smith's position hangs on an unwarranted assumption, and our theory of motivating reasons can and should be anti-psychological.

In the third chapter, I will outline Dancy's arguments for his anti-psychological approach to reasons. I will outline his argument for anti-psychologism about reasons, focusing on his 'normative constraint', which is a constraint that motivating reasons must be the kind of thing that is able to be a normative reason. This constraint is at the heart of his argument for anti-psychologism about reasons. I will also discuss some problems with the normative constraint.

In the fourth and final chapter, I will discuss Dancy's account of how to explain the actions of agents who are acting in the light of false beliefs. Dancy argues that action explanations are non-factive, in that the explanans in an action explanation does not actually have to exist in order to explain the actions of an agent. I will make two criticisms of Dancy's position, showing that it is inadequate. I will then argue, using McDowell's disjunctive conception of perception, that in the case of false beliefs we are justified in adopting a psychologistic approach to action explanation. This approach preserves what is valuable about Dancy's anti-psychologism, while resolving the apparent problems false beliefs present to an anti-psychological account of reasons.

Chapter 1: Internal Reasons and Cognitivism

1.1 An Overview of Williams' Position in "Internal And External Reasons

Bernard Williams' "Internal and External Reasons" is responsible for an explosion of interest in theories of moral motivation and theories of the nature of reasons for action. He conceives of two mutually incompatible ways for a statement of the form "*A* has a reason to φ" or "There is a reason for *A* to φ" to be interpreted (Williams, 1981: 101). One interpretation of reason statements is given by an *internal* account of reasons ("reasons internalism"). An internal account of reasons holds that reasons are necessarily connected to the motivational states of the agent for whom they are reasons. For something to count as a reason for an agent to do some action, there must be something in the agent's subjective motivational set that is furthered by her acting (I will hereafter refer to the agent's 'subjective motivational set' as *S*, following convention set by Williams). According to Williams, an agent's S can contain things such as "dispositions of evaluation, patterns of emotional reaction, personal loyalties, and various projects ...embodying commitments of the agent", although he does state that the term 'desires' can be used formally for all elements of an agent's subjective motivational set (105). The precise nature of the necessary connection (and any additional concerns) can be cashed out in different ways, but if all reasons are internal, then there is no reason that is a reason for an agent that exists independent of the S of that agent. The internal account of reasons is contrasted with what he terms the *external* account of reasons ("reasons externalism"). An external account of reasons holds that at least some reasons are not part of the S of an agent, and yet are still reasons for that agent. Williams argues compellingly for the case that all reasons are internal.

Covering the scope of discussions that have resulted from "Internal and External Reasons" is well beyond the scope of my dissertation. Dancy's position, and the modifications I want to make to it, can only be understood as being motivated by a particular response to issues Williams raises in "Internal and External Reasons" and

Williams' later discussions of those issues.[14] The eventual conclusion I will draw in discussing Williams is that his sharp division between reasons internalism and reasons externalism is artificial. While he argues for reasons internalism and against reasons externalism, I will argue that reasons internalism and reasons externalism establish, not a binary, but rather a spectrum on which theories of normative reasons can be ranked as being more or less external or internal. This undermines some of the force of the criticisms of reasons externalism he puts forward which stand in opposition to the strongly reasons externalist position Dancy advocates. As such, my discussion of Williams will generally focus on a few specific issues he raises that are pertinent to a discussion of *Practical Reality.*

One central issue is whether or not there are reasons, and specifically moral reasons, that are facts independent of the agent's beliefs (that is to say, objective reasons). If a moral realist position, such as Dancy's, purports that 1) moral facts can exist independent of an agent's S; and 2) moral facts provide agents with normative reasons, then it must be the case that there are normative reasons that exist independently of any agent and thus are in some sense objective and are external.[15] According to an internalist position, normative reasons are necessarily connected to an agent's S. Objective reasons, should they exist, have no necessary connection to an agent's S (barring no reasons to think otherwise) and thus, if internalism about reasons is correct, there are no objective reasons. All reasons are subjective for a reasons internalist, since all reasons are elements of, or are derived from elements of, an agent's S.

While precisely what is and is not an external reason is open to some interpretation (as I will discuss shortly), objective reasons should be considered to be external reasons, as objective reasons are reasons that are not dependent for their existence on the particulars

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14   Notably, "Internal Reasons and the Obscurity of Blame", in *Making Sense of Humanity*; *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*; "Some Further Notes on Internal Reasons and External Reasons", in Millgram (ed) *Varieties of Practical Reasoning*; and in "Replies" in Altham and Harrison (eds) *World, Mind and Ethics: Essays on the Ethical Philosophy of Bernard Williams.*

15   I will assume henceforth that with moral realism there is a necessary connection between moral facts and the existence of reasons for relevant agents to act.

of the agent.[16] As such, acceptance that the agent's existing S determines what counts as a reason for an agent is incompatible with moral realism without further clarification.[17] Such further clarification can exist, if an argument can be made such that what determines what counts as a reason for an agent (for a minimal account of internalism about reasons, that would be the agent's S) is determined in part by the moral facts. McDowell states that, "The implication of Williams's scepticism is that ethical reasons are reasons only for those for whom they are internal reasons: only for those who have motivations to which ethical considerations speak, or can be made to speak" (McDowell, 1998: 95). This is an implication that Williams himself accepts (Williams, 1995a: 42), but with some clarification, it can be shown that it is not a necessary implication of Williams' position. It looks like Williams' argument for reasons internalism prevents the possibility of anti-psychologism about reasons, because Williams' argument that reasons are not external also blocks reasons from being objective. If reasons are not objective, they also cannot be anti-psychological.

A second issue regarding Williams' position that needs discussion is the particular relationship between an agent's S and the reasons ascribable to an agent. Williams notes that it is not the case that all internal reasons for an agent must correspond to motivations that constitute that agent's (actual) S. Rather, in determining what counts as an internal reason for the agent, it is just enough that there is some connection, however weak, between that internal reason and some actual entity (some motivation) in the agent's S. Williams indicates that for something to be an internal reason for an agent there need not be a motivation that directly corresponds to that reason, but just a hypothetical motivation connected by a sound deliberative route from the agent's actual S that would correspond to that reason. This creates a hypothetical S, consisting of the set of subjective motivations the agent hypothetically would have, were she to deliberate soundly. As

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[16] Although it should be noted that objective reasons may exist only for some agents. Reasons can be both objective and agent-relative.

[17] Williams purpose in arguing for reasons internalism (1979) is to create problems for moral realists generally, Kantians more specifically, and particularly Nagel's anti-Humean (and now largely discredited) account of reasons in *The Possibility of Altruism* (1970).

such, it is the agent's hypothetical S that determines what the agent has a reason to do and not to do.

One final issue worth noting is that positions taken in the internalist/externalist debate do not necessarily correspond to any particular theories of motivation. Williams is a Humean, but the issue with internalism and externalism has to do with the relationship between what counts as reasons for the agent and the agent's motivating states. It doesn't matter, as far as reasons internalism goes, just what those motivating states are. At the same time, however, certain theories of motivation (notably the Humean theory of motivation) are likely to be more compatible with reasons internalism than other theories of motivation, in that the Humean theory of motivation seems to necessitate certain claims about reasons. There will probably be some correlation between the theory of motivation one endorses and how internalist one's theory of reasons is, but the two can be detached, to some extent, as well. Consequently, in discussing Williams' arguments for reasons internalism, I am going to disregard his Humean theory of motivation as mostly irrelevant to the discussion at hand.

1.2 Sound Deliberation

The idea of sound deliberation and its ability to discover new reasons that are beyond the agent's actual S plays an important role in Williams' argument. Consequently, it is worth discussing some of its significance, which I will do both through a brief exposition of Williams' own position and through an examination of dialogue over the possibility of external reasons between McDowell (1998) and Williams (1995b). Understanding Williams' conception of sound deliberation and the role it plays in determining what counts as an internal reason for an agent is important both when considering Dancy in relation to Williams, and in examining Smith's position, since Smith relies on Williams' internal reasons framework.

Williams' concern with sound deliberation arises from a consideration of how to deal with an agent having motivation arising from false beliefs. The agent's hypothetical S is based on her existing S, were she stripped of false beliefs and possessed of relevant true beliefs. However, it is important to note that when we consider the process of sound

deliberation, we are not attributing to the agent *all* relevant true beliefs and *no* false beliefs. After all,

> [f]or it to be the case that he actually has such a reason it seems that the relevance of the unknown fact to his actions has to be fairly close and immediate; otherwise one merely says that *A* would have a reason to φ if he knew the fact. (1981:103)

Williams' internalism does not aim to strip away the uniqueness and relatively limited perspective of the agent in question. The agent's S is considered from the perspective of what the agent could, within reason, know, rather than from a perspective of omniscience, where the agent is attributed every possible relevant true belief, regardless of how close the believed fact is to the agent's actions. This interpretation of sound deliberation will be significant in discussing Smith later, as he operates with a very different conception of sound deliberation (which he still considers to be based on Williams' approach).

Since Williams' account of sound deliberation determines the content of the agent's hypothetical S, different concepts of sound deliberation will produce a different hypothetical S for an agent. In discussing sound deliberation, Williams points out that concluding one has a reason to φ in some cases where one discovers that φ-ing is a means to some motivationally related end can be a case of deliberation, but proceeds to say that "this is only one case: indeed, the mere discovery that some course of action is the causal means to an end is not itself a piece of practical reasoning" (1981: 104). Some other possibilities of deliberation he considers include deliberating about how to combine the satisfaction of multiple elements in one's S; deliberating on how to reconcile conflicts within one's S; ranking in value elements of one's S; as well as a host of others (104). Furthermore,

> [a]s a result of [deliberation] an agent can come to see that he has reason to do something which he did not see he had reason to do at all. In this way, the deliberative process can add new actions for which there are

internal reasons, just as it can also add new internal reasons for given actions. (104)

The deliberative process can change whole aspects of an agent's psychological states, including those related to motivation, and as such is reiterative, in that one result of sound deliberation can be a new perspective on the matter, resulting in the need to begin deliberating anew. One more feature of sound deliberation is that it may well require the exercise of imagination (104-105). Given the inclusion of something that is relatively intuitive in nature like imagination, it should be clear that sound deliberation is not solely or necessarily a mechanical, calculative process. Furthermore, as will be evident in discussing McDowell's disagreement with Williams, Williams is very clear that under his account sound deliberation does not involve a radical conversion, where the agent's hypothetical S is relatively disconnected from the agent's actual S.

1.3 External Reasons: Why Williams Thinks There Are None

If we can explain action through the use of external reasons, then reasons are not necessarily internal and Williams will be unable to use reasons internalism as an argument against the position that there are objective reasons. As a result, it is essential for his argument against objective reasons and moral realism that he can establish that there are no external reasons. Williams provides two arguments against reasons externalism. First, a necessary condition for something to count as a reason is that it serves an explanatory role by explaining the intentional actions of an agent for which it is a reason. In order to explain the actions of the agent, reasons must serve to explain why the agent acted as she did. In order to explain why she acted as she did, one must to some extent appeal to motivations, and such an explanation is an internal, not an external, reasons attribution. In order for an external reason to explain the actions of an agent, there must be some further element explaining how the external reason led the agent to act. This further element may be a belief, but beliefs are psychological states, and if a belief is motivating it is, by necessity, an element in an agent's S or, conversely, if the belief is insufficient to motivate alone, it would necessitate the existence of some other

element (presumably a desire) that is psychological in order to explain the agent's motivation (107).

Second, assuming for the moment that the first argument is not successful and it would be possible for the further element connecting the agent's motivation to the external reason to be external itself, Williams argues that such an element would not be something that satisfies a second, normative requirement of reasons. A reason for an action is something that can be reached by sound deliberation from the agent's S, in that the action that the reason is for will further some element of that agent's S (as realized by some ideally rational agent as a result of her rational deliberation). The reasons for an action "reveal the rationality of an action as well as how it may be explained" (Cohon, 1986: 547), and as such the agent has to come to acquire a new motivation "because he comes to believe the reason statement" (Williams, 1981: 109), and has in fact come to believe it through a process of sound deliberation. External reason statements are, by definition, indifferent to the agent's current S. However, an external reason statement entails that, were the agent to soundly deliberate, the agent would come to believe the external reason statement.

Williams argues that such reasons cannot exist, because external reasons necessarily have no connection to an agent's existing S that the agent can derive the external reason statement from (since that is part of what it is to be an external reason). As a result, an agent can never deliberate from her S in such a way as to be motivated to act on an external reason, and as such an agent can never have a reason to act regardless of the contents of her S (Cohon, 1986: 548). For external reason statements to be true, there must be a related new motivation that could be arrived at through rational deliberation, given earlier motivations. (Williams, 1981:109). But no such deliberation could occur, since if it could occur, the external reasons statement would in fact be an internal reasons statement, not an external reasons statement (since it would bear the appropriate relationship to the agent's existing S that is indicative of an internal reasons statement). Consequently, all actual external reasons statements must be false. However, since it could be argued either that a 'sound deliberative route' is something other than what Williams' takes it to be, or that the correct connection between an agent's hypothetical S

and her actual S should be something other than sound deliberation, it is possible that there could be other, radically different internalist positions.

1.4 What are Internal Reasons?

What is interesting about Williams' position is not his particular kind of reasons internalism, but what reasons internalism requires. By looking at what reasons internalism requires, it becomes evident that Williams' particular position is not the only reasons internalist position available, and that in fact that there are a wide range of possible positions ranging from the extremely internalist to the almost wholly externalist. Williams develops his reasons internalist position as part of his rejection of reasons externalism. However, one could be a reasons internalist and reject Williams' position, advocating for example that the connection between an agent's hypothetical S and actual S is based not on Williams' notion of sound deliberation, but instead on a different conception of sound deliberation (such as the position Smith espouses, according to which we should attribute all relevant true beliefs and no false beliefs to the agent to determine the agent's hypothetical S). Doing so would undermine Williams' argument that reasons internalism is incompatible with an objective account of reasons, however, as I will discuss.

Under reasons internalism, what counts as a reason is not determined solely by a connection to the agent's S, but also by the rubric that determines what does and does not count as such a connection. A position is a reasons internalist position if it holds that all reasons for an agent are necessarily connected to that agent's motivational states. Williams' discussion of sound deliberative routes shows that for something to be an internal reason for an agent, that reason does not need to have an immediate connection to an agent's actual S. Rather, for a reason to be internal, it need only be connected to an idealization of the agent's S (the agent's hypothetical S), derived via some mechanism from the agent's actual S. Obviously, this would mean that there are reasons internalist positions that are not consistent with the position Williams' espouses, but are, nonetheless, internalist, maintaining that there is a connection between the agent's S and the agent's reasons. Williams' own reasons internalism, then, is merely one member of the large set of reasons internalist positions, and his argument for reasons internalism

generally can be separated from his argument for the importance of a sound deliberative route being the particular method by which a hypothetical motivational set is derived from an actual one.

An example of a reasons internalist position that differs from Williams' is a position that does not consider an agent's reasons from the standpoint of a hypothetical S at all, but only from the agent's actual S. Such a position might not be a good position, but it would be an internalist position and a different position than the position Williams' espouses. In fact he argues against such a position.

> An important part of the internalist account lies in the idea of a 'sound deliberative route' from the agent's existing S to his φ-ing. It is important that even on the internalist view a statement of the form 'A has a normative reason to φ' has normative force. Unless a claim to the effect that the agent has a reason to φ can go beyond what that agent is already motivated to do – that is, go beyond his already being motivated to φ – then certainly the terms will have too narrow a definition. 'A has a reason to φ' means more than 'A is presently disposed to φ'. (Williams, 1995a: 36)

In this passage, Williams argues that the notion that a reason is based on the agent's hypothetical S (which is determined, in turn, by extending the agent's existing S by considering what the agent's S would be, were he to deliberate soundly) is essential for the internalist. Williams surely is correct that a position that looks only at what the agent is currently motivated to do is operating with too narrow a notion of what a reason for an agent is. Such a position is not a good account of reasons. This is, however, a separate question from whether or not such a position is an internalist position. While it is clearly not a good position, it just as clearly is internalist, in that it satisfies the criteria for what it is to be an internalist position. Williams is treating his position as *the* internalist position, whereas it is merely *an* internalist position. There are a large number of hypothetical S's we could ascribe to an agent, and from which we could determine what the agent's reasons are, that are connected in a number of ways to the agent's actual S. Any position that holds that there is a necessary connection between the agent's motivating states and

the agent's reasons is going to be internalist, including the clearly problematic position that holds that agents have all and only a reason to do what they are currently motivated to do.

One reason for thinking that reasons internalism does not restrict possible theories of motivating reasons is that there are a large number of reasonable ways of determining a hypothetical S, connected to an agent's actual S, such that the agent has some seemingly otherwise unconnected reason. Williams' way of cashing out what constitutes a sufficient connection between the agent's S and an internal reason for that agent is only one of a number of ways that such a connection can be cashed out. One could cash out that connection by insisting that the only feasible internal reason for an agent is that the agent only has a reason to act on the contents of her actual S, not her hypothetical S, which would still be and internalist position. Similarly, one could imagine a hypothetical S that possesses a much looser connection to the agent's actual S than Williams' posits. Such a position would be inconsistent with Williams' own position, but it would still presumably be internalist, since it still entails a connection between the S of an agent and her supposed reasons.

Since a reason is an internal reason if it has a counterfactual connection to an agent's existing S, a large range of possible internal reasons positions exist, including those that could result in a moral realist position. Of course, some accounts of what that right counterfactual connection is are better than others, but the question of the nature of the right counterfactual connection is a different question than whether or not there is a counterfactual connection to an agent's existing S in the first place. Internalism only requires that there is such a counterfactual connection. Williams may be construed as considering only close possible worlds, but that does not mean an internalist position needs to restrict itself to only those worlds. For example, consider a position that holds that there are objective moral facts that provide reasons to act that are not determined by a relevant agent's S. One could support a moral realist position that is internalist about reasons, in that what counts as a reason for an agent is necessarily connected to that agent's S, but modify Williams' position for what counts as a sufficient connection to that agent's S by suggesting that a sound deliberation (and thus a sound deliberative route)

requires a full understanding of the relevant facts, including the relevant moral facts.[18] Such a position differs from Williams' conception of sound deliberation, but is still capable of creating an idealization of an agent's hypothetical S that seems to have an equivalent, internal reasons-type relationship to the agent's actual S. Under such a position, what counts as a reason for the agent is determined in part by moral facts.

The general articulation of reasons internalism that Williams' provides at the beginning of "Internal and External Reasons" does not suggest that sound deliberation is a criterion for what counts as an internal or external reason. What is essential for a position to count as a reasons internalist position is that it is of the general form:

> *RI*: For some agent, *A, A* has a reason to φ if, given the satisfaction of some condition, there would be a member of *A*'s S, *D*, such that *D* gives *A* a reason to φ.

This articulation of what counts as a reason for an agent moves from what is actually the case, including the agent's actual S, to what reasons the agent would have, based on the agent's hypothetical S, were things different in some way due to the satisfaction of some condition (such as, for example, the agent soundly deliberating). Any theory of motivating reasons that satisfies this general form is going to be a reasons internalist position, since any theory of motivating reasons that satisfies this general form has a necessary connection between the agent's reasons and the agent's subjective motivational state. The implications of this will become evident in discussing McDowell and Williams' disagreement over the possible existence of external reasons later in this chapter.

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[18] It is worth noting that Williams himself recognizes this possibility, and views it as putting a limiting factor on the internalist position (2001: 94).

1.5 John McDowell and Williams' Disagreement Regarding External Reasons

John McDowell, who holds a position that influenced the position Dancy espouses, takes issue with Williams' argument against reasons externalism.[19] Specifically, McDowell rejects Williams' particular notion of correct (or sound) deliberation. In "Might There Be External Reasons?", McDowell attempts to put forward an argument for external reasons, against Williams' argument for internal reasons. His argument and Williams' subsequent reply (1995b) provide insight into Williams' argument against external reasons. My interest in discussing McDowell and Williams' disagreement over whether or not reasons can be external is not to establish which of the two have a better account of reasons. Rather, I intend to show that Williams is mistaken about what exactly is and is not an internal reason, and thus that even what appear to be very strong reasons externalist positions are not necessarily in conflict with Williams' internalism.

This is important because Williams' argument against reasons externalism would, under his interpretation of it, prevent any anti-psychological states from counting as reasons. I intend to show that McDowell's position is in fact an internalist position, and it is internalist for reasons that make every possible position on reasons at least weakly internalist. Williams takes his conclusion that all reasons need to be internal as a key premise in a larger argument designed to refute the possibility of moral realism.[20] I intend to refute Williams' argument against moral realism by showing that even agent-independent moral facts can be internal reasons for agents (however weak the internalism).

In my examination of the discussion between McDowell and Williams, I will show that, while Williams and McDowell take themselves to be disagreeing over whether or not there are external reasons, they are in fact disagreeing about what counts as a

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[19]   It should be noted that McDowell's position here is unrelated to his disjunctive conception of perception that I will be discussing later.

[20]   If moral realism is true, there are agent-independent moral facts. If moral facts exist, they are necessarily reasons for agents to act. But, because moral facts, if they are reasons, would be external reasons (according to Williams), and there are no external reasons, there can be no agent-independent moral facts that are reasons for agents to act. Therefore, moral realism is false.

hypothetical S of the agent. Williams argues that the hypothetical S of the agent is determined by sound deliberation from the agent's existing S, whereas McDowell thinks that more radical processes, such as conversion and inspiration, can play a role. Ultimately, the conception of what really constitutes necessary conditions for a position to be a reasons internalist position will be of value when considering Smith's position as outlined in *The Moral Problem* as well as, ultimately, Dancy's anti-psychologistic position about reasons for action.

McDowell takes issue with Williams' emphasis on sound deliberation. McDowell, in opposition to Williams, argues that being persuaded by inspiration and conversion is essential for certain characters to properly consider moral matters. Under the influence of conversion, an agent sees moral matters in a new light and has motivations not connected to their prior S by a process of sound deliberation (as is required, according to McDowell, for reasons internalism) (1996: 102).

> The idea of conversion would function here as the idea of an intelligible shift in motivational orientation that is exactly *not* effected by inducing a person to discover, by practical reasoning controlled by existing motivations, some internal reasons that he did not previously realize he had. But if its upshot *is* a case of considering matters aright, why should such a process not count as someone's being made aware of some *external* reasons, reasons that he had all along, for acting in the relevant ways? (102)

McDowell rejects the implication that there must be some necessarily sound deliberative route that can determine what motivations an agent should have. Rather, the change that occurs in an agent is a change to deliberating correctly. A change to deliberating correctly is itself going to be a non-rational change, in that does not itself need to arise from deliberation. Such a change is not a change effected by deliberating correctly from an agent's S, and the change itself may be motivated by processes that are not themselves rational (107).

Against McDowell, Williams argues that both he and McDowell agree that, if an agent deliberates correctly and as a result is motivated to φ, that agent has a reason to φ (Williams, 1995b: 188). He also points out that the only way that conversion (or other equivalent processes) could really be useful to a reasons externalist is if such processes resulted in a reason to act that had no content distinctively about the agent acting (190). For McDowell, presumably, the conversion would result in an agent having a reason to act as a *phronimos* (what McDowell terms a virtuous agent), and as such would have nothing to do with the pre-conversion motivational states of the agent.

Consider, for example, Sally and Sarah. If both have a conversion to act as a virtuous agent, both will presumably have identical (external and objective) reasons to act as a virtuous agent would in any given situation. Imagine, however, that Sally but not Sarah, has a potential problem with respect to her desire to act virtuously, in that she is intemperate – her S contains an overly strong desire for alcohol, even in those contexts where it is not appropriate and could get her into trouble.[21] An ideal virtuous agent does not have that problem, however. If it is the case that McDowell, in advocating agents act like the ideal virtuous agent, is advocating external reasons, then the reasons that Sally has to act like a virtuous agent are not subjective, and thus she has the same reasons as Sarah, despite her intemperance. Sally and Sarah will have the same reasons, but if they do the same things, Sally's intemperance will eventually get her into hot water, leading her to act in a way not in accord with virtue. Sally should take her motivation to behave intemperately into consideration when determining what she should do if she wants to do the virtuous thing, but if she does so, she is acting according to subjective and not external and objective reasons. If Sally acts as a virtuous agent does and as according to McDowell she has reason to, she will on occasion be acting foolishly with respect to her known motivations. On the other hand if Sally's lack of temperance coupled with her current motivation to act as a virtuous agent gives her a reason to act that differs from Sarah's reason to act, there is more to the determination of her reasons than a purely objective and externalist account, relying on the notion of conversion, can provide. What

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[21] The discussion of the lack of temperance in agents and how an agent's knowledge of her own lack of temperance impacts a post-conversion agent is taken from Williams (1995b: 190).

Sally has good reasons for doing still seem to be constrained by correct deliberation (in this case, deliberating about her own lack of temperance will lead her to modify her actions) from her S (her post-conversion to act as a virtuous agent). Consequently, Williams argues, there are good reasons for thinking that there needs to be internalist limitations on what counts as correct deliberation and what counts as a reason for an agent, and that statements about an agent's reasons are, invariably, distinctive to that agent.

Having considered both Williams' and McDowell's arguments on reasons externalism, there are good reasons to think that McDowell's arguments for some kind of reasons externalism fail. If we allow that conversion and inspiration can give agents reasons for action, and those reasons do not result from a correct deliberative route, the question still remains as to whether or not the resulting position is internalist or externalist. Such a position is obviously not consistent with Williams' own position, but it does not follow from this that it is anti-internalist.

Regardless of Williams' position (his claim that a sound deliberative route is what is required), it should be evident that conversion or inspiration can form a connection between an agent's actual and hypothetical S in the same way that a sound deliberative route can. Inspiration and conversion can generate hypothetical subjective motivational sets. In the same way we could consider the standpoint of the agent, were she to deliberate rationally, and ascribe reasons to her from that standpoint, we could consider the standpoint of the agent were she to undergo McDowell's conception of conversion or inspiration, and ascribe reasons to her from that standpoint, as well. While we may understand and even find compelling Williams' rejection of conversion and inspiration as reasonable grounds for determining what an agent should do, the question of whether or not a position is internalist is a question of whether or not a link is held between the reasons ascribed to the agent and the S of that agent. And when we talk about the actions of an agent who has undergone conversion (or what she would do, were she to undergo conversion), we are still talking about her reasons for acting based on her subjective motivational set. We can hypothesize what an idealized agent's S would be were she to

have some conversion experience, based on her actual S. This is true even if we accept McDowell's argument that conversion radically changes an agent's S.

Conversion and inspiration are processes akin to rational deliberation in that they can modify an agent's S. A modification to an S by conversion or inspiration, according to McDowell, can result in a much more radical shift than rational deliberation. And, in many respects, the dispute between McDowell and Williams has to do with how willing one is to accept a radical change in an individual's actual S. As a result of being willing to accommodate a more radical change, it looks like McDowell's position is more externalist (or less internalist) than Williams'. However, there is still the connection between an agent's S and the agent's reasons, which according to McDowell is based on what the agent would be motivated to do were the agent to undergo inspiration or conversion. Since there is such a connection, and that connection is the sole criteria for what counts as a reasons internalist position, McDowell's position is internalist. Even if we ignore Williams' arguments against McDowell's claims, talk about reasons for an agent post-conversion is still going to be centred on her (now changed) S. As long as there is some story about how the agent could be motivated to act on the reasons given her existing S, some counterfactual connection between the agent's S and the motivation she would have to have in order to be motivated by a set of reasons, those reasons are internalist to at least some degree. While the debate between Williams and McDowell looks like it is a debate between reasons internalism and reasons externalism, as that is what both Williams and McDowell take it to be, it is in fact best considered as a debate between different flavours of reasons internalism. McDowell may be putting forward a reasons internalism position that is weaker than Williams, but his position is reasons internalist, nonetheless.[22]

Williams' position establishes that reasons need to have a counterfactual connection to an agent's existing S to count as internalist. Of course, whether or not a position is internalist is a separate question from what the right counterfactual conditions are which determine

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[22] Findlay and Schroeder describe McDowell as a counterfactual internalist, in that reasons are ascribed to the agent as she would be motivated in those circumstances in which she is ideally virtuous. They also note, however, that McDowell is considered an externalist by himself and others because of his "rejection of any stronger, more interesting internalist thesis" (Findlay and Schroeder, 2010).

what counts as a reason for the agent. While McDowell's position is internalist, that does not mean that McDowell's position is as good as Williams'. It just means that McDowell's position is not entirely externalist.

We can, of course, imagine positions that are much more externalist than those of either Williams or McDowell but still maintain a connection between the agent's actual S and the reasons we in fact ascribe to that agent. One bad theory of reasons we might espouse is that, for any agent, that agent has a reason to act just as she would be motivated to act from the standpoint of her hypothetical S, given her current S, if she underwent a lobotomy. Her hypothetical S, from which we ascribe reasons, is her current S, plus a lobotomy. This isn't a good theory of reasons, but it is to an extent internalist, in that there is a connection, however tenuous, between the reasons we ascribe to the agent and her S (her current motivations). This theory of reasons seems less internalist, and thus more externalist, than McDowell's, in that the reasons we would ascribe are further removed from the agent's current subjective motivational set than the reasons McDowell thinks the agent has. A position seems to be a reason internalist position to the extent that the hypothetical subjective motivational set that the agent would have in order to have the reasons we say the agent has is similar to the agent's actual subjective motivational set. An anti-psychological account of reasons can still have a connection between the agent's reasons and the agent's S, but that connection will be much more tenuous, and thus more externalist, than the sort of position that Williams, for example, advocates.

Part of the basis for disagreement between Williams and McDowell is that McDowell emphasizes much more than Williams the role of beliefs in giving an account of an agent's S. McDowell contends that agents can be motivated by beliefs alone, whereas Williams loosely calls the elements in an agent's S "desires". As such, McDowell assumes a very different theory of motivation than Williams does. If we accept that beliefs independent of desires can be entities in an agent's S, then an agent can come to change her S simply by developing a new belief, regardless of how. McDowell is more concerned with the agent's beliefs and whether or not those beliefs are true (since an agent can, under McDowell's account, have true or false beliefs about what the agent ought to do, and these beliefs alone can motivate the agent) than about how the agent

obtained these beliefs. If beliefs alone can form elements in an S, a different set of processes can change the content of an agent's S, as opposed to an S composed of desires. Dancy's "pure cognitivism", outlined first in *Moral Reasons*, is a similar theory of motivation, in which motivation is determined solely by sets of beliefs as the gap between those beliefs.

While there is a relationship between one's theory of motivation and one's adherence to an internalist or externalist theory of reasons, the two can be detached to some degree. Particularly, a theory about the contents of S (a theory of motivation) can exist somewhat independently of the theory that connects an agent's S with reasons. While McDowell disagrees with Williams about how agents can come to be motivated, there is, as I have illuminated, an underlying acceptance of Williams' general framework about what constitutes reasons for action and in particular the assumption that there is a necessary relationship between whatever constitutes a reason and motivation. As such, McDowell can be ascribed an internalist interpretation that is, admittedly, much weaker than the internalism that Williams himself upholds. However, what McDowell can be taken to be rejecting is not that there is a relationship between reasons and motivation, but the assumptions Williams makes about what an S contains.

1.6 Conclusion

Williams' aim, in arguing against reasons externalism and in support of reasons internalism, is to undermine moral realist positions that are presumably committed to reasons externalism. According to Williams, then, there is a relatively sharp distinction between reasons externalism and reasons internalism. His purpose is to undermine theories of reasons which hold that an agent has normative reasons to act that exist independent of the desires and wants of the agent. If his account is right, then Dancy's anti-psychological position would be discounted. I have argued, however, that reasons externalism and reasons internalism should be viewed as positions along a spectrum. Consequently, every position on reasons, including Dancy's anti-psychological approach, is going to be at least weakly internalist.

Generally speaking, Williams has attempted to create a problem for the moral realist by arguing that all reasons are internal, and that no reasons are external and independent of the agent's S. At the same time, I have demonstrated how Williams' attempt to undermine moral realism with his arguments for reasons internalism is ultimately unsatisfactory, in that it becomes possible to imagine a position that is internalist, and thus accommodates Williams' general concerns, but that is still realist. Williams' argument has refined our discussions of reasons, and has put technical restrictions on how we discuss reasons and in particular how we relate our discussions of reasons to normativity. However, he has not done what he set out to do, which is to undermine moral realism across the board. Moral realists must talk carefully and precisely about how objective normative truths give agents reasons for action in the wake of *Internal and External Reasons*, but such talk is not curtailed altogether. Michael Smith, whom I will discuss in Chapter 2, provides the solution for Williams' argument along the lines I have suggested in *The Moral Problem*.

Chapter 2: Motivating States, Motivating Reasons, and Michael Smith's Humeanism

2.1 Introduction

In *The Moral Problem* Michael Smith grapples with the apparent incompatibility of a Humean theory of motivation with the combination of motivational internalism and cognitivism about moral judgements. Moral cognitivism is the view that our moral judgements are the sorts of things that are true or false.[23] Motivational internalism is the view that our moral judgements are inherently motivating – judging it wrong to commit murder inherently motivates the judger not to commit murder. Humeanism about motivation is the view that motivation requires both a belief and an appropriate desire. At first glance, a Humean theory of motivation is incompatible with a combination of cognitivism and motivational internalism because cognitivism requires that moral judgements be matters of belief, while moral internalism requires that moral judgements motivate. But the Humean theory of motivation holds that while both beliefs and desires are necessary for motivation there can be no necessary connection between beliefs and desires. As a result, according to the Humean theory of motivation beliefs alone can neither directly nor indirectly (since beliefs cannot cause desires) generate motivation. Since beliefs are not able to generate motivation alone and cognitive judgments are a kind of belief, a cognitive moral judgement cannot on its own generate motivation, unless the agent already, and independently, has a desire relevant to that judgement. Consequently, a conjunction of the otherwise appealing positions of moral cognitivism, motivational internalism, and the Humean theory of motivation appears to be impossible.

There are a few ways this incompatibility can be resolved (Miller, 2003). Non-cognitivists deny that moral judgements are like beliefs, and thus moral judgements could be either desires or non-cognitive states capable of generating desires, compatible with Humeanism and motivational internalism. Motivational externalists hold that moral

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[23]   Note that Smith is a moral realist, and that moral realism – the position that moral claims are about moral facts and are true or false with respect to those facts – is a subspecies of moral cognitivism.

judgements are not inherently motivating, and thus moral judgements can be true or false while motivation still requires the presence of a desire that might not be present when a moral judgement is made. In this chapter I will focus on Michael Smith's argument in *The Moral Problem*. There he attempts to solve this apparent dilemma in an ingenious manner. Smith argues for an anti-Humean theory of normativity that is generally compatible with the Humean theory of motivation and is also compatible with both cognitivism and motivational internalism. While Smith's larger project is very interesting, my interest here is with his argument for a Humean theory of motivation conjoined with his anti-Humean theory of normativity, as it is this area of his project that relates to my concern with reasons for action and the specific relationship between motivating and normative reasons. Since Smith is a moral cognitivist and has a well-developed and robust account of motivating and normative reasons that attempts to address some of the obvious problems of a Humean theory of motivation, I will take his position to be generally representative of the Humean position.

Smith's position is one of the leading theories of moral reasons and moral motivation, and many take it to be, perhaps with some modification, the right solution to the problem for moral realists that Williams puts forward in "Internal and External Reasons" as discussed in my previous chapter. As such, I take it to be important to discuss Smith, not merely to show how his position fits in relation to Williams and Dancy, but to demonstrate the problems that lead me to reject his position and Humeanism generally, thereby showing that his position is not satisfactory and that there is the space and the need for a better moral realist account of moral reasons. I will do this by arguing that the Humean theory of motivation fails to provide us with an adequate account of what our practice of ascribing reasons is intended to provide. In the next chapter of this essay, I will show that Dancy's anti-psychologistic account of reasons has a number of significant advantages over Smith's position, and is better able to resolve the particular concerns I raise in this chapter.

My ultimate aim in this chapter is to show that an anti-psychological account of reasons explanations is better than Smith's version of the Humean theory of motivation and that, particularly for those who aim to endorse a moral cognitivist position, the Humean theory

of motivation is not the best account of motivating reasons. An essential component of my argument is that our theory of motivating states, which describes the psychological states that make up motivation, is not identical to our theory of motivating reasons, which provides an account of what serves to explain the reasons for which we do the things we do. I will establish this important claim in this chapter. Motivating states are the psychological states that make up an agent's motivation, while motivating reasons are the reasons which explain why an agent did what she did. If a thorough-going anti-psychological account of reasons is correct, then it must be the case that our theory of motivating reasons is not the same as our theory of motivating states. If the Humean theory of motivation (Humeanism) is the right theory of motivating reasons, then all reasons are psychological states, since the Humean theory of motivation explains all motivation through the use of psychological states. However, if our theory of motivating states is not our theory of motivating reasons, it is possible that our theory of motivating reasons could include anti-psychological reasons as reason candidates, even if the best explanation of our motivating (psychological) states is Humeanism.

2.2 Reasons

In order to show that an anti-psychological account of motivating reasons is superior to Humeanism, it is necessary to first outline what Humeanism takes reasons to be. Since Smith's sophisticated Humean position is similar in key respects to the position that I am going to develop (in that it is cognitivist as well), I am treating his position as the best Humean alternative to the position I am putting forward. According to Humeanism, motivating reasons are motivating states, and motivating states are conjunctions of a belief and a desire. Smith articulates the central claim of Humeanism as follows:

> P1: R at t constitutes a motivating reason of agent A to Φ iff there is some Ψ such that R at t consists of an appropriately related desire of A to Ψ and a belief that were she to Φ she would Ψ." (1994: 92)

To put it more plainly, according to P1 a motivating reason (R) for some action (the action Φ, whatever action that is) is the conjunction of a desire for some end (Ψ) and a belief that action Φ will bring about (or help to bring about) that end. According to Smith, then, motivating reasons are psychological states, in that motivating reasons just are a conjunction of a belief and a desire – they are constituted solely by the mental states of the agent (96).

Since the presence of a relevant desire is a necessary component for motivation under a Humean account, it is not possible for a motivating reason to be solely cognitive – to be just a belief. Desires necessarily have non-cognitive content. However, a moral cognitivist position is the position that moral judgements are wholly cognitive in nature. Consequently, cognitive moral judgements cannot systematically be motivating reasons under the Humean position. Cognitive moral judgements and Humean motivation will come apart modally, as the agent making the judgement may lack the necessary desire to be motivated.

Smith contends that normative reasons are "best thought of as truths: that is, propositions" (95). Normative reasons, then, are the objects of belief. Normative reasons with a moral dimension will be the products of moral judgements. If Smith is right, motivating reasons cannot be normative reasons, since motivating reasons are psychological states, and normative reasons are propositions (96), and more generally because motivating reasons are necessarily composed of both a belief and a desire, while normative reasons, according to Humeanism, bear no necessary relation to desires. The combination of Humeanism with respect to motivation and moral cognitivism therefore implies that our normative reasons cannot be our motivating reasons.

An additional feature of Smith's Humeanism about motivating reasons is that he takes the aim of the theory to be providing a teleological explanation of action – which is to say that, "explanations that explain by making what they explain intelligible in terms of the pursuit of a goal" (104). He develops this position through a discussion of McDowell's

complaint that the Humean theory of motivation is 'quasi-hydrolic'[24] (which Smith understands as criticising the Humean theory for assuming reason explanations are causal) (McDowell, 1982) and Davidson's argument to the effect that reasons explanations are causal (Davidson, 2001). Smith argues that, contrary to both Davidson and McDowell, reasons explanations are necessarily teleological in nature, and that whether they are causal is a side issue. In the present context, a causal explanation asserts something about certain psychological states – mainly, that they have the causal power to produce some behaviour. Smith points out that this is going to be an equal possibility for any (psychologistic) theory of motivating reasons, be it Humean or anti-Humean. Instead, Humeanism (or any theory of motivation, for that matter) will stand or fall depending on how well it can "make sense of motivation as the pursuit of a goal" (104). Reasons explanations, be they casual or non-casual, are necessarily teleological, and a reasons explanation is a good explanation to the extent that it provides the best teleological explanation of action.

In summary, according to Smith, motivating reasons are conjunctions of beliefs and desires, and thus are psychological. Because desires are oriented towards the achievement of a goal, Smith argues that explanations of why agents act are teleological, in that they explain actions by what end the agent was trying to achieve, which is done by reference to the agent's desire. Normative reasons are propositions (and are anti-psychological). Normative reasons are the objects of beliefs, but are not the beliefs themselves. Since motivating reasons, being made up in part by a desire, always have non-cognitive content, there is a significant difference between motivating reasons, which are psychological states, and normative reasons, which are truths.

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[24] The meaning of McDowell's use of the phrase 'quasi-hydrolic' is unclear and is obviously metaphorical. The idea seems to be that there is an originating force that is transmitted in a manner in some sense similar to hydraulics, to result in an action. Smith takes this to be a criticism of Humeanism as being necessarily committed to a causal theory of mind, and rightly points out that Humeanism has no such commitment. Wallace, however, argues that the impression that McDowell is being critical of Humean commitments to a causal theory of mind is accidental, and that McDowell is intending to criticize, as he does elsewhere, is the requirement that the source of motivation is desire, which is taken by Humeanism to provide the force for deliberation and motivation (1991: 475).

2.3 Desires and Phenomenology

Central to Humeanism is the claim that motivating reasons[25] are composed of both a belief and a desire. Consequently, beliefs and desires must be distinct and identifiable entities in order for the theory to work. While agents may not need to be knowledgeable about exactly what their own desires are, agents need to be aware of their own desires at least to the extent that those desires can play a role in deliberation and motivation to act intentionally. Consequently, given the role that desires play in Humeanism, those who advocate Humeanism need to show that criteria to identify desires exist, such that desires can be shown to be playing the role that Humeanism says they do in cases of motivation. If desires are not identifiable even in some cases, then desires cannot be necessary to the explanation of action, nor do we have grounds for asserting they are present in all cases of motivation. The most obvious way to identify desires is by their phenomenological feel. This approach to identifying desires began with Hume, according to whom desires were a species of passions, and passions were a species of feeling (Smith, 104). Smith, drawing on Platts and others, rejects the view that desires can be discerned by their phenomenology.

Platts argues against Humeanism, and in particular is critical of the Humean emphasis on desire.

> We perform many intentional actions [..] that we apparently do not desire
> to perform. A better description of such cases is that we perform them
> because we think them desirable. The difficulty of much moral life then
> emerges as a consequence of the apparent fact that desiring something and
> thinking it desirable are both distinct and independent. The premise [that
> desires are always part of the explanation of an action] can be held true, of
> course, simply by claiming that, when acting because we think something
> desirable, we do indeed desire it. But this is either phenomenologically
> false, there being nothing in our inner life corresponding to the posited

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[25]   And, since for Humeanism, motivating reasons are motivating states, motivating states, as well.

> desire, or utterly vacuous, neither content nor motivation given to the positing of the desire. (Platts, 1980: 256).

Platts claims that at least some of the time we act because we think our action desirable and not because we desire to act. We can presumably think our action desirable without actually being in a desiring state. To hold that there always is a desire present, as Humeanism necessitates, is either to assert something phenomenologically false or, Platts claims, vacuous. The assertion of the presence of desire when there is no accompanying phenomenology is presumably vacuous because there is nothing to distinguish the presence of a desire from the absence of a desire.

Platts is assuming that phenomenology is essential to desires, such that the presence of a desire necessitates some sensation (some internal phenomenological content – an active urge, or something). Specifically, Platts is assuming desire is like pain in that, in the same way pain is individuated by a feeling (if one does not feel pain, one is not in pain[26] – although it may be possible to be mistaken about what one feels), a desire is individuated by a particular kind of feeling as well,[27] and cannot be identified any other way. If not, there is no other feature essential to desires, which means that there is no way to identify a desire aside from the sensation of desire. Thus, if one were to assert that a desire is present without any distinct sensation, the assertion being made is vacuous on the grounds that there is no way to tell whether it is right or wrong, as there is no other way to identify desires aside from the presence of the sensation of desiring.

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[26] Pain is suffering. An anaesthetic, for example, prevents pain. It does not prevent one from feeling the pain that is still there, but unfelt. The cause of pain may be unchanged, but if the sensations of pain stop, one is no longer in pain. "To be in the same epistemic situation that would obtain if one had a pain *is* to have a pain; to be in the same epistemic situation that would obtain in the absence of a pain *is* not to have a pain" (Kripke, 1980: 152).

[27] Note that the assumption Platts is making is that desires are individuated by their phenomenological content. Platts is not explicitly assuming that desires just are their phenomenological content, although that assumption is to an extent implicit in his claim that if we do not individuate desires by their phenomenological content, desires are in some sense vacuous. However, it is not inconsistent to hold that desires are individuated by their phenomenological content and even that desires' phenomenological content is the only way to individuate desires, and still hold that desires are not just their phenomenological content (other features of desires might not be able to be used to individuate the desire).

Platts is correct in claiming that one does not always experience the sensation of desiring when one desires. However, it is possible that there is some other feature of desires that can be used to identify them aside from the experience of the desire. If this is so, and it turns out that whatever indicates the presence of desires is also always present when human beings are motivated to act, then the claim that desires are an essential component of motivating reasons looks quite plausible. If, on the other hand, there is no way of identifying desires aside from the phenomenology of desire, then Platts' argument is sufficient to undermine the Humean position.

Smith agrees with Platts that the phenomenological conception of desire is problematic (105). Rather, it is entirely possible to act on desires that one doesn't know one has, or to discover one's desires from introspection after one has acted. It is entirely possible to have desires, but to not experience them.[28] Desires are tacit – present even when we are insensate[29] – in a way that sensations are not and cannot be. Consequently, it must be the case that sensation is not essential to desires. Also, since desires have propositional content and sensations do not (107), desires cannot be sensations. Smith goes on to argue that desires cannot have phenomenological content as an essential feature at all, on the grounds that phenomenological content cannot contribute to our understanding of desires as a state with propositional content, nor can they explain how desires have such propositional content, and thus they require some additional independent explanation of the propositional content of desires. Given the difficulties raised for any account of desires which treats desires as having phenomenological content, it is evident that the right account of desires is one that does not identify them by their phenomenological content. Since what is essential to desires is not phenomenological content but propositional content, the right way to identify desires must be by some feature that respects their propositional content. Such a method for identifying desires would allow

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[28]   Note that this seems to be different than can be the case with pain, for example. One could confuse a pain and a tickle. But the assertion being made is that, unlike pain, sensations of desire could be wholly absent and still be a desire. Pain is a sensation, and thus cannot be present if not being felt (even if that feeling is misinterpreted or misunderstood). A desire, on the other hand, can come away from any directly associated sensation.

[29]   Like beliefs, and unlike pains, I still desire (for example, the well-being of those I love) when I am asleep.

Smith to avoid the dilemma Platts outlines (discussed above), in that Smith avoids identifying desires with phenomenological content, while still having reasons to think that ascriptions of desire are not vacuous or contentless.

That being said, in order to avoid Platts' dilemma, Smith needs not only to deny that desires essentially have phenomenological content, but also show that desires have some other distinguishing feature. According to Smith what is essential to desires is that they have a world-to-mind direction of fit, in that the hallmark of desires is that the agent is trying to make the world fit the content of her desires (make the world such that, were her desires beliefs, they would be true beliefs). This contrasts sharply with beliefs, which have a mind-to-world direction of fit, in that the agent is (ideally) trying to get her beliefs to fit with how the world actually is, so that the propositional content of her beliefs reflect the world.

Smith's suggestion is a dispositional account of desires, according to which a desire is a set of dispositions to do certain things given certain states of affairs.

> According to this alternate conception, desires are states that have a
> certain functional role. That is, according to this conception, we should
> think of desiring to Φ as having a certain set of dispositions, the
> disposition to Ψ in conditions C, the disposition to χ in conditions C', and
> so on, where, in order for conditions C and C' to obtain, the subject must
> have, *inter alia*, certain other desires, and also certain means-ends beliefs,
> beliefs concerning Φ-ing by Ψ-ing, Φ-ing by χ-ing, and so on. (113).

A desire, then, according to Smith, is identified by its functional role, and particularly the disposition to act. A dispositional account of desires provides a way of identifying desires that does not rely on a desire's possible phenomenological content. Such an account also has the merit of allowing us to be fallible about our own desires, as desires are recognized by the disposition of the agent to act, of which the agent herself may be unaware. A dispositional account of desires also provides a basis for determining the propositional content of any desire, as the propositional content of the desire can, according to Smith

(114) be inferred from the particular desire's "functional role," presumably in that the propositional content of the desire is the end the agent is trying to bring about.

Picking out desires by their functional role accounts for the world-to-mind direction of fit of desires by picking out exactly how a desirer is aiming to bring the world to some desired end-state. According to a dispositional account of desires, states that have a world-to-mind direction of fit are, as a function of defining desires as a set of dispositions, desires. By Smith's definition, all and only states with a world-to-mind direction of fit are desires. If an agent is in a world-to-mind state, then they are disposed to act such that they bring the world to the end determined by the state they are in (this is just what it is to be in a world-to-mind state). This avoids Platts' problems with desire if desire is to be individuated by phenomenological content. However, it does not resolve the charge of vacuity that Platts puts forward, should desires be individuated by some criterion other than phenomenological content. This particular problem will be discussed at greater length later in this chapter.

Smith contends that, based on the dispositional account of desires, desires in conjunction with beliefs are motivating reasons. He puts the argument succinctly:

> a) Having a motivating reason is, *inter alia*, having a goal
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> b) Having a goal is being in a state with which the world must fit
>
> and
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> c) Being in a state with which the world must fit is desiring. (116)

Smith takes this argument to entail P1, discussed above. If the dispositional account of desires is correct and the argument that desires in conjunction with beliefs are motivating reasons is valid, then Humeanism must be the correct theory of motivation.

Smith considers two possible objections to c) (Smith 1994: 117-120). Firstly, one might object that many other states have a world-to-mind direction fit. Secondly, one might object that some states are bi-directional – they are both world-to-mind and mind-to-world. While I have some concerns about his response to the second objection, I have no

interest in defending the possibility of bi-directional states, so I will let the matter rest. However, there are some comments that should be made regarding Smith's response to the first objection.

Smith accepts there are a number of states with a world-to-mind direction of fit that are not desires, such as "hopes, wishes and intentions" (117). However, such an attack on the Humean position is "clearly not an attack on the *spirit* of [the] argument, it is rather an attack on the *details* of [the] argument" (117). The Humean may argue that some some states that have a world-to-mind direction of fit and are supposedly not desires are in fact better considered as composites of beliefs and desires (e.g., "wishing that p is just desiring that p and believing that p is very unlikely" (117)). On the other hand, there may be states that we don't normally consider as desires that it turns out actually have a world-to-mind direction of fit. These states are not a problem, either. Since the necessary identifying criterion of a desire is its direction of fit, Smith's account of motivating reasons is satisfied as long as there are two distinct psychological states with different directions of fit present and working in the manner outlined in P1. By 'desire', then, what is really meant is 'pro-attitude' (Davidson, 2001), where both 'pro-attitude' and 'desire' are taken to mean 'psychological state with which the world must fit' (117), and 'pro-attitude' can stand in for the notion of desire in P1.[30] As Dancy points out (2000: 11) this is consistent with current philosophical usage, according to which desire really is a term of art picking out pro-attitudes. This makes the claim that all action is motivated by desire less contentious, where the term desire just picks out any pro-attitude. Smith seems to assume without saying so that our folk-psychological account of desire will coincide with his technical definition of desire (where the state is defined by its direction of fit) – which is to say, he generally seems to assume that all and only our actual desires will turn out to be pro-attitudes. That being said, it is not clear that our common use of 'desire' does match up with his more technical definition, and he should justify that assumption.

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[30]   Pro-attitude here should not be confused with emotivist terminology. The term being used as it is here originates with Davidson, and can be taken to mean all and only states with a world-to-mind direction of fit.

It is important to bear in mind when considering Smith's position that the term 'desire' is a term of art[31] and the defining feature of desires under his account is their direction of fit. As such, Smith's account of the Humean theory of motivation is much broader than an account of the Humean theory of motivation that relies on a phenomenological account of desire, since more states will count as 'desires' for Smith. In particular, anti-Humean psychologistic accounts of motivation that do not include bi-directional states may well turn out to be acceptable Humean theories of motivation, under Smith's account, if they adequately accommodate both directions of fit as two (or perhaps more) distinct states - which, in the main, they will.

2.4 Smith's anti-Humean Theory of Normative Reasons

To this point I have summarized Smith's account of Humeanism, and in particular his reasoned position on how desires are individuated. Desires, according to Smith, are all and every state with a world-to-mind direction of fit. This account of desire is motivated by concerns that will impact Humean positions generally, and as such Smith's conception of desire is essential to a robust Humeanism. This is important, because I will argue later in this chapter that, as a result of his definition of desire, his Humean position is much more acceptable to a large range of anti-Humean accounts of motivating reasons.

I will now turn to Smith's anti-Humean theory of normative reasons. Smith's position is notable in that his account of normative reasons is cognitivist, while still compatible with a Humean account of motivation, and is thus able to overcome the challenge that Williams' took himself to be presenting to cognitivists in chapter 1. Presenting an account of Smith's position is important as well in order to help explain what is at stake in disagreements between Smith and Dancy over the nature of reasons. Furthermore, it is important to show that Smith's account of normative reasons is tied to his account of

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31   I have considered using the term 'pro-attitude', from Davidson (2001), instead of 'desire' when discussing Smith, since using 'desire' creates an unintentional risk of equivocation between the technical meaning that Smith imparts to it and its more general folk-psychological meaning. This is because the reader may accidentally assume that my use of 'desire' connotes meaning only actually warranted in the folk-psychological case. Since Smith exclusively uses the word, 'desire', I will stick with his convention on this. However, the reader should bear in mind that all that is meant by desire (and all that could be meant, given Smith's argument) is that the state in question is a psychological state with which the world must fit.

motivating reasons, so that when I reject his account of motivating reasons, it is clear that his account of normative reasons is also implicitly rejected.

While Smith endorses a Humean theory of motivating reasons, he describes his account of normative reasons as being distinctly anti-Humean. This is because he rejects what he takes to be the hallmarks of a Humean theory of normative reasons – mainly, that our desires are beyond rational criticism, and that, as a result, the only normative reasons we have are reasons to act to satisfy our desires. We are rational in our actions only to the extent that we act to maximally satisfy our desires (Smith, 1994: 130), and thus what we should do – what we have normative reason to do – is to act in all and only that rational, desire-maximizing way. For the Humean, our desires direct us, and we cannot be but so directed. Smith, on the other hand, does think that our desires are at least potentially subject to rationally directed change and criticism, particularly towards the end of what he calls "systematic justification", according to which our desires are unified into a "more coherent and unified desiderative profile and evaluative outlook" (1994: 159), through a process similar in form to Rawls' reflective equilibrium.

However, while not a problem for Smith per se, it should be noted that the distinction between the anti-Humean and the Humean is not as clear cut as Smith makes it. Williams, for example, allows reasoned change of an agent's subjective motivational set. While Smith characterizes Williams as a Humean (165), with justification he would not be, strictly speaking, given Smith's own account of what is essential to a Humean theory of normative reasons. Nonetheless, there is a longstanding tension in the area of moral motivation and reasons for action between those who are Humean in spirit and those who hold that agents can be motivated by reason alone (Kantians being the most notable group holding this latter position).[32,33] Given that split, Williams is clearly on the Humean side,

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[32] This tension is pervasive in the literature, even in Smith and his drawing on Kantian accounts of rationality to support his position. Williams, for example, is defending a Humean, subjective account of reasons and working to undermine particularly a Kantian moral realist position. Korsgaard (1986) defends a Kantian position and works to undermine Williams' narrow conception of reasons. Wallace (1991, sec. 2) provides a solid overview of the particulars of what is at stake in the tension between Kantian and Humean accounts of motivation.

[33] It should be noted that not all anti-Humeans are Kantians. McDowell, for example, is an animal of a different stripe altogether, drawing from an Aristotelian tradition.

irrespective of the particulars of his position, and Smith is just as clearly on the Kantian side of the divide (Smith, 1994: 165).

Towards establishing his anti-Humean theory of normative reasons (while still maintaining his Humean approach to motivating reasons), Smith distinguishes between two different perspectives from which we can explain action: the *intentional* and the *deliberative*. Intentional explanation explains the action of the agent with respect to the (Humean) motivating psychological states of the agent. It explains the action teleologically, in terms of the desires and beliefs of the agent. To the extent that we take the motivating states of the agent to be the motivating reasons of the agent, intentional explanations explain via motivating reasons. Deliberative action, on the other hand, explains "intentional action in terms of the pattern of rational deliberation that either did, or could have, produced it" (Smith, 1994: 131), even if that pattern of rational deliberation is only apparent after the fact. Switching between the deliberative and intentional perspective, we can on the one hand talk about the agent's desire for heroin and her belief there's some heroin in the cupboard (intentional), or we can talk about her valuing the quality of life she would have, were she to get clean, and how that leads her to act (deliberative).[34] Smith's point is that there is a perfectly plausible standpoint of action explanation which relies on, not beliefs and *desires*, but beliefs and *values*. In order to explain how agents act from deliberation, it needs to be explained how an agent acts from a combination of belief and value.

Central to Smith's account of normative reasons is his claim[35] that values are judgements (and therefore beliefs) about what we have normative reasons to do. This claim is

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[34]   Some other examples from the deliberative perspective: the agent who desires to punch the rogue for his vulgar remark, but does not do so on deliberation that such an action is not justified by the circumstances; the agoraphobia sufferer who reasons through and judges that leaving the house is the best course of action but cannot bring himself to do so; or the woman, married for thirty years who, despite valuing her relationship with her partner greatly, is filled with sudden loathing and anger at that person.

[35]   See Smith, 1994:136-151 for the full particulars of his argument for his claim. Note that, while this particular position of Smith's is not of special concern to my overall argument, it does seem problematic, particularly in light of his previous claims about desires. Consider Values can at least some of the time be cashed out at as statements about how agents should act. Such statements, presumably, dispose an agent who believes them to act towards some end or goal as determined by the value, even if the agent who believes in the value does not always act in such a way (dispositions need not always be activated).

supported by the further claim that believing you have a normative reason to do something entails that, were you rational, you would desire to do that thing (Smith, 1994: 148). Since values are beliefs and not desires, we can fail to be motivated by our values. I might value working a little more on my dissertation before turning in for the night, but I may not desire doing so (and, in the end, despite my values, my desire for sleep may well win out).

If we were fully rational (where 'fully rational' is cashed out by reference to a completely informed and perfect reasoner) and were making correct and true judgements, our fully rational selves would know what it is optimally desirable for us to do in some actual circumstance and would desire that we do that which it is most desirable that we do.[36] What our ideally rational selves would desire us to do is what we have a normative reason to do, which is what is desirable for us to do.[37] This is not the same as saying that we should do what our fully rational selves would do in the same situation, since we differ significantly from our fully rational selves. Rather, what we should do in some situation is what our fully rational selves would want us (our actual selves) to do in that situation. Our normative reasons are not determined by the furthering of our desires as they are (in a sense) for Williams.[38] Rather, what we have normative reason to do is what we would desire that our actual selves do, were we fully rational.

Smith's analysis of this is a little ambiguous. He states, "The analysis tells us that what it is desirable for us to do in certain circumstances C is what we would desire that we do in C if we were fully rational" (151). He also states,

> [W]hat it is desirable for us to do is what we would desire that we do if we were fully rational. In other words ... it tells us that what it is desirable for

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[36] This is because, Smith rejects the claim that our desires are beyond rational criticism (Smith, 1994: 130). Rather, when we are rational, our beliefs can both give rise to new desires and undermine our existing desires.

[37] This is taken from Smith (1994: 150), who in turn is drawing from Korsgaard (1986).

[38] Normative and motivating reasons are not distinguished by Williams, as mentioned in Chapter 1. However, to the extent that reasons have a normative dimension under Williams' account, that normative dimension is determined by our desires.

> us to do in certain circumstances ... is what we, not as we actually are, but
> as we would be in the possible world in which we are fully rational ...
> would want ourselves to do in those circumstances.

This means that what we have a normative reason to do in circumstance C is what our fully rational selves would desire us to do.[39] Our fully rational selves operate as idealized hypothetical advisors, who are situated in the best possible position to determine what we should do. As such, we have a normative reason to do what such an idealized advisor would direct us to do in our actual situation. Smith is concerned with how our possible fully rational selves would advise us on our own actual situation, rather than what they would take as their right course of action in the same situation.[40]

Fundamental to this conception of valuing is the assumption of the possibility of reasoned change in our desires, which is a central way in which Smith diverges from the classically conceived Humean conception of normative reasons. Like Williams, although to a greater degree, Smith holds that one can, through the exercise of rationality, develop new desires.[41] Since desires are in part representational in that desires represent how we want the world to be, desires have propositional content, and as such, can be inconsistent with other states with propositional content, including beliefs. This is a necessary step if beliefs about what is valuable or what one has a normative reason to do can motivate one

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[39] Smith's analysis is based on insights on the gulf between value and desiring, drawing on Ayer, Frankfurt and Watson. Smith's analysis of desirability is similar to Frankfurt's account first and second order desires (where desirability would be similar to a second-order desire). However, there is a significant difference, in that Smith argues that desirability is a kind of belief, not a desire about what to desire. The heroin addict who finds kicking his habit desirable does not desire to not desire heroin, but believes that he should not desire heroin.

[40] Such an account relying on abstract possibilities raises the question as to whether such a solution really is viable, or if there is a certain amount of hand-waving going on. It could be objected (drawing in part on Williams) that ascribing "full rationality" to an agent that in the actual world is defined in part by the boundaries of her own subjective standpoint results in incoherence. It may be the case that part of what makes an individual the individual she is would not survive the transition to full rationality (there is no possible fully rational version of herself, because a person like her but fully rational would not sufficiently be her or like her to advise her in the way Smith requires). Similarly, we might want to count a fully rational version of her as still being her in some sense, but question whether or not that person sees things from a standpoint that is still meaningful to the non-rational original version, such that the fully rational version can given meaningful advice.

[41] "[D]eliberation can both produce new and destroy old underived desires" (Smith, 1994: 158).

to act. Since it is possible to have a reasoned change in desires, it is possible that new beliefs, such as beliefs about what it is desirable that an agent does, can change that agent's desires, if the agent is a rational agent. For Smith, an agent is being practically irrational if she believes that an action is desirable (that the action is valuable), but does not desire to do it. It is for this reason that he rejects Davidson's (2001) claim that values are desires. After all,

> a rational evaluator who says honestly 'It is desirable that I stop smoking' does indeed have some pro-attitude towards stopping smoking. But it does not follow from this that someone who is able to say, honestly, 'It is desirable that I stop smoking' may yet have no inclination to stop; and nor does it follow that someone who is unable to say, honestly, 'It is desirable that I smoke', may yet have some inclination to smoke. All that follows is that, if either of these is possible, the agents in question are not rational evaluators. (Smith, 1994: 138)

Consequently, if we agree with Smith that values are beliefs, desires cannot be beyond rational criticism on the basis of substantive (and not procedural) grounds.

Given that what one has a normative reason to do is determined from the standpoint of a version of the self idealized to have full rationality, it is important to consider what Smith takes being fully rational (or ascribing full rationality) to entail. Smith takes himself to be drawing on and extending Williams' emphasis on sound deliberation (although, as I will discuss, Smith is significantly misrepresenting Williams' position, and in particular ignores that Williams thinks that the relevance of an unknown fact to an action must be fairly close and immediate). Smith outlines three conditions for an agent to count as fully rational (1994: 156), purportedly according to Williams:

1) The agent must have no false beliefs.

2) The agent must have all relevant true beliefs.

3) The agent must deliberate correctly.

As such, the fully rational agent is one that has a complete understanding of the matter at hand, having all relevant true and no false beliefs, and can deliberate correctly, drawing the correct inferences and the right deductions from her complete understanding.

Smith argues that an essential part of deliberating correctly is determining whether our desires are systematically justifiable (158-159). We try to "integrate the object of [our] desire into a more coherent and unified desiderative profile and evaluative outlook" (159). Drawing on Rawls, Smith describes the process of systematically justifying our desires as searching for an 'evaluative equilibrium' in both our general and our specific evaluative beliefs (our values – ideally, what we judge our fully rational selves to judge desirable). We may find, after deliberating, that the addition of some desire increases the overall coherency of our set of desires, or we may find that some existing desire is in conflict with our general set of desires or our beliefs. So, for example, I may find that my set of desires becomes increasingly systematically justifiable if I ground my existing general desire not to cause humans pain in a more general desire not to cause pain to sentient beings. Or I may find that my desire for heroin[42] conflicts with my belief that I should have a long and healthy life, and thus find that my desire for heroin is inconsistent with my other propositional states and prune my desire for heroin from my set of desires. If I am rational, my belief that I should have a long and healthy life will affect my desire for heroin. What we change through the deliberation of what desires are systematically justifiable are our evaluative beliefs about our desires – beliefs about what we have normative reasons to do. So the conclusion of a deliberation about the systematic justification of an agent's desires is a potential change in evaluative belief, not necessarily desire per se. When I judge my desire for heroin to be inconsistent with my desire for clean living or my belief that I should have a long and healthy life, I am judging at bottom that I cannot coherently value heroin and a long and happy life at the same time. I can value one or the other, but not both. If I judge a long and happy life more valuable than heroin, if I am practically rational, I am forced to give up my desire for heroin. I am making an evaluative judgement, and as such come to possess new evaluative beliefs about what I should or should not do. If I am practically rational, my desires will match

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[42]   Given certain assumptions about heroin.

my change in evaluative beliefs, and a recognition that desiring heroin is inconsistent with either my belief that I should have or my desire for a long and happy life, combined with an affirmation of the latter, will result in a dearth of desiring of the former. If I am not practically rational, of course, I may continue to hold a combination of desire and belief that are inconsistent.

An evaluative belief, then, is a belief about what we would desire were we fully rational. And, if we are practically rational, changes to our evaluative beliefs will result in changes to our desires – this is the basis for Smith's claim that deliberation can destroy old and create new desires (158). If we were fully rational and had all relevant true beliefs and no false beliefs, and were from that standpoint to engage in the process of systematic justification, we would end up in a state of reflective equilibrium. From such a standpoint, we would be able to correctly judge what we should do and furthermore, being practically rational, would desire that we do what we should. Thus, we have normative reasons to do what we would desire to desire to do in our actual circumstances, if we were fully rational and had all relevant true beliefs and no false beliefs.

Smith proceeds to argue that reasons and desirability are ascribed in non-relative terms, and our normative concepts, like truth, desirability and meaning, have non-relative truth conditions (Smith, 1994: 167). As a result, normative reasons, despite being connected to motivation reasons under Smith's account, are still non-relative. If desirability is implicitly relativized, then it is unlike our other normative concepts, which are not relativized, and there are no good reasons for thinking that this is the case. Because of the possible scope of the results of the systematic justification of our desires, agents in a fully rational state could have radically different desires than they actually do, and as such it is a mistake to think that our normative reasons are relative.

> On the non-relative conception [of normative reasons], by contrast, reflection on our concept of desirability reveals no such arbitrariness. For on that conception everyone can reason themselves to the same desires if they engage in a process of systematic justification of their desires. Which desires *I* would end up with, after engaging in such a process, thus in no

way depends on what *my* actual desires are to begin with. Reason itself
determines the content of our fully rational desires, not the arbitrary fact
that we have the actual desires that we have. (Smith, 1994: 173)

The result of a fully rational agent engaging in a process of systematic justification of
their desires is a convergence in desires, for every rational agent. Desires converge in
fully rational agents such that normative reasons are context, but not agent, dependent –
that Sally is my daughter, for example, gives me a reason to care for her that even a fully
rational you would not have, but my normative reasons to care for her are non-relative in
that, were she your daughter and our situations reversed, you would have the same
reasons to care for her I do. The non-relativity of normative reasons is best explained,
according to Smith, in that all fully rational agents would have, as a result of the
systematic justification of their desires, this convergence in their evaluative states,
equivalent to a convergence in their beliefs about what they desire that they do,
accompanied by the relevant desires.

While Smith uses Williams to support his position, it is worth noting that Williams and
Smith advocate very different positions. Smith, unlike Williams, takes ascribing full
rationality to entail ascribing all true relevant (and no false relevant) beliefs to the agent.
Williams, on the other hand, is only concerned with those beliefs that are relatively
immediate to the standpoint of the agent. Williams rejects the possibility of radical
change in the agent's S, whereas Smith ascribes all relevant true beliefs and no false
beliefs to the agent, and in the quote above embraces radical change in the agent's S.
Smith, unlike Williams, claims that the reasons I would end up with after deliberating
soundly are unrelated to what my desires are when I begin deliberating soundly. This is a
vast difference in the model of rationality each endorses. Williams emphasizes the
uniqueness of the subjectivity of the individual, whereas Smith is interested in
establishing exactly the sort of realist position Williams is so opposed to. While Smith is
still an internalist to the extent that he thinks sound deliberation starts from our existing
motivations, he argues, contrary to Williams, that the ultimate position we end up with

does not need to bear any of the traces of our original motivational set (although it can).[43] As a result, his final position could be considered to be a reasons externalist position, given how radical the change in the agent's S is that Smith proposes.

It is important to keep in mind (Smith, 1994: 164) that this convergence of desires is conceptual and may not be substantive. There may be no actual normative reasons grounded in the convergence of the desires of actual agents. While conversing and engaging in rational discourse in good faith, agents may well continue to (and always continue to) disagree. Instead, Smith is providing a conceptual grounding of normativity in the desires of hypothetical fully rational agents, and what we take the substance of our normative reasons to be in the actual world is to a certain extent beside the point, and not a basis for objection to his position. Rather, an objection would have to raise doubts about the possibility of the conceptual convergence of the desires of idealized fully rational agents.

2.5 Implications of Smith's Humean Theory of Motivation

Let me pause to summarize what I've done so far. Recall that the essential claim of Humeanism, according to Smith, is that an agent's actions are best explained by reference to her motivating reasons, where her motivating reasons consist of a belief-desire pair, and where both the belief and the desire are independently intelligible. Consequently, Humeanism has two components: 1) a view or theory about motivating states, and 2) the claim that any theory of motivating states is also theory of motivating reasons.[44] Again, according to Humeanism the theory of motivating states is the claim that an agent's motivation is composed of at least two psychological states – a world-to-mind state and a mind-to-world state – working together. Humeanism asserts that these two states in conjunction are the agent's motivating reason for the action to be explained.

If it is true that our theory of motivating states is our theory of motivating reasons, Smith's Humean account will significantly restrict what can count as a motivating reason.

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43   The more rational we are and the more we know about the relevant facts about the situation we find ourselves in, the closer our original motivational set will be to what we end up with.

44   This position is clear in Smith (1994, 2003) and Dancy (2000).

In particular, we will be forced to accept that motivating reasons are always psychological states. Furthermore, even if our theory of motivating reasons is distinct from our theory of motivating states, it is possible that our theory of motivating states will still impose indirect restrictions on our theory of motivating reasons, since there is going to be *some* relationship between the two theories – they are not wholly independent of each other. Consequently, even if it can be established that the theory of motivating states is distinct from the theory of motivating reasons, Smith's Humeanism could put indirect restrictions on what counts as a theory of motivating reasons.

However, Smith's Humean theory of motivating states actually restricts very little. This is because of two distinct features of his theory of motivation that, while necessary extensions of traditional interpretations the Humean theory of motivating states, make that theory less objectionable. The first feature is his definition of desire as any state which exhibits a world-to-mind direction of fit, as explained above. The second feature is Smith's view that the Humean theory of motivation does not require that desire is dominant or 'ert' ('ert' being that which is not inert).[45]

One problem for Smith's dispositional definition of desire is that it does not adequately respond to Platts' concern that we do not really need 'desire' to explain an action. Smith picks out direction of fit as an essential feature of desires, by which desires can be identified, because desire always has a world-to-mind direction of fit. But Smith does not argue that only desires have a world-to-mind direction of fit, and in fact admits that some other states might have a world-to-mind direction of fit as well, although he doesn't see this as a particular problem (see Smith, 1994: 117). However, the debate between Humeans and anti-Humeans is fundamentally over whether or not motivation has a cognitive basis. Notable anti-Humeans such as Nagel (1970), McDowell (1978), Darwall (1983), Dancy (1993, 2000), and Wallace (1991) all put forward theories in which there

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[45]   See Dancy, 2000: 11 for Dancy's claims about the Humean theory of motivation, and Smith, 2003: 463 for Smith's response, including the claim that desire need not be dominant. In fact, Smith argues that even Dancy's 'pure cognitivism', while problematic in its own right (he claims) is not inconsistent with a Humean account of motivation. It should be noted that according to pure cognitivism desire is necessary for motivation but relatively causally inert (according to Dancy, desire just is a kind of motivated-ness that arises from a gap between two motivating beliefs – a belief about how things are, and a belief about how things could be, given a course of action).

is both a mind-to-world and a world-to-mind state present in motivation. As Wallace states,

> Kantian and Humean positions in ethics traditionally differ on the question of whether reason can give rise to a motivation to act. The Kantian answers this question affirmatively, holding that pure reason can be practical in its issue, and that it is possible to explain motivation and action in terms of the grasping of reasons or justifications for action. The Humean, on the other hand, returns a negative answer to the question. On this view, rational reflection cannot by itself give rise to motivation; rather, motivation has its source in the agent's prior desires, and practical reasoning (to the extent that it exists) must always begin *from* these desires. It is important to bear in mind that both parties to this debate can and should acknowledge that desires always have a role to play in the explanation of motivation and action. That is, the Kantian no less than the Humean should maintain that motivation requires the presence of desires. ... The conventional debate about practical reason, then, does not concern the presence of desires, on occasions of motivation and action; rather, it concerns the form taken by the rationalizing explanation of desires. (1991: 471-472, 473)

Those who disagree with Humeanism either already deny that a world-to-mind state is necessary to explain motivation, or argue that a cognitive state can have or can motivate or in some other way generate a world-to-mind direction of fit and satisfy that role in explaining an agent's action. Smith's claim that all world-to-mind states are the sorts of states that satisfy the Humean expectations of desire with respect to motivating reasons makes a significant assumption about what sort of states mind-to-world states are. The disagreement that many anti-Humeans have with Humeanism is precisely over what sort of thing world-to-mind states are, and by assuming that world-to-mind states satisfy the Humean expectations of desire, Smith is begging the question against the anti-Humean. This is because he does not adequately establish as part of his argument that all world-to-mind states are desires or similar non-cognitive states.

Smith, by focusing on what is essential to the Humean position, and by presenting his particular articulation of desire, makes it clear that cognitivism need not be at odds with Humeanism. A problem for cognitivists with the Humean position is the dominance of desire, where desire is conceived of as non-cognitive.[46] Smith points out that it is not essential to the Humean position that it be dominant or non-cognitive either in nature or origin.

> Though Hume denied that either desires or actions should be explained by beliefs, and so in this sense denied that beliefs could be "leading" or "dominant," it has to be said that a Humean theory of motivating states requires no such commitment, at least not strictly speaking. For suppose that beliefs could rationally explain desires but that, when they do, they do not motivate them. That would leave the Humean's theory of *motivating states* intact. For desires may none the less be what motivates subsequent actions. (Smith, 2003: 462).

Beliefs should not motivate desire, according to Smith, but desires can have a cognitive basis. Dominance of cognitive states is compatible with Humeanism. Since Smith has stripped away what cognitivists find objectionable about Humeanism and has replaced the traditional non-cognitive and phenomenal notion of desire with an emphasis on states with a world-to-mind direction of fit, which most philosophers will agree are present, he seems to have successfully resolved the heart of the disagreement most of those I've described as anti-Humeans have with the Humean theory of motivating states.[47] He does

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[46] As Dancy points out, "the best known anti-Humean suggestions are those stemming from Nagel and McDowll. But all that those two do, at least on the surface, is to suggest that on some occasions beliefs can play a role other than that which Humeanism traditionally allows them: moral and some prudential beliefs can lead desires rather than follow them" (Dancy, 1995: 10).

[47] There is, of course, still plenty of ground for disagreement between Smith and those I have described as anti-Humean, above. There are a number of particulars to Smith's position, such as the rejection of bi-directional states, which Smith objects to. What Smith takes as essential to the Humean theory of motivation, however, seems consistent with what even most anti-Humeans think is essential to a theory of motivation. To some extent, I think some disagreement arises because the implications of his position and the meaning of 'desire' when he uses the term is not always fully appreciated. It may be objected that this articulation of Humeanism is so very encompassing that it is difficult to not be a Humean, given how Smith has defined desire and the Humean theory of motivation generally. However, I think that

deny that beliefs themselves can have a world-to-mind direction of fit, but he has no problem counting as a Humean theory pure cognitivism, according to which desire is a functional state that only exists as a gap between two beliefs, as a form of Humeanism (Smith, 2003). As such, his position, which is a clarification of the traditional Humean theory of motivation, does not significantly restrict an anti-psychologistic account of motivating reasons, assuming it can be shown that our theory of motivating reasons and our theory of motivating states come apart. Consequently, Smith's Humean theory of motivating states does not present a problem for an anti-psychological account of motivating reasons, if we can show that our theory of motivating reasons should be distinct from our theory of motivating states. Specifically, Dancy's pure cognitivism, which will be my preferred theory of motivating states, is not inconsistent with Humeanism, according to Smith (2003), even if Smith does object to it on other grounds.

2.6 Motivating States, Motivating Reasons

The second part of Smith's argument for Humeanism is the claim that our theory of motivating states is our theory of motivating reasons. Given that motivating states are psychological states, if one aims to advocate (as I do) for a shade of anti-psychologism about motivating reasons, it is necessary to first overcome the hurdle of proving that our motivating reasons can at least sometimes come apart from our motivating states. A theory of motivating states is a theory of the psychological states that play a role in an agent's motivation. So, for the Humean, motivation is explained by a conjunction of beliefs and desires – these are the states that motivate an agent. A theory of motivating reasons is a theory of how agent's actions are best explained – motivating reasons being those reasons that explain, rather than justify,[48] an agent's action. The claim that our theory of motivating states need not be our theory of motivating reasons is the claim that an agent's psychological states involved in her motivation are not the reasons that best

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merely indicates that Smith has hit upon the fact of the matter when it comes to a theory of motivating states.

[48]   I'm not assuming that motivating reasons can't be justifying (normative) reasons. I do intend to suggest that the same reason for which an agent acts is capable of standing in a justifying relationship to that action (sometimes, the reasons why we should do an action are the same as the reasons why we did that action).

explain her action. A better explanation of the agent's actions might well be facts about the world (perhaps the facts that, in a rational agent, would lead her to have those beliefs and desires in the first place). Such an account of reasons would be an anti-psychological account of reasons. I intend to argue that in some cases, the best explanation for an intentional action is not one that utilizes reasons that are only psychological in nature. This is because in some cases, facts or states of the world are better candidates and more explanatorily useful than psychological reasons. Consequently, the best theory of motivating reasons is not a theory of motivating states (Humean or otherwise).

One problem for Smith's Humeanism, according to which reasons are necessarily psychological, is raised by Dancy, who points out that the argument that desires are a component of motivating reasons justifies only the weaker conclusion that having a motivating reason entails desiring, but not that desires are necessarily a component of motivating reasons. Smith argues:

> a) Having a motivating reason is, *inter alia*, having a goal

> b) Having a goal is being in a state with which the world must fit

> c) Being in a state with which the world must fit is desiring.

and aims to conclude (quoting Dancy, here):

> d) Desires are motivating reasons.

> What he actually gets is:

> (d*) Having a motivating reason is, *inter alia*, desiring.

> This is perfectly compatible with the claim that desires are not reasons of any sort, let alone motivating ones. (Dancy, 91)

While desiring of course entails having a desire and Smith's argument entitles us to conclude that motivating reason is desiring (if one has a motivating reason, one desires), it does not follow that the desire is the motivating reason, since 'having' relations are not

such that, if I have *x* and I have *y* (or, for that matter, am *y*-ing), I can conclude that x=y. Consequently, even if we assume with Smith that all world-to-mind states are desires (or something near enough), there is no reason to conclude that motivating states and, in particular, desires, are motivating reasons. This does not show that motivating reasons and motivating states do come apart in any particular context, but it does show that they need not always come together – they are modally independent, even when they do as a matter of fact coincide, given that desiring entails having a motivating reason. Since they are modally separable, our theory of motivation is not our theory of motivating reasons, since our motivation is not necessarily our motivating reason. This is the case even if circumstantially the two tend to come together.[49] And thus, our theory of motivating states, which is psychological, is not our theory of motivating reasons. Facts about our motivating states, revealed to us by our theory of motivating states, should not be taken to determine what our motivating reasons are.

Further considerations which justify the claim that motivating reasons are not always motivating states comes from considering the teleological nature of reasons explanations. Explanations of actions in terms of an agent's reasons are, at heart, teleological explanations (Smith, 1994:102). An essential part of explaining an action is explaining the point of the action – what the goal of the action was. As such, a way of determining what counts as a good explanation of an action is determining the extent to which an explanation provides a teleological explanation of that agent's action. A reasons explanation of an action is a good explanation of an action if it explains the action with respect to the object of the action – if it explains the object or goal of the acting agent. An essential criteria, then, for judging a theory or explanation of reasons explanations themselves is the extent to which this theory captures the teleological explanatory nature of reasons explanations.

Smith's claim, and the reason for his emphasis on his particular interpretation of desire as a world-to-mind state, is that the reason for an action is the achievement of the goal or

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[49]   That motivating reasons and motivating desires do tend to come together helps to explain why we find it so intuitive to think of our theory of motivating states as our theory of motivating reasons, particularly since Smith's argument does establish that desiring, and thus being motivated, does entail having a motivating reason, at the very least.

purpose of the action. Furthermore, the limiting factor on what counts as a good reasons-based explanation of an action is that it explains the aims or goals of the acting agent. An explanation is not a good explanation if it does not help to make plain what the object of the action is. It is an open question whether or not actions are best explained if we treat the reasons for the action as being the psychological states or if, instead, we take the reason for the action to be at least possibly the actual states of affairs that the action was supposed to bring about. I would suggest that at least sometimes, an explanation of an action in terms of the actual state of affairs that the action was supposed to bring about is a sufficient explanation, in that an action in terms of motivating states is not going to better explain the aims of the agent in acting. In other words, an explanation of the action in terms of the psychological states of the agent is not always better than an explanation in terms of non-psychological states, where an explanation of an action is 'better' than another explanation to the extent that it makes clear the relationship between the action and the object of the action. An implication of this is that a simpler explanation is better than a complex explanation that is otherwise equally effective, since a simpler explanation is, generally, clearer than a complex one. Given two explanations for an action: (1) the agent went to the store to get onions for supper; and (2) the agent went to the store because he desired onions and believed he could obtain onions at the store, (2) does not seem to explain better than (1), given what I have taken 'better' to mean. One neither needs an explanation of the action in terms of psychological states of the agent, nor does such an explanation always explain more than an explanation of an action that is not in terms of the agent's psychological states. In the same way that Platts argues against the Humean theory of motivation on the grounds that desires are not explanatorily necessary, I am arguing that the theory of motivating states is not the theory of motivating reasons because motivating states are not explanatorily necessary. It is possible to provide sufficient intuitively plausible explanations of an agent's actions without referencing an agent's motivating states. If the theory of motivating states is the theory of motivating reasons, then an explanation of action that explains in terms of motivating states is always going to be a better explanation than an explanation that does not.

It could be argued that (1) presupposes Humeanism. In response to (1), it seems sensible to ask why the agent went to the grocery store as opposed to, say, the hardware store. And a response might be that the agent believed that she would find onions at the grocery store and not the hardware store, which supports Humeanism. At the same time, however, one could just as easily respond that the agent went to the grocery store and not the hardware store because the onions were at the grocery store and not the hardware store, maintaining an anti-psychological explanation of the agent's actions. And as long as the agent's beliefs are true, we can explain the agent's actions in terms of what is the case as reliably as we can explain the agent's actions in terms of the agent's beliefs. There are, as I am arguing here and will discuss in the next chapter, explanatory advantages to explanations in terms of what is believed, rather than in terms of the agent's beliefs. It could be pointed out by the Humean that the advantage of (2), and the reason why (1) presupposes (2), is that (2) does not require that the agent's belief be true, and thus can explain the agent's actions even in cases where the agent is acting in the light of a false belief, unlike (1). My response to this concern will be the central topic of chapter 4, but ultimately I will argue that, just because we need to explain an agent's actions with respect to that agent's beliefs when she is acting in the light of false beliefs, we can and should still explain an agent's actions through the use of anti-psychological reasons when the agent's beliefs are true.

In order to see why our theory of motivating reasons should not be our theory of motivating states, consider, by way of example, what is going on when we ask someone why a friend took her umbrella with her when she went outside. Note that there could be a significant number things we are trying to find out. In a normal course of events, we could be trying to figure out if it is going to rain (or is raining) or not, and we are interested in finding out if the reason she took her umbrella was that it was raining. We could also be concerned about our friend's psychological states, given that we are in the heart of the Sahara and an absence of rain is a certainty. And of course, many other possibilities exist, as well. If our theory of motivating states is our theory of motivating reasons, we could only ever find out information about an agent's psychological states from explanations of the agent's actions, and non-psychological states would be secondary to the explanation. However, this is not always the case – sometimes, the

explanation that our friend is taking her umbrella with her because it's raining outside is as good as or better an explanation than an account of her action in terms of her psychological motivating states. When we are interested in finding out about the non-psychological states that played a role in the agent's actions, an explanation in terms of those states is more useful, and better explains the agent's actions, than an explanation in terms of the agent's psychological states. Tellingly, when an agent considers her reasons for acting, it is generally not her own psychological states she is considering. At the very least, if we think about what the agent takes to be her reasons or how she generally would explain her action, her reasons from her standpoint are not her motivating states. Consequently, since sometimes the reasons that best explain an agent's goals are not motivating states, our theory of motivating states is not the same as our theory of motivating reasons – the two must come apart. Since the aim of a theory of motivating states is not the same as the aim of a theory of motivating reasons, and since motivating states are not necessary to explain actions, our theory of motivating states is not our theory of motivating reasons, even if sometimes it does turn out that the best explanation of an action is in terms of motivating states.

Contrary to Dancy, rejecting a psychological theory of reasons explanations does not mean our theory of motivating states cannot coincide with our theory of motivating reasons. It might turn out that sometimes, we are best off relying on Humean belief/desire psychology to explain the actions of an agent. That being said, a psychological theory of reasons explanations is committed to the view that reasons are psychological, and as such only has recourse to the states in the agent's head in order to explain the actions. An anti-psychological theory of reasons explanations, however, can also avail itself of both the psychological and the non-psychological states that explain the agent's actions, as necessary.

2.7 Towards an Anti-Psychological Theory of Reasons

I began this chapter by discussing Smith's position. I outlined his particular Humean account of motivating reasons and the issues surrounding his particular conception of desire. I then proceeded to outline his anti-Humean theory of normative reasons. Having discussed Smith's position, I then argued that Smith's Humeanism, taken as a theory

about our motivating states, does not restrict theories of motivating reasons and, furthermore, our theory of motivating reasons should not generally be tied to our theory of motivating states. I now want to turn to establishing the groundwork for the combined anti-psychological/ psychological account of reasons I intend to argue for. This will involve a discussion of a pair of constraints governing reason explanations put forward by Dancy, as well as introducing McDowell's epistemological disjunctivism. I intend to use McDowell's epistemological disjunctivism to argue that when an agent's beliefs are true, they are explained by the facts, but when they are false the are best explained by the agent's psychological states.

Dancy (1995) notes two constraints (the last two out of four he discusses) that make a particular problem for those who object to the claim that the Humean theory of motivation is the correct theory of motivation. These two constraints are:

> 3. States of the world and facts cannot motivate unless recognized by the agent.

> 4. The distinction between true and false beliefs on the agent's part cannot affect the *form* of the explanation which will be appropriate to his actions. (1995: 13)[50]

These two reasonable constraints look, at the outset, like they would encourage us to consider motivating reasons to be psychological states. Under constraint 3, facts or states of the world cannot motivate in their own right, but must be believed for motivation to occur. Under constraint 4, whether or not a belief is true or false cannot, on its own, affect the form of our explanation, and thus whether or not a belief is true or false cannot serve to determine what a motivating reason is. Constraint 4 indicates that the form of an explanation must be consistent, regardless of whether or not a belief is true or false. It cannot be the case that facts best explain the actions of an agent only in the case of true beliefs, but not in the case of false beliefs. Since the truth or falsity of a belief, under constraint 4, cannot determine the form of the explanation of an agent's actions, we

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50   Italics in the original.

cannot arbitrarily use the truth or falsity of beliefs as a criterion for whether or not the facts believed rather than the belief itself counts as a reason. Beliefs (combined with world-to-mind direction of fit states) reliably motivate action, whereas facts or states of the world do not. Consequently, since our psychological states, and not states of the world, can reliably explain action, our best theory of motivating reasons is psychological, and as a result it should be evident our theory of motivating reasons is our theory of motivating states.

I don't think these two constraints are the problems they seem to be. Part of the discussion of the problems these constraints create will have to wait until after chapter 3, where they can be addressed within the broader discussion of Dancy's position. But there are a few things worth saying now. It is important to bear in mind that the heart of the problem here involves false beliefs. Since we are motivated the same regardless of whether or not our beliefs are true, and anti-psychological states can't play a motivating role when we have false beliefs, we naturally are inclined to treat the (false) beliefs as motivating reasons. Since motivation works the same regardless of whether or not the beliefs are true or false (from condition four), our motivating reasons are presumably the same (mainly, beliefs) regardless of whether or not our beliefs are true or false. In order to show that reasons can be anti-psychological, I therefore need to undermine this apparent problem created by the existence of motivation in the presence of false beliefs.

Note that I am not arguing that there is no theory of motivation, but that our theory of motivating reasons need not (but not that it necessarily will not) refer to psychological states. If it was just that sometimes we treat the agent's beliefs as being her reasons for action, this would not pose a problem. Rather, it is the conjunction of Dancy's condition three and condition four that pose the particular problem, since the fact that we seem to need to refer to the agent's beliefs as reasons in some cases suggests that we should do so in all cases, since we appear to have no good grounds (from condition four) for thinking we should not. I intend to show that, despite condition four, we do have reasons to consider cases of false belief distinct from cases of true belief.

One reason to think that whether or not a belief is true or false can change the form of the explanation can be found in McDowell's epistemological disjunctivism. McDowell's position is a reaction against the claim that, because illusory appearances are "subjectively indistinguishable" from genuine perceptions, the differences between illusory appearances and genuine perceptions is "external to how things are with you subjectively" (Soteriou, 2010). Since the difference between illusory appearances and genuine perceptions is external to how things are with the agent subjectively, illusory appearances and genuine perceptions provide identical epistemic grounding to the agent's beliefs. Both genuine perceptions and illusory appearances are equally epistemically significant. A problem with this position that concerns McDowell is the problem of other minds. Since the appearance of minded-ness and actual minded-ness in other people is subjectively indistinguishable, the judgement that other people have minds and the judgement that the appearance of other minds in other people is only an illusion appears equally well grounded. If the criteria for concluding what mental states another person has is based on their behaviour, then it seems at least possible that other people are meeting the relevant criteria that justifies concluding they have certain relevant mental states, while not actually being in those mental states. A person can appear to be minded by meeting the behaviour-based criteria for seeming minded without actually being minded. All an observer can be certain of is that the behaviour-based criteria for concluding someone is in a relevant mental state are satisfied. Consequently, it is not possible for there to be knowledge of other minds. Even if the criteria are met, since the criteria might not be indicative of the actual presence of the relevant mental state, there is no way to know that the corresponding mental state is actually present.

Similar arguments can be run regarding our ability to tell the difference between reality and illusions. We cannot know that what is in front of us is a cup of coffee, as we only have the belief based on our experience. Since we would have the same experience in the case of an illusion (or a mere 'seeming', of some kind or another), we cannot know whether what we are confronted with is an actual cup of coffee, or merely the appearance of a cup of coffee. As a result, we are not in a position to know if what is in front of us, regardless of our experience, is actually a cup of coffee.

McDowell rejects this line of reasoning. We see manifestations of others' mental states in their behaviour. The criteria by which we determine that someone is in a mental state are based on that person's behaviour. However, just because we think that the criterion that justifies our belief that they are in a particular mental state has been satisfied does not mean that it actually has been. A necessary part of meeting the criterion that justifies our belief that some person is in pain is their actually being in pain. What the facts actually are in part determines what kind of epistemic standing we have to those facts. Someone pretending to be in pain gives the appearance of satisfying the criteria of being in pain, but that person does not actually satisfy that criteria (McDowell, 1982: 380). As such, an appearance that X is the case (where X is some possible fact) can be read disjunctively – it is *either* the case that it is a mere appearance *or* X is actually the case. It is common to both cases that the agent's subjective experience is of X being the case, whether it is or not. However, McDowell argues that the agent actually believing that X, when X is the case, is not external to the agent, even if there is no experiential difference to the agent between the genuine and illusory experiences. Only in those cases where X actually obtains, rather than those cases where we merely experience X, do we have appropriate epistemic grounds to conclude that X is the case. Of course, given that all we have to rely on is experience, we occasionally get things wrong. Consequently, there are grounds to distinguish between true and false beliefs, even if the difference between true and false beliefs is indistinguishable to the agent.

McDowell's conclusions warrant drawing an explanatory distinction between true and false beliefs. False beliefs are not the same beliefs as true beliefs, because an essential criterion that determines what is believed is what is actually the case. Consequently, Dancy's constraint 4, above, is false. Whether or not a belief is true or false can affect the form of an explanation, and this rejection of condition is not arbitrary because the beliefs are different beliefs, according to the distinction I am drawing from McDowell. There are in fact good reasons for distinguishing between the explanatory roles of true and false beliefs because in the case of true beliefs the agent has the appropriate epistemic standing to have the belief. When our beliefs are true beliefs, our beliefs are based on experiences with the objects of our beliefs that is not the case when our beliefs are false. When we have true beliefs about another's pain, it is because we have observed that person's pain in

a way that (objectively, but not subjectively)[51] is not the case when we have false beliefs about another's pain. Explaining actions through anti-psychological states when it is those anti-psychological states which justify our true beliefs is itself justified since those anti-psychological states are not external to our beliefs. They are, in fact, integral to our beliefs, and as such are integral to the actions we engage in based on those beliefs, in a way the beliefs themselves are not.

On the other hand, when our beliefs are false, our beliefs are not justified by anti-psychological states. In such cases, it is the false belief which plays an interesting explanatory role. The belief that X is the case in those cases where X is actually the case is distinct from beliefs that X is the case based on a mere seeming or misunderstanding of the facts, and should be treated distinctly. A false belief is based only on appearances, not on what is actually the case. While a true belief is a belief about what is actually the case, a false belief is a belief about what appears to be the case, given McDowell's disjunctive conception of perception. Consequently, when an agent has a true belief, the agent's actions are best explained by what is actually the case, whereas when an agent has a false belief, the agent's actions are best explained by how the world seems to be to the agent, which in turn is best done through an explanation in terms of the agent's pscyhological states.

One way to put this distinction that McDowell draws is to articulate it as a form of mental content externalism. The content of the beliefs of an agent are individuated, not only by her experiences, but by what is in fact the case. An agent can only have certain types of mental content by being related to her environment in the right kind of way. Consequently, there is a difference in content between the (true) belief and the (false) belief that there are no onions in the cupboard, in that this is not actually the same belief (varyingly true or false), but it is, in fact, two different beliefs. This difference justifies rejecting Dancy's condition 4. Because the right sort of relationship exists in cases where the agent has a true belief (a belief about a genuine state of affairs), it is those facts which

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51   Subjectively, we may be unable to distinguish between actual pain and the appearance of pain. Thus, subjectively, we may not know if we have true or false beliefs, and thus whether or not our beliefs are justified.

individuate and justify the agent's beliefs which are of explanatory interest. Where the content of an agent's true belief is individuated by anti-psychological states, the agent's actions can only properly be explained by taking those anti-psychological states as primary. Taking an agent's true belief as primary, as the Humean theory of motivation would have it, fails to properly account for the way in which the actual facts are essential in distinguishing which belief the agent has. Conversely, when the agent has a belief that is not justified by the facts, it is the belief, and not the facts, that is of explanatory interest.

McDowell's conclusion that an agent only has appropriate epistemic standing to believe that X when X is actually the case may seem counterintuitive. If an individual is acting as though he is in terrible pain, is hopping up and down, and saying "I'm in terrible pain," it looks as though an agent would have justification in concluding the person is in terrible pain, regardless of whether or not the individual is actually in pain.[52] McDowell's claim is that the belief that the person is in pain is justified only in those cases where the person is actually in pain. A consequence of this is that the agent has no grounds to distinguish between cases where her beliefs are justified and where they are not, because the justification of the agent's beliefs is external to the agent herself. As a result, despite being confronted with an individual who seems to be in pain, an agent cannot conclude that she is justified in believing that the individual is in pain. The content of the agent's belief, taken subjectively, should thus be the disjunction "either the individual is in pain *or* he only seems to be in pain". Which of the two elements the agent is justified in believing is determined externally to the agent, but subjectively, independent from how the world is, the agent lacks justification to determine based solely on the agent's behaviour that the individual is in pain.

One final concern to bear in mind is that reasons, as Dancy states, are considerations in light of which the agent acted (2000: 3). If we are explaining an agent's actions, the reasons must be reasons *for* the agent – the reasons in light of which he acted. Consequently, advocating anti-psychologism about reasons cannot be a matter of treating

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52   Thanks to Andrew Botterell for this example.

all facts that played a causal role in the agent's actions as part of the reason-based teleological explanation of the agent's intentional action qua its intentionality. It is not being claimed that any causally relevant non-psychological state is a motivating reason for the agent's action. The claim is just that, sometimes at least, facts or states of the world serve a better role in explaining the agent's actions towards some intended end than the psychological states of the agent.

2.7 Conclusion

Smith presents an ingenious and remarkable argument for moral realism, combining Humeanism with an account of reason-ascription drawn, in part, from Williams. However, as I have shown, his Humean position is problematic. First, Smith fails to adequately address criticisms raised about the Humean theory of motivation by Platts, and as a result, his Humean theory of motivation, taken as a theory of motivating states, does not present a serious alternative to an anti-psychological theory of motivating reasons. Second, our theory of motivating states can and should come apart from our theory of motivating reasons. The best explanation of an agent's action is not necessarily cashed out in terms of the psychological states of the agent. Often, the best explanatory reasons we have for explaining an agent's actions are not psychological, but are facts or states of the world. Furthermore, McDowell's epistemic disjunctivism gives us a reason to think that actions are, at least when an agent has true beliefs about the world, best explained first and foremost by anti-psychological states. In the next chapter, I will outline Dancy's anti-psychological theory of motivating reasons, and I will subsequently use McDowell's epistemic disjunctivism to resolve the problem that false beliefs present to Dancy's anti-psychological theory of motivating reasons.

Chapter 3: Jonathan Dancy and the Normative Constraint

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued against Smith's Humean account of motivation. I argued that our theory of motivating states can and should be treated differently from our theory of motivating reasons. Motivating reasons and motivating states are not necessarily the same thing. Since our theory of motivating states need not be our theory of motivating reasons, it is possible that the best explanations for actions are anti-psychological in nature. Actions can be explained by non-psychological facts in addition to psychological facts, even if our motivating states are always psychological. In addition, I discussed McDowell's disjunctive theory of perception, in order to explain how it is that, in the case of an agent with true beliefs, an agent's actions are best explained by non-psychological facts, while in the case of an agent with false beliefs, an agent's actions are best explained by psychological facts.

In this chapter, I will discuss Dancy's anti-psychological account of action explanation, in order to demonstrate how anti-psychological action explanations work, and why such explanations are compelling. Dancy's anti-psychological account of reasons is compelling, and I take his arguments for an anti-psychological account of reasons to generally be the best arguments that are available. As such, I intend to use Dancy's position as the foundation for the anti-psychological/ psychological hybrid position I espouse. At the same time, there are significant problems with Dancy's position, which I will discuss in this chapter and in the next and final chapter, as well.

It's worth noting at the outset that Dancy's anti-psychological account of reasons holds that reasons, including motivating reasons, are objective. Consequently, Dancy's position is radically opposed to Williams' argument for reasons internalism, outlined in chapter one. However, as I have shown in chapter one, Williams' argument for reasons internalism is not actually capable of undermining theories of reasons, even if such theories are as reasons externalist as Dancy's position is. While Dancy and Williams are in obvious disagreement regarding the nature of reasons, their shared position that there is

only one kind of thing, a reason[53], does provide some common ground. Dancy argues for a constraint, called the *explanatory constraint,* which is very similar in nature to Williams' reasons internalism, in that both hold that there must be a connection between an agent's reasons for acting and an agent's reasons to act.

In *Practical Reality*, Dancy advocates an anti-psychological account of reasons. He supports his anti-psychological account of reasons with the *normative constraint*, which is a constraint on what can count as a reason. The normative constraint stipulates that motivating reasons must also be normative reasons. He also argues that because normative reasons are objective they must also be anti-psychological. Since normative reasons are objective, and motivating reasons must be capable of being normative reasons, motivating reasons must also be objective. He supports this position by showing that his 'pure cognitive' theory of motivating reasons, according to which motivation is grounded in cognitive states (i.e., Beliefs), is the best theory of motivating reasons. He argues that this supports the conclusion that reasons are actually anti-psychological, not psychological.

In this chapter, I will outline Dancy's positive position, as I will eventually use his position to support my own anti-psychological approach to motivating reasons. To show the advantages of his anti-psychological approach to reasons, I will outline his argument that normative reasons are objective and his argument for his pure cognitive account of motivating reasons. I will also discuss his normative constraint, as well as some of the problems with his normative constraint. I will also supplement the discussion of the possibility of desires being motivating reasons from chapter two with some further discussion of the role of desire as a motivating reasons with respect to arguments made by Dancy. In many respects, his anti-psychologism is the position I will argue for. However, in the next chapter I will discuss the significant problems his position has with false beliefs. These problems necessitate substantive modifications to his position. I will modify Dancy's position by arguing that in some cases, but not all, explanations of an agent's action in terms of the agent's psychological states provide the best explanations of

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53   As opposed to Smith, for example, who holds that there are two kinds of things, motivating reasons and normative reasons.

that action. The resulting position, which holds that reasons can be either psychological or anti-psychological in nature depending on the appropriate context, is the position I will advocate.

3.2 Objective Reasons

Part of the foundation of Dancy's argument for an anti-psychological account of reasons is his claim that all reasons for acting (i.e., all normative reasons) are objective, as both duties and the requirements of rationality are objective. As outlined in the introduction, objective reasons are facts that are not grounded in the psychological states of an agent. Normative reasons are either duties or requirements of rationality. If it turns out that both duties and the requirements of rationality are objective, then our normative reasons are objective. If normative reasons are objective, then they are anti-psychological,[54] in that they depend on the world to an extent. Conversely, if normative reasons are subjective, then they depend on how the agent takes the situation to be, and thus depend on the mental states of the agents (Dancy 2000: 49). Subjective reasons, then, are psychologistic, in the sense defined in the introduction of my dissertation.

There are two specific arguments, made by Dancy, which I am going to discuss that show that normative reasons are objective. First, he argues that there are no subjective normative reasons by arguing that normative reasons only appear subjective, to the extent that they do, because of a misguided logical manoeuvre called 'detachment'. If we avoid 'detachment', it will be plain that there are no subjective normative reasons. Secondly, he defends the possibility of objective duties and thus the possibility of objective normative reasons from a criticism from Prichard that an espousal of objective duties creates duties to act in situations where an agent could not know that such a duty exists. Dancy does this by arguing that objective reasons are reasons relative to what he calls an 'epistemic filter', such that the agent only has reasons that the agent could be expected be aware of.

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[54]   It should be noted that Smith (1994) considers normative reasons to be objective and would as a result be considered to hold that normative reasons are anti-psychological. The fundamental source of disagreement between Dancy and Smith has to do with Dancy's anti-psychological conception of what Smith would call motivating reasons, since Smith holds to a clearly psychological account of motivating reasons.

Let me begin by discussing detachment. Dancy argues that what appear to be subjective normative reasons in some contexts are actually complex objective normative reasons governing a combination of beliefs and actions (2000: 53). A simple reason would be a straightforward reason to act or refrain from acting. A complex reason, on the other hand, consists of a combination of banned and/or required beliefs and actions. Consider, for example, a complex reason not to be hypocritical. An individual has a complex normative reason not to be hypocritical which consists of a ban on believing that it is wrong for others to Φ while engaging in Φ-ing.

The subjectivist about normative reasons justifies her subjectivism through misdiagnosing complex objective reasons as subjective reasons. According to Dancy, this is due to a misguided logical manoeuvre called 'detachment'. Specifically, detachment involves moving from complex moral requirements to the assumption that if part of the complex obtains, then the moral requirements are passed to the other part of the complex. If detachment is correct, subjective normative reasons are actually complex objective normative reasons. Detachment involves moving from a complex obligation to component obligations when the complex obligation obtains. For example, if there is an obligation "if one believes x to y" ($Ox[Bxp \rightarrow Dx]$), detachment would involve concluding that, because you believe x(Bxp), you have an obligation to y ($OxDx$). Detachment can be represented symbolically as:

(D) $Ox(Bxp \rightarrow Dx)$, and

  Bxp

  Therefore, $OxDx$[55]

Dancy's claim is that the obligation lies in the complex obligation as a whole, not in its component parts. For example, Dancy states: "those who deny detachment (the 'non-detachers') will tend to say that you should ensure that if you have promised, you keep your promise; but that it does not follow that if you have promised, you should ensure that you keep your promise" (2000: 71). If you have a complex obligation to, if you have

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[55] Based on Dancy (2000: 71-72). "'Ox' means 'x should ensure that', 'Dx' means 'x performs action D', and 'Bxp' means 'x believes p'" (2000: 71).

made a promise to keep that promise, it does not follow that if you have made a promise, you have an obligation to keep the promise. The obligation lies over the whole conditional. For the non-detachers, the obligation lies in the conditional alone – there is no particular obligation to ensure one keeps one's promise; instead, there is only the obligation to ensure that if you have promised, you keep your promise.

The distinction being made is subtle, and often practically irrelevant, since under both conceptions of the deontic operator, one should not both make promises and not keep them. The dispute between detachers and non-detachers is a dispute about the scope of the deontic operator. To the non-detacher, the deontic operator ranges over the conditional as a whole in all cases, and cannot be taken to extend just to the consequent, should the antecedent obtain. However, Dancy denies that there exists an equivalency law that would enable the unpacking of the 'ought' conditional so as to legitimize detachment. It may be the case that the same actions are required for both detachers and non-detachers in this and other cases.

Detachment/non-detachment is significant for Dancy because he wants to avoid a shift from acknowledging the conditional "if we have belief x then we have specific duty y" to thinking that normative reasons are in fact grounded in beliefs themselves (2000: 55). If detachment is valid then for some belief, x, and for some action, y, where we think "you should, if you believe x, y", then, if you believe x (Bxp), you have an obligation to do y (OxDx). By denying the validity of such a move, he stops the reduction of complex objective normative reasons to subjective normative reasons, showing that normative reasons are objective, and thus anti-psychological.

A criticism of detachment, taken from Prichard's "Duty and Ignorance of Fact" (1932), and extrapolated by Dancy, is that if duties, and thus at least some normative reasons, are objective, then agents have reasons to act in situations where agents do not know that such a reason exists, and conversely agents will not have a reason to act in situations where they think they have a reason but in fact do not. If duties are objective and not subjective, they exist independently of our beliefs about the world. For example (from Prichard), if there are objective duties, we would only have a duty to slow down when

merging or when approaching an intersection when there is other traffic. It does not matter if we are unaware if there's other traffic. Our duties are grounded in what is actually the case if duties are objective, and thus we would only have a duty to slow down when there was, objectively, a reason to do so. Similarly, there could be objective duties we are not and never could be aware of (a duty not to eat grapes, for example), but if duties are objective, we could have such duties. If there can be duties one does not and, perhaps, never could know one has, it seems absurd to think that they are still somehow duties that one is expected to act on. Since duties only have meaning to the extent to which we are able to act on them, on this account, the objectivist account of duties cannot be the right one. By embracing a strongly objectivist account of duties (a kind of duties realism), the objectivist makes duties something that cannot be known with certainty.

Dancy suggests that normative reasons generally should be seen through the eyes of an agent-relative epistemic filter. Only features of the situation that the agent can be reasonably expected to be aware of can count as normative reasons. This is consistent with the principle that 'ought' implies 'can': if an agent cannot be aware of the grounds of a normative reason, it cannot be a reason in the first place since if she cannot be aware of it, she cannot intentionally act on it. If an agent has, for example, an obligation to win a bet at a horse race, the obligation is not to bet on the horse that will win, but to bet on the horse that, given what features of the situation she is capable of being aware of, she expects to win, because she cannot have an obligation she cannot act on. The only obligation she can have is one she can act on, and her epistemic limitations are just as real as any physical limitation regarding what she is capable of. It is not the case that it is only those features of a situation that the agent has noticed that can serve as grounds for objective duties, for example. Willful ignorance does not make one's normative reasons go away. At the same time, features of the situation the agent could not possibly be aware of cannot count as grounds for normative reasons, since the agent could not act based on those features of the situation. Since an agent always has a fundamental reason to act morally, and because an agent could never act on reasons that are grounded in features of the situation that she cannot in principle be aware of, an agent cannot have moral normative reasons that she could not become aware of. This bypasses the above criticism from Prichard, which rests on the principle that objective duties exist independent of the

agent's awareness of the features of the moral situation. Since the epistemic filter ties normative reasons to some extent to the agent's awareness of the features of the situation, Dancy's account of objective normative reasons are not subject to the above criticism.

It may be objected that Dancy's epistemic filter forces him to give up his conception of objective reasons. For if some (otherwise) objective reasons are not reasons for some agents because of those agents' beliefs, one might think that reasons are no longer objective but are instead subjective, since whether or not they hold depends on the presence or absence of various subjectively held beliefs. However, I would argue that this conflates the question of whether reasons are *agent-relative* with the question of whether reasons are objective. Reasons are agent-relative if they are reasons for some agent or agents, but not for others, depending on the particulars of the agent. Reasons are objective if they are grounded in features of the relevant situation, as opposed to psychological states of the agent. It is possible for reasons to be objective and also agent-relative, which, not coincidentally, is the position espoused by Dancy (1993). Consider, for example, an agent who encounters a child struggling to keep afloat in deep water. Arguably, the agent has a duty to do what she can to save the child. If the agent can swim, and swimming to save the child is the best or only way to save the child, she has a duty and thus an objective reason to swim out and save the child. If she cannot swim— because, say, she does not know how to—she does not have this reason. The reason to swim out and save the child is objective, but it is also agent relative, in that agents who can swim have it, but agents who cannot, do not.[56] The underlying principle that justifies reasons being agent-relative is that an agent cannot have an obligation (and thus cannot have a reason) that she cannot act on (ought implies can).

This principle is itself an objective fact about reasons. It does not matter why the agent cannot act. One reason an agent could be unable to act on an obligation is that she is unaware an obligation exists in the first place. Since awareness, or lack thereof, is a fact about the agent's psychological states, an agent can be able or unable to act because of

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[56]   This is not to say that agents who cannot swim might not have other obligations with respect to the situation. Even if we are powerless to save the child, there may still be social duties surrounding the situation and how we act and even feel with respect to it.

her psychological states and, specifically, because of what she does or does not know. Consequently, there is some correlation between an agent's reasons to act and what agent does or does not know, and thus an agent's psychological states. Dancy's response to Prichard's criticism that objective reasons would give us all reasons to act in situations where we could not know we have a reason to act is that we cannot have reasons to act we could not act upon, but this does not undermine the claim that reasons are grounded in features of the situation. Our psychological states, amongst other things, are relevant for determining which reasons we can act on, but our reasons are not grounded in our psychological states. Rather, our psychological states serve as enabling conditions that determine which facts give us reasons (as will be discussed later in this chapter). Our psychological states determine which facts are reasons for us, and possibly even which facts give us reasons, but do not themselves give or ground the reasons. Under the epistemic filter, normative reasons are still anti-psychological because, even though reasons will vary with the psychological states and abilities of the agent, reasons are still grounded in the facts of the situation. This account of reasons is consistent with Dancy's general approach to reasons.[57]

To recap: Dancy proposes that there exists an epistemic filter that limits what counts as an objective reason for an agent. According to the epistemic filter, duties exist only if an agent can reasonably be expected aware of them. The justification for thinking this is that ought implies can, and an agent cannot be expected to act on that which she is not aware of. Consequently, Dancy's position is that reasons are objective, but what specific reasons the agent has will vary with facts about the agent.

Dancy's account of the epistemic filter naturally raises the question of how fine the filter should be – how accessible to the agent do the relevant features of a moral situation need to be before she is counted as having been negligent? Dancy is aware of this particular concern. While he does claim that it is not a concern that needs to be immediately addressed, he suggests (taking a cue from Anscombe) that the filter is not purely

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[57] Cf. Dancy (1993) for Dancy's account on which he draws on Nagel's distinction between agent-relative and agent-neutral reasons (Nagel, 1970), or his insistence that a good explanation "enables us to see how the agent might have taken certain features of the action as good reasons to do it" (Dancy, 2000: 95).

epistemic. He states that the epistemic filter has a normative component, in that in some cases of apparent negligence the agent *should have known* (57), whereas in other cases (the death of a baby left on an agent's doorstep by a stranger after she has gone to bed, where it is not the case that she should have known about the baby that arrived and died during her sleep, for example) it is not the case that the agent should have known, and thus the agent did not have a reason to act under the epistemic filter. The 'should' in play here is objective. Dancy's position would be made more plausible if he provided a clear account of how fine the filter should be, and thus provided a theory of what agents should and should not be expected to know which is not dependent on their beliefs. However, the claim that there is a fact of the matter about what an agent should know in any given situation is not undermined by the absence of a theory of what that fact would be.

Nevertheless, that practically it can be difficult to determine whether or not an agent should have known may be considered a problem by some. In response to this, I would suggest that we consider Dancy's epistemic filter to be a corollary of the general principle that 'ought implies can', but applied specifically to epistemic concerns. In the majority of cases, the epistemic filter is easy to apply. I could not have known there was a baby left on my doorstep overnight, so I had no obligation to do anything, even though the results of my not doing anything was tragic. I knew the child was drowning, and all things being equal, had an obligation to do something about it. The difficult cases are those boundary cases, where it is up in the air whether or not the agent should have known. For example, Jim had a hunch Sue was up to something, but didn't look into it, and it turned out she was embezzling. Did Jim fail in his obligations? Dancy does not present a clear sense of when an obligation does or does not exist.

Much like with the epistemic filter, there are boundary cases for 'ought implies can', where it is unclear practically what obligations the agent has. There are also clear-cut cases, where the agent's obligations are straightforward. An agent who is unable to swim does not have an obligation to swim out to save a drowning child. The matter is not so clear in the case of an agent who can swim well, but is aware of the strong undertow thanks to posted signs. In boundary cases, epistemic concerns increasingly come into play as an agent has to make a judgement about how to proceed where there's a lack of

certainty. The agent may judge that she would be throwing her life away if she swam out to the child because of the undertow. Let's say she's right, nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand, but of course the agent doesn't know this – she's made a judgement based on her understanding of the situation. According to Dancy's epistemic filter, we need to look at the agent's beliefs and judgement to determine whether or not she judged soundly. If we reject the epistemic filter, we need to look at the facts of the situation, instead. When we reject the epistemic filter, we are left saying that nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand the agent would have no obligation and one time out of a thousand, she would, but we will be unable to make a judgement regarding the case at hand as to whether or not the agent has an obligation. While looking at the information the agent had and whether or not she judged soundly and acted rationally with respect to her judgement may be difficult, it is not clear that it is inherently more problematic than trying to make a judgement about whether or not the agent had an obligation when ignoring the agent's epistemic limitations in all cases. Furthermore, in many cases (such as the case I'm discussing here), it seems more practical and more accurate to focus on the agent's epistemic standing.

It is not ideal that it can be difficult to apply Dancy's epistemic filter in some cases. However, determining what obligations agents have generally is often difficult in practical situations, and the epistemic filter is another tool that can be applied in at least some circumstances. Rejecting the epistemic filter means that, if there are objective normative reasons, an agent can have an obligation to act in circumstances where the agent could not know about that obligation, and thus could not act on that obligation, despite having it. This would contradict the principle that 'ought implies can'. The epistemic filter should be accepted because it is a corollary of 'ought implies can'.

There is still a further problem – how to assess those who, through being misinformed by no fault of their own (thus having false beliefs), have acted in ways we want to say they should not have. A consequence of the epistemic filter is that an agent may have done the wrong action from the standpoint of a more informed agent, but due to the epistemic filter Dancy discussed earlier, the agent, given what the agent ought to be expected to know, was not wrong for doing the action. For example, an agent who neglects the baby that

was left at his doorstep in the middle of the night without his knowledge, may have done something wrong from the standpoint of someone who knew the baby was there. However, the agent is not culpable for any harm done to the baby as a result of the unavoidable neglect. After all, the agent acting in accordance with all the duties he could have reasonably been aware of. We can desire that the agent had found and given appropriate care for the baby, but the agent did not have a duty to do so, given what the agent knew. What an agent has a normative reason to do is both objective and also dependent on facts about the agent,[58] depending as it does on what the agent can be expected to know about her situation.

To summarize: Dancy has argued that normative reasons are objective. Supposed subjective normative reasons are actually complex, irreducible objective reasons. However, while normative reasons are objective, they are also agent-relative, as agents only have reasons they could know they have, consistent with 'ought implies can'.

3.3 Reasons and Desires

In arguing against Smith's Humean account of motivation in the previous chapter I argued that, in cases of true belief, our psychological states may not play a role in our explanations of action. Instead, in cases where the agent acting has true beliefs, our explanations are going to rely on an anti-psychological account of reasons. If it turns out, even in the case of true beliefs, that desires, as motivating states, are reasons for an agent's actions, then psychological motivating states are, in those cases, motivating reasons. My argument that we should reject Dancy's claim that the form of our explanation cannot change between cases of true and false belief hinges on the claim that in the case of true beliefs, but not in the case of false beliefs, our beliefs are justified by what is actually the case, and as such, it is what is the case (the object of our beliefs) and

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[58]   It may seem counter-intuitive, but a normative reason can be both objective in that it exists as a matter of fact, while still being agent-relative in that it depends on certain features of the agent. For example, there may be objective reasons to act for agents who have particular combinations of beliefs. Specifically, there may be an objective reason to help those you believe in distress. The reasons are objective, but still relative to states specific to the agent. Dancy's claim that reasons to act exist through an epistemic filter requires that reasons be both objective and agent-relative. The reasons are objective, in that they are grounded in features of the situation, not the agent's psychology, but agent-relative, in that they are only reasons for agents who are aware the reasons exist in the first place.

not the psychological states themselves that are of explanatory interest. If in cases of true belief we still need to rely on the psychological, motivating states of the agent, it looks like it could undermine the distinction I am drawing between action explanations in the case of true beliefs compared to action explanations in the case of false beliefs. However, I will use Dancy's arguments in *Practical Reality* to show that, on the one hand, desires do not play an independent explanatory role, and on the other, that even were we to take motivating reasons to be psychological states, motivating reasons would be sets of beliefs. The result is that, as a general rule, desires are not necessary to explain agent's actions and, to the extent that they are necessary, they do not threaten the distinction between explanatory cases of true belief and cases of false belief that I am drawing.

Dancy does not think desires are reasons for action. A desire-based account of reasons, such as the Humean theory of motivation, holds that an agent has a reason to do action Ψ if the agent desires Φ and Ψ-ing will subserve Φ-ing. The desire-based account of reasons has two parts. "The first part holds that desires convert what is not an end in itself into something that is an end for the agent – the desirer. The second part holds that a desire to Φ gives us no reason to Φ, but it does give us a reason to do whatever will subserve Φ-ing" (Dancy, 2001: 34). However, as a general rule, we only desire to Φ in the first place because there is a reason to (or for) Φ. There is a reason to subserve Φ-ing or not to subserve Φ-ing and thus, if we are sufficiently knowledgeable and rational enough to be aware of this, we desire to Φ. For any desire that subserves a reason R to Φ will always itself be subserved by some additional reason, so citing the desire adds nothing to the explanatory force of R.[59] There are (anti-psychological) reasons to not harm others, to help those who need help, and to treat others with respect, and they precede the desire to do so. Moreover, the desire itself springs out of recognition of this, preceded by a belief about what we already have a reason to do. If we desire to go to the store, or learn a new language, or seek gainful employment, there are reasons we do these things that are not based on our desires. We go to the store to get onions for supper, learn a new language to prepare for our vacation, and seek employment so we can put bread on the table, thereby staving off starvation. Desires provide no extra reason for an action and, should there be

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[59]   Thanks to Andrew Botterell for suggesting this formulation.

no good reason for the action that an individual desires, fail to provide one. If there is no reason to drink battery acid, my desire to do so doesn't change anything. If an agent has every "reason not to Φ, the fact that Ψ-ing will subserve Φ-ing cannot give us a reason to Ψ", and therefore if "we have no reason to Φ, the fact that Ψ-ing will subserve Φ-ing can be no reason to Ψ, even where we desire to Φ" (Dancy, 2001: 38). Agents may have a desire to Φ when there is no reason to Φ, or every reason not to, but the presence of this desire does not suddenly create a reason for the agent. One could posit the existence of desires in each case. Dancy's point, however, is that a coherent explanation of an action can be given without having to reference an agent's desires and, furthermore, where an agent has a normative reason to act, we do not need to refer to the agent's desires to explain the reason to act.

One may object to this position on the grounds that it may seem that certain actions are only explainable by the agent's desires. If I get myself some chocolate chip mint ice cream over strawberry ice cream because I prefer chocolate chip mint, it seems like the most straightforward explanation of that action is, all things being equal, I got myself the ice cream because I desired that kind of ice cream. Dancy describes this sort of desire as an 'inclination' (2000: 36), and claims that in the case of inclinations, there are equally compelling reasons why I should purchase either chocolate chip mint or strawberry ice cream, and I am acting on the reasons I have, but there are no conclusive reasons deciding for one ice cream or the other. Dancy concludes from this that "inclinations are just desires that we have for inconclusive reasons" (2000: 36). This claim seems *ad hoc*, however, because Dancy provides nothing to justify it. It is unclear what an inconclusive reason is, or how one has a desire because of an inconclusive reason. There need be no reason, conclusive or inconclusive, for preferring one ice cream flavour over another. In some situations, the best explanation of a choice made by an agent seems to be that the agent was directed by her desire.

Dancy also discusses 'urges', such as "the urge to eat another slice of cake, or to touch a woman's elbow" (2000: 36). Urges are desires held for no reason. Dancy points out that a desire is only an urge if the agent with the urge sees no good in it, but yet has some psychological push to act on the urge. His suggestion is that the urge, then, must be

pathological and thus even if there is no reason for the urge, the urge should not count as a reason. However, it at least seems possible that the agent could value the urge for its own sake, and thus the urge can be good from the agent's perspective for no external reason. The urge need not be pathological to serve as a counter-example to Dancy's claim that all desires are had for a reason.

It is not clear that Dancy has good grounds to discount our ability to act on our inclinations and urges. However, I don't think such states threaten an anti-psychological account of reasons. I agree with Dancy that desires do not provide reasons, but Dancy's explanation of why this is the case is inadequate.

Urges and inclinations often exist for no obvious external reason and could be considered to have a world-to-mind direction of fit. However, I don't think this threatens an anti-psychological account of reasons. Since desires are often held to play an important role as a motivating state, it may seem difficult to imagine how we could explain at least some instances of motivation without reference to desire. However, as I discussed in chapter two, motivating states and motivating reasons come apart. Consequently, whether or not urges and inclinations can be motivating states for agents is a separate issue from whether or not urges and inclinations can be motivating reasons for agents.

It is important to note that psychological states can be anti-psychological reasons. I can, for example, purchase you chocolate mint ice cream because I know that you would like the ice cream (I bought the ice cream for you to enjoy). In this case, your psychological states are the reason why I bought the ice cream. While the action here is best explained by psychological states, the psychological state that is the reason for the ice cream purchase is not a motivating state for that purchase, but is an anti-psychological reason for the purchase in the same way that the threat of rain is a reason for an agent to take an umbrella with her on a walk, or the threat of military intervention can be a reason for a country to cease its aggressive posturing. Furthermore, I can stand in the same relation to my own psychological states that I can stand in relation to yours when I purchase you ice cream. This is what happens when a desire is a reason for an agent – she believes (truly) that she has the desire and that she is, in this case, justified in acting on the desire, where

the desire and the justification for acting on the desire are both objects of belief. Since desires have propositional content, it is that state picked out by the propositional content of the desire, coupled with other facts believed by the agent, such as hypothetically the fact that bringing about the state picked out by the desire would bring about a relevant amount of net good (by, say, increasing the happiness of the agent), that explain the action. In the same way that the good of a child is a reason to save the child from drowning, the good I get from ice cream is a reason for me to get some when appropriate. My anticipated enjoyment of ice cream (my want or desire) is not a (psychological) motivating state for the action, but rather is a motivating reason, in the same way that needing onions for supper is a motivating reason but not a motivating state. I believe I will enjoy the ice cream and it is on the basis of this belief that I purchase the ice cream. In the same way that, if my beliefs about needing onions for supper are true, we can best explain my action with respect to the need for onions, if my beliefs about future ice cream enjoyment are true, we can best explain my action with respect to that anticipated enjoyment. If some action can satisfy some inclination or urge, then, in contexts where acting to satisfy that end is justified objectively, then I am justified in taking that action. This applies equally, regardless of whether the urge I am satisfying is mine or the urge of someone else. This does not problematically render the explanation psychological in nature, and neither does it undermine an argument for anti-psychologism about reasons.

Supposed counter-examples to the anti-psychological account of reasons often come down to agents having false beliefs about complex duties. Cases where the agent does not have a good normative reason for acting on her desires look like instances that support the Humean theory of motivation, since there is no anti-psychological reason for the agent to act as she does. The best explanation presumably relies on the agent's psychological states. However, in such cases the agent has a false belief about whether or not she is justified in acting on her desires. The diabetic who eats the chocolate bar because of her desire for it, despite knowing she shouldn't (and assuming she is acting intentionally), is acting irrationally. There is, even if just implicit, an evaluative judgement that satisfying her desire will be worth it to her. This is consistent with Smith's claim that Regardless of what her motivating states are, she is acting as though she has a good reason to eat the chocolate, but she is mistaken. Agents can act irrationally, by

acting on their desires when they have no justification. But such instances are just standard cases of irrationality. This case is an instance of a false belief and, relying on my use of McDowell's epistemological disjunctivism, discussed in chapter two, can be resolved by pointing out that in cases of false beliefs, we are best off describing the agent's actions in terms of the agent's psychological states.

3.4 Psychologistic Theories of Motivating States

To this point I have outlined Dancy's argument that normative reasons are objective, in that normative reasons are independent of an agent's psychological states. That normative reasons are objective is important to Dancy's argument, because he intends to argue that normative reasons and motivating reasons are the same kind of thing, on the grounds that one reason should be able to be both normative and motivating. I have also argued that, despite some inadequacy in Dancy's argument to this effect, desires are not reasons in their own right. I now intend to discuss Dancy's preferred psychologistic position, 'pure cognitivism', which he uses to support his anti-psychological account of reasons. After outlining his pure cognitivist position, I will argue that Dancy's pure cognitivism creates problems for Humeanism.

Dancy has argued that neither beliefs nor desires are capable of grounding normative reasons, as normative reasons are objective and so cannot be psychological states. It is what is believed, not the belief, that grounds a reason (Dancy 2000: 99). Dancy holds that this is true even in the case of false beliefs, as will be discussed next chapter. Thus, an anti-psychological account of normative reasons is the best account of normative reasons.[60] However, a central claim Dancy makes in *Practical Reality* is that normative reasons are capable of being motivating reasons. The claim that normative reasons are anti-psychological, and that normative reasons can motivate, strongly suggests that motivating reasons are anti-psychological as well. Dancy wants to establish that an anti-psychological account of reasons is the correct account of both normative and motivating reasons. To this end, he argues that a pure cognitive theory is the best, and only viable, psychologistic theory of motivation out of the possible array of psychologistic positions.

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[60]   This is consistent with Smith's approach to normative reasons, discussed in chapter two.

He argues that it is superior to Humeanism and to other anti-Humean theories of motivation (all of which are necessarily psychologistic). He then proceeds to establish that, if pure cognitive theory is the best psychologistic theory of motivation, certain features of pure cognitivism give us reason to think that actually an anti-psychologistic theory of motivation is an even better account of motivating reasons. He argues as follows:

> 1) Either a psychologistic or an anti-psychologistic theory of motivating reasons is the correct theory of motivating reasons.
> 2) If the correct theory of motivating reasons is psychologistic, then that theory of motivating reasons is the pure cognitive theory of motivation.
> 3) If the pure cognitive theory of motivation is the correct theory of motivating reasons, then an anti-psychologistic theory of motivating reasons is the correct theory of motivating reasons.
> 4) Therefore, the correct theory of motivating reasons is an anti-psychologistic theory of motivating reasons.

The claim that pure cognitivism entails an anti-psychologistic theory of motivating reasons may seem surprising. However, this claim is supported by a number of arguments from Dancy. Our reasons for acting are objective features of the situation (seen through the epistemic filter). As such, our beliefs are only the means by which the relevant objective features of the situation, which count as reasons for acting, are discovered. Once Dancy establishes that our motivating states are our beliefs, it follows that the proper objects of explanatory interest are those features of the situation as the agent understands it that favours choosing one action over the other possibilities. In order to assess some action or another, our interest is not in what the agent believed, but in whether or not she had good reasons to act as she did. Since the agent took herself to be acting for good reasons, in order to explain her actions, we need to be able to see why she took herself to have good reasons for acting. Ideally, agents act because they have a reason to do so, and since reasons to act (normative reasons) are objective facts of the matter, it is the facts of the matter, and not the agent's beliefs, that best explain the agent's actions. Rather than looking to the agent's beliefs to determine the agent's reasons, we

need to look at the situation the agent's beliefs are about. I will briefly discuss pure cognitivism and the reasons why it is the best psychologistic theory of motivating reasons, so that pure cognitivism can be used to support Dancy's anti-psychologism later.

Dancy supports his pure cognitivist position by drawing from Nagel, in order to show that desires are not necessarily causally relevant to motivation, and as such beliefs can be motivationally fundamental. Says Dancy,

> Nagel suggests that though, if the agent is indeed motivated, we know that he has a relevant desire, what it is for the agent to have the desire is left open. ... The motivated desire may not be an independent existence, in Humean terms; that is, it need not be a self-standing psychological state, playing its own role in the agent's motivational economy. ...It follows from the fact that these considerations move him that he has a relevant desire, but the desire is not a part of what moves him. (Dancy, 2000: 80)

Nagel has suggested it is an open question whether motivated desires are causally relevant to motivation, and in fact motivated desires may not be independent psychological states. Dancy posits that it is actually the case that desires are not independent psychological states, and motivation results from two purely cognitive states. Desires, while necessary for motivation, do not play a direct role in causing or generating motivation (and, in fact, are taken to be identical with motivation). As such, desire is not the basis for motivating reasons. Since motivation uncountered will lead us to act directly in line with our motivation, Dancy claims our explanation of motivation is presumably structurally similar to our explanation of our action. However, the only desire directly involved in explaining an action is identical with motivation. Desire is not a motivating reason, but a state of being motivated. The desire we ascribe when explaining the action of an agent generally just is that agent's motivation, which arises from, and is generated by, cognitive states. As argued earlier, desires are never reasons in their own right. Consequently, since desires are not explanatorily fundamental but instead depend on cognitive states, the best psychological account of motivation is pure cognitivism.

Like Nagel's approach, the pure cognitive theory preserves a Humean account of the direction of fit of belief and desire. Dancy also claims that, for the pure cognitive theory, a desire has an 'independent existence'. In this, he seems to be claiming that desire is distinct from belief in the sense that a classical Humean would think that desire is distinct. That being said, desire appears to in fact have very little independence on Dancy's account. Traditionally, Humeanism expects that desire has a distinct existence and, while it is distinct from belief under pure cognitivisn and thereby respects the Humean concern that desire have a distinct existence, Dancy's identification of desire with motivation and his claim that motivation has a cognitive basis is unacceptable to traditional Humeanism. This is because traditional Humeanism expects that desire is not merely distinct, but also independent. Given that Dancy holds that there is a necessary dependence of desire on sets of beliefs, he is in conflict with traditional Humean accounts which hold that desire is independent of belief, not dependent on belief. Consequently, Dancy's pure cognitivist position is broadly anti-Humean. Furthermore, traditional Humeanism holds desire to be the active ('ert') component of motivation, while beliefs are supposed to be inert, guiding desire. The 'oomph', the drive of motivation, for the traditional Humean, comes from desire.

Smith criticizes pure cognitivism as not posing a serious threat to Humeanism. The claim that beliefs are inert, while essential to Hume's position, is not essential to contemporary Humeanism (Smith 2003: 461). If beliefs are not inert for the Humean, then pure cognitivism, which has active ('ert') beliefs and also recognizes the necessity of desire is at bottom compatible with Humeanism (Smith 2003: 463). Dancy agrees with Smith that his pure cognitivism is compatible with Smith's interpretation of the Humean theory of motivation (Dancy 2003b: 483). However, if Smith's conception of Humeanism can encompass pure cognitivism, it is difficult to imagine that there are many theories of motivating states it does not encompass. Either Smith is misrepresenting what is constitutive of Humeanism, or the label 'Humeanism' is too broad to be useful. Furthermore, even if Dancy's pure cognitivism is taken to be compatible with Humeanism, it still presents a problem for the Humean theory of motivating reasons. Dancy's position that all desires can be explained by sets of beliefs would show that Humeanism's constitutive claim that desires are required to explain action is uninteresting

(Smith, 2003). Dancy's position might be compatible with Humeanism, but there is a shift in explanatory focus from non-cognitive to cognitive states. Smith might think that Dancy's pure cognitivism is compatible with Humeanism, but he is still opposed to the idea that motivation and all desires are subserved by or grounded in cognitive states in all cases. Smith's opposition to Dancy's pure cognitivism stems not from its incompatibility with Humeanism, although he does admit that "if beliefs had to explain the desires that explain actions, then Humeanism's constitutive claim would be uninteresting" (Smith, 2003: 463). Rather, Smith thinks that Dancy's pure cognitivism, according to which all desires can be explained by beliefs, is plainly mistaken (Smith, 2003: 463). That, however, is not a particularly strong argument against Dancy (although it should be noted that in that article Smith argues, based on a misunderstanding of Dancy, that Dancy does not actually hold the position that all desires can be explained by beliefs). The emphasis on cognitive states in motivation is a source of disagreement between Dancy and Humeans such as Smith.

In short, then, Dancy's account of motivation does create problems for the Humean position. He is able to provide a wholly cognitive account of motivation, according to which we can start with a cognitive state and, without change or addition to that state, be motivated. Since explanations of motivation and action are the same, this is a solely cognitive account of action. Insofar as desire plays a direct role in motivation and is therefore identical with being motivated, there is no addition to or change in the psychological state of the motivated agent – to have a desire just is to have two or more cognitive states interacting in such a way that the agent is motivated. Smith and Dancy will be in agreement regarding when motivation is occurring. Smith also holds that Dancy's position is compatible with Humeanism broadly speaking, because Smith argues that any position that requires both a belief and desire is a Humean position of some stripe (Smith, 2003). However, Dancy's position still creates a problem for Smith, in that Dancy rejects the possibility that desires can ever be anything but subserved by cognitive states. Assuming Dancy's argument given above for pure cognitivism is correct, Humeanism is in error, be it traditional Humeanism or Smith's more modern approach.

3.5 Psychological Reasons, Anti-Psychological Reasons

While Dancy contends that a pure cognitive theory is the only viable psychologistic theory of motivating reasons, he goes on to argue that no psychologistic account of normative or justifying reasons is going to be satisfactory.[61] In order to explain the actions of an agent, we need to explain not merely what the agent did, but what gave the agent a good reason to do the action. He describes the constraint of needing to explain what features of the action count as good reasons for doing the action (for the agent) as a regulative constraint (97) – a limiting factor on what counts as a good reason (qua explanation).[62] He takes this to be a fundamental truth about action explanations, but it can be seen to be rooted in his pure cognitivist account of motivation. If the agent acts because of what she believes, the object of an explanation is to make plain what it was that she believed (what she saw in the situation) such that the agent was led to act as she did. The action sits at a nexus of beliefs, both about the situation and about how the action would impact the situation. The aim of an explanation is to make plain what the agent saw in the situation and action such that she did the action. Furthermore, drawing on Davidson,[63] Dancy advocates something analogous to the principle of charity in explaining the action of others. We don't merely explain the agent's actions, but we explain charitably, assuming that the agent acted as rationally as possible and for what the agent, at least, took to be good reasons. We explain, from our point of view, what the agent, from her point of view (as we understand her point of view), would have seen in the action, and thus what it was about the action that she would have taken to give herself a good reason to do it.

Another reason Dancy takes the aim of action explanations to make plain what the agent saw in the action stems from his conception of reasons. At the beginning of *Practical*

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[61]   Following Dancy I will, for the rest of the chapter, assume pure cognitivism in discussing psychologistic theories of motivation, despite the prevalence of the Humean theory of motivation.

[62]   Note that I will be discussing explanations, and what counts as a good explanation, in further detail in the next chapter.

[63]   Dancy (2001: 96) draws on Davidson's claim that in understanding the attitudes and theory of meaning of another person, "we will try for a theory that finds him consistent, a believer of truths, and a lover of the good (all by our own lights, it goes without saying)" (Davidson, 2001, 222).

Reality Dancy states that "a bad reason for doing something, if it is not merely a not very good reason for doing it, can only be no reason at all for doing it; if so, it is not a reason in the sense intended, since it does not favour the relevant action" (2001: 1-2). All reasons for doing an action are good reasons, since otherwise they would not be a reason to do the action. Consequently, the goal of an action explanation is to show, from the agent's side of the epistemic filter discussed above, what about the action counted in its favour for the agent or, to put it another way, what reasons the agent had for doing the action. That being said, some reasons are better (or worse) than others. Dancy claims, however, that if we want to discover whether or not the agent acted for good reasons, we cannot restrict ourselves to the psychological states of the agent. The agent could be wrong or could have reasoned poorly. Instead, we consider features of the relevant situation (albeit features the agents are capable of being aware of, given the restrictions imposed in the discussion of the epistemic filter, above). Dancy's interest is in how agents can be taken to have been acting for a good reason, since explaining how an agent had a good reason to act (by the agent's lights) is the aim of an explanation (2000: 95). He specifically describes his position as starting with normative reasons, and then looking to see how normative reasons can motivate us (and, it turns out, we can be motivated by them, by believing them).

A large part of Dancy's motivation for advocating anti-psychologism is to support his strong claim, which Williams also advocates, that there is only one kind of thing that is a reason which can be put to both motivating and justifying (or normative) purposes.[64] However, unlike Williams, Dancy resolves the apparent tension and metaphysical incompatibility between motivating reasons (which are usually taken to be psychological) and normative reasons (usually taken to be facts about the world) by arguing that all reasons are anti-psychological, rather than that all reasons are psychological.

Given Dancy's conception of what counts as a good reason, his contention is that it is what the agent believes, rather than the agent's believing, that counts as a motivating reason. Since pure cognitivism holds that motivation is the product of a set of beliefs, and

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[64]   As discussed in the introduction.

that the beliefs then look to be the motivating reasons for the action, Dancy is arguing that it is not the beliefs or the believing of the agent, but the object of the belief, that is the reason. It is the object of the belief that is the motivating reason, not the agent's psychological state or the fact that the agent believes what the agent believes. As it has been established in discussing desires earlier in this chapter, and in discussing the Humean theory of motivation in the previous chapter, desires are motivationally relevant in relation to beliefs about what is desirable. Consequently, if Dancy can show that it is the object of beliefs, and not the beliefs themselves, that are reasons, he has shown that no reasons are psychological states. However, his argument that it is what is believed that is the motivating reason for an agent's action takes some work to establish.

Dancy identifies three plausible accounts of the metaphysical status of reasons:

1. All reasons are psychological.

2. All reasons are facts, as believed by agents.

3. Motivating reasons are psychological states and normative reasons are facts as believed by agents.

It is not possible that all reasons are psychological. It has already been established that normative reasons are objective, and thus anti-psychological. The issue, then, is between the second and the third possibilities – specifically, whether motivating reasons are psychological states or non-psychological facts. Claiming that all reasons are facts, what he comes to call the 'normative story', due to his emphasis on good reasons, is the anti-psychologistic account of reasons that Dancy wants to establish. The third possibility – that motivating reasons are psychological and normative reasons are facts – is what he calls the 'three-part story', represented as Dancy's pure cognitivist account (although Smith's Humeanism fits loosely as well, barring the emphasis on cognitive states). The 'three-part story' is so-called because it contains three components that together explain an agent's act. First, there is a normative reason to act. Second, the agent is then motivated (has a motivating reason) to action. And third, there is then the action itself.

Normative reasons and motivating reasons are different kinds of things, but motivating reasons can create normative reasons.

Dancy points out that the advantage of the three-part story is that it satisfies the explanatory constraint placed on any theory to show how a normative reason contributes to an explanation of the action done for that reason. The 'explanatory constraint' is based on Williams' argument for reasons internalism. It is the claim that any reason must be something an agent is capable of acting on (Roberts 2005, 98).[65] It is a constraint on any theory about the relationship between normative and motivating reasons, which is that the theory must be able to show "that and how any normative reason is capable of contributing to the explanation of an action that is done for that reason" (2000: 101). Normative reasons must be capable of contributing to an explanation of the action they are reasons for. Something cannot be a reason for an action if it cannot also be involved in explaining why an agent would act as she did. Normative reasons need not be able to directly motivate, however. The three-part story meets the explanatory constraint by explaining action in regards to beliefs, and explaining beliefs by the states of the world that cause those beliefs to be held. States of the world can be normative reasons, because they can contribute to how an action is explained (mainly, they are the objects of the agent's beliefs, and the beliefs motivate the action). As Dancy states, "the reasons that favour an action can explain the reasons that explain the action" (101). Normative reasons explain motivational reasons, which in turn explain the action itself, and thus normative reasons and motivational reasons are different kinds of reasons.

The normative story is opposed to the three-part story, "which denies the existence of motivating reasons of any sort, and tries to make do with normative reasons" (Dancy 2001: 101). Reasons are objective, despite being subject to the constraints of an epistemic filter, and as such reasons are anti-psychological facts as they can be expected to be understood by the particular agent in question, not the beliefs that an agent has. The

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[65] The term, 'explanatory constraint', originates in Dancy (2000, 101). Dancy describes it as a constraint that any normative reason needs to be capable of contributing to the explanation of an action that is done for that reason – which is to say, normative reasons must play a motivating role, however indirect. However, Roberts' articulation of the explanatory constraint is consistent with Dancy's, and is clearer and more precise.

obvious difference between the three-part story and the normative story is that the normative story is anti-psychologistic, whereas the three-part story is the general account of reasons provided by psychologistic theories of motivation, and particularly the pure cognitive theory of motivation, when beliefs are taken to be motivational reasons.

It may well seem to be the case that the three-part story is the correct account of our reasons for action. We often explain our actions in terms of our beliefs, and even when we don't talk about our beliefs explicitly, it is presumably *that* we believe something to be the case that causes us to act one way or another since, after all, if we didn't have the relevant belief, we wouldn't act the way we do. Dancy's contention, however, is the nuanced position that it is not the belief itself, but what is believed (even if we have gotten things wrong), that is the reason for the action. It is what is believed that is relevant and, when the belief is true, what is believed will be a fact.[66,67]

Dancy presents three objections to the three-part story, in order to show that the normative story provides a better account of reasons and to show thereby that reasons are anti-psychological. The first objection comes from the normative constraint, which is an additional constraint on top of the explanatory constraint on any theory seeking to explain our actions. The normative constraint is the constraint that a motivating reason must be able to be a reason that counts in favour of the action it motivates – motivational reasons should be able to be normative reasons (which is equivalent to saying that at least some set of normative reasons can be motivating reasons). Any normative reason must be the kind of thing that can be the reason *why* an agent acted, in addition to being the reason why an agent should act. Obviously, any theory of motivation which takes normative reasons to be anti-psychological facts and motivating reasons to be psychological states will not be able to meet the normative criteria, since if an agent can only act because of psychological states, an agent can't act directly because of anti-psychological states. Since the three-part story holds that motivational reasons are psychological states and

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[66]   The case of false beliefs will be discussed in the next chapter.

[67]   Note that this account of normativity, while having much in common with Smith, who also thinks that normative reasons are objective, but views them as "truths: that is, propositions of the general form 'A's Φ-ing is desirable or required" (Smith, 1994: 95).

normative reasons are anti-psychological facts, it runs afoul of the normative constraint. Conversely, if we take the normative constraint seriously and, as Dancy has argued, reject the possibility that normative reasons are psychological states, we will have to hold to an anti-psychologistic theory of not just normative reasons, but also motivational reasons, given that something cannot be both a psychological reason and not a psychological reason at the same time. As a consequence, normative reasons will be able to be motivational reasons, which is Dancy's aim in *Practical Reality*. Since my goal is to argue for a combined account, according to which reasons can be psychological or anti-psychological, depending on whether or not agents have false or true beliefs (respectively), I will be using Dancy's anti-psychologism to support my own anti-psychologism about reasons in cases of true belief.

Above, I discussed Dancy's criteria for what counts as a reason. It is important to recognize the relationship between Dancy's criteria for what counts as a reason, and his emphasis on the normative constraint and the normative story. Dancy's assertion is that an explanation consists in showing that an agent acted for a good reason, which requires showing what it is about the action the agent took that might have appealed to the agent, given the agent's understanding of the situation the agent found herself in. If we are to explain an agent's action, the reasons for that action are the reasons favouring that action over any other action (or inaction) that the agent could have taken as good reasons to act (with the epistemic constraint coming in to play here). In the same way that Smith began with a focus on teleological explanation of actions and, given his account of desire, built his account of reasons generally up from motivating reasons (and in particular from desire), Dancy is beginning with normativity as the grounding for explanations, beginning with normative reasons, and then explaining how normative reasons can play an explanatory role – how they can motivate an agent.

It may seem initially that the explanatory and normative constraints are mirrors of each other – a set of converse, parallel constraints. However, the explanatory constraint is the reasons internalist claim that a (normative) reason need have a connection, however conditional, to an agent's subjective motivational set (that it is the sort of thing an agent could act on). It need not be the case that normative reasons are the same kind of thing as

motivating reasons for the explanatory constraint to be met, which is how the three-part-story satisfies the explanatory constraint. Dancy, however, takes the normative constraint he introduces to be ontologically constraining – normative reasons and motivating reasons have to be the same kind of thing. And, to a certain extent, the viability of his anti-psychologism about reasons hinges on whether or not the normative reason needs to be so narrowly interpreted, such that normative reasons and motivating reasons have to be the same kind of thing, rather than closely (perhaps causally) related.

There is no overwhelming argument for Dancy's account of reasons, and if there are better accounts of what counts as a reason than his account, the emphasis on the normative constraint and the argument for the normative story ceases to be feasible. This is a significant concern with Dancy's position – whether or not his conception of a good explanation of an agent's action, and his resultant criteria for what counts as a reason is the right one. Dancy has pointed out an object of possible concern with prevalent (psychologistic) theories of motivating reasons, and has offered his anti-psychologistic approach as a resolution, inasmuch as his approach satisfies the normative constraint. However, this is where the weight of his argument lies. If the result is that his anti-psychologistic approach is less able to explain certain features of action explanations than other theories are, or is unable to account for an agent's actions under certain conditions (such as when an agent is acting because of a false belief), other theories of action explanation are preferable to his.

Dancy's second criticism of the three-part story is that, based on the normative constraint, motivational reasons need to be the right kind of metaphysical thing to be a normative reason (not that every motivational reason is a normative reason). An action explanation succeeds to the extent that it shows why there was a good reason for the agent to do what she did. However, beliefs are not normative reasons, and thus cannot be good reasons, as discussed in the previous section on beliefs and reasons. Consequently, our motivational reasons cannot be beliefs. If this criticism is accepted, the three-part story fails for reasons more or less the same as the reasons it fails against the normative constraint.

Dancy's third criticism of the three-part story is that the three-part story misconstrues an individual's self-ascriptions of belief. Dancy, drawing from Collins,[68] holds that statements of belief by an individual are expressing the same thing as statements of fact made by the individual, only with varying degrees of commitment to the truth of their claim or with acknowledgement of varying possibilities of error. So, someone who said "I believe there is a rat in my underwear drawer" is really making a statement about the world, not about her beliefs. However, under the three-part story, Dancy claims that someone uttering a statement about their beliefs is not actually making a commitment to the world being one way or another, given the particular role that beliefs have in a psychologistic account of motivation. The three-part story, as a result, misses something essential about our belief self-ascriptions – mainly, that such self-ascriptions are really just psychologized statements of fact, and are about supposedly objective circumstances, not the subjective internal states of the individual in question. Rather, the individual cannot help but be committed to the facts they claim they believe – but the three-part story denies that such commitment occurs.

Dancy also deals with a possible psychologistic theory of motivation that holds that motivational reasons could be a believing of the agent, and thus presumably a psychological state, while a normative reason might be the content of that belief, and so it looks like both the normative and explanatory constraints would be satisfied, as a normative reason would play a sufficient role in the motivation of an agent to satisfy the normative constraint. However, such an account would necessitate a highly problematic position in the philosophy of mind, as normative reasons are states of the world, but the contents of beliefs are propositions. Since propositions cannot be states of the world, propositions cannot be normative reasons, and thus a normative reason cannot be the content of a belief, if a belief is a psychological state. Consequently, there are no evident viable psychologistic theories of reasons, assuming that Dancy's arguments are sound.

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[68]   Dancy cites Collins (Collins 1997), who states that "the three-part story makes possible something that is in fact impossible, namely for the agent to explain his action in a way that makes no commitment to the truth of the beliefs that he cites in that explanation" (Dancy 2000: 108).

3.6 The Explanatory Constraint and Reasons Internalism

In Chapter 1, I discussed Williams' argument that for something to count as a reason, it must necessarily be connected to an agent's subjective motivational set (or her S, for short). An agent's reasons explain her actions, and something could not serve to explain the agent's actions if it could not motivate her, since it is not possible for an agent to make an intentional act without having a motivation to do that act. Consequently, anything which could not motivate the agent could not serve to explain the agent's actions. Purported reasons which have no connection to an agent's S are external reasons, since they are external to an agent's S. According to Williams, external reasons are not, in fact, reasons, however, since an agent cannot act on them.

Williams argues that the connection between the agent's reasons and the agent's S does not have to be based on the agent's actual S, however. Something is a reason for an agent if there were to be a connection to the hypothetical S the agent would have if the agent deliberated soundly. However, he stipulates that such a connection must be "fairly close and immediate" in order to count as a reason (Williams, 1981: 103).

Dancy's explanatory constraint is a constraint that any theory of the relationship between normative and motivating reasons must be able to show how normative reasons can contribute to the explanation of an action (Dancy, 2000: 101). The explanatory constraint, if not based on Williams' reasons internalism, is at least inspired by some of the same considerations as reasons internalism. The idea in both cases is that, for something to be a reason, it must serve to explain an agent's action. Reasons internalism, however, is much more constraining than the explanatory constraint, because of Williams' insistence that for something to count as a reason for an agent, that something must have at least a fairly close and immediate connection, via sound deliberation, to an agent's S. Dancy's explanatory constraint contains no such stipulation. As a result, even if a theory of the relationship between normative and motivating reasons meets the explanatory constraint, it still might not satisfy Williams' reasons internalism. A theory of the relationship between normative reasons and motivating reasons might be able to show how some proposed normative reason is able to contribute to the explanation of an action, but not be able to provide a connection between that normative reason and an agent's S, or between

the normative reason and the agent's relatively similar hypothetical S, were the agent to deliberate soundly.

Williams' argument presents a problem for Dancy, in that anti-psychological reasons are independent of an agent's psychological states, and thus are independent of an agent's S. Anti-psychological reasons are thus relatively external,[69] as far as reasons go, and according to Williams' argument, cannot actually be reasons. The aim of Williams' argument is to show that realist positions, according to which certain moral facts are supposed to be reasons for all agents, are not possible. Dancy's position, which holds that reasons are objective facts, certainly runs afoul of Williams' argument. Dancy's position does meet the explanatory constraint, because any normative reason, from the agent's side of his epistemic filter, is capable of contributing to an explanation of an agent's action. His position will not satisfy Williams' internalism, however.

In chapter 1, I argued that Williams' emphasis on the (counterfactual) connection between an agent's reasons and an agent's S does not need to be as tight as Williams' claims for a position to be reasons internalist. The connection between an agent's reasons and an agent's S does not need to be close or immediate, or even based on sound deliberation, for there to be a connection between an agent's S and an agent's reasons. All that is essential to reasons internalism is that there is some connection between an agent's S and an agent's reasons, and that connection does not need to be based on sound deliberation. And, in chapter 1, I argued that any theory of reasons is capable of providing a counter-factual connection to an agent's hypothetical S in order to count potential reasons as internal, rather than external, reasons.

That being said, the claim that any theory of reasons can potentially provide an internalist connection between an hypothetical S of an agent and the agent's purported reasons does not address the underlying concern that makes reasons internalism plausible. What is right about reasons internalism is that reasons, including normative reasons, must have

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69   Keeping in mind that, in chapter 1, I established that it is a mistake to think of reasons as being either internal or external, but it is better to think of them as existing on a internal/external spectrum, being either more or less internal (or external) in nature. Dancy's reasons, however, are pretty far along on the external end of the spectrum.

some role in explaining an agent's actions. The rest of Williams' position, such as the emphasis on sound deliberative routes that are close and immediate to the agent's actual S, is in fact Williams' own position and not essential to the general claim that for something to be a reason, it must have some role in explaining an agent's actions. The problem that reasons internalism presents for realism generally, and thus for Dancy's anti-psychological position, is to explain how objective reasons can be shown to necessarily have some role in explaining an agent's actions. It does not require the particular features of Williams' position, no matter how compelling his position is, to present that challenge. However, that challenge is also expressed by Dancy's explanatory constraint. As such, the explanatory constraint looks like a better standard that theories of reasons need to meet, since it captures what is essential to reasons internalism without assuming Williams' particular position. Since Dancy's theory of reasons meets the explanatory constraint, the fact that his theory runs afoul of Williams' more stringent reasons internalism is not a concern.

3.7 Concerns about the Normative Constraint

In this section I will discuss some problems with the normative constraint. The normative constraint is the requirement "that a motivating reason, that in light of which one acts, must be capable of being among the reasons in favour of so acting (Dancy, 2000: 103). Many philosophers agree with Dancy that there is a normative constraint, and that we have to be able to act for normative reasons.[70] It could be argued that the normative constraint does not require the tight relationship between motivating and normative reasons that Dancy treats it as requiring. If motivating and normative reasons do not need to be the same kinds of things, then the three-part story becomes viable. If our theory of reason explanations holds that one of the reasons an agent acts is that she believes that she should, and that is all that is required for an agent to act on a normative reason, the three-part story has a perfectly good explanation of how an agent can act for good reasons (mainly, by believing there is a good reason when in fact there is, and acting accordingly). Dancy needs to show that the right kind of account of explanation is one

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[70]   See Setiya (2009), Norman (2001), Heuer (2004) and Sandis (2012), for example.

that has agents acting for normative reasons. Dancy's normative constraint is the underpinning of the philosophical picture of reasons he puts forward, and a failure to support it undermines his entire anti-psychological account. If Dancy is correct about the normative constraint, some form of anti-psychologism about reasons is necessary. Conversely, without the normative constraint, an anti-psychological account of reasons is much less compelling.

There are three problems with the normative constraint that I would like to discuss. The first problem is that the normative constraint is being taken more literally than is needed, and accounts such as Smith's, according to which normative reasons are objective facts and motivating reasons are psychological (which Dancy calls the 'three-part story'), can provide an account of acting for a good reason that is all that we require of an action explanation. The second problem is that the three-part story better respects the different explanatory roles of motivating and normative reasons. The third problem, which is the most significant problem with the normative constraint and anti-psychological reasons generally, is how to explain agents acting in the light of false beliefs. I will discuss the third problem briefly here, but how to address the third problem will be a large part of the focus of the next chapter.

The first problem is the three-part story is capable of explaining how an agent acts for a good reason without the normative constraint. Consequently, the normative constraint is not actually a constraint on explanation. Dancy describes how an advocate of the three-part story might articulate how an agent acts for a good reason as follows:

> S Φ's for a good reason iff:
> 1. there is a good reason for S to Φ.
> 2. S believes that there is a good reason to Φ.
> 3. S Φ's because he so believes. (Dancy, 2003b: 470)

It is sufficient for an agent's action to count as being for a good reason if there is a good reason, the agent believes there is a good reason, and the agent acts on that belief. Similarly, Smith argues

> Dancy has fallen into a trap of thinking that just because the Humean thinks that beliefs and desires have to be part of the explanation of every action, it follows that he cannot think that facts about justifying reasons – which are not themselves beliefs and desires – can be part of the explanation of any action. ... [However,] because the Humean admits that an agent's beliefs about her justifying reasons can explain her actions, it follows that he admits that facts about her justifying actions can explain her actions as well. Facts about an agent's justifying reasons explain an agent's actions whenever they explain why she has the (true) beliefs she has about her justifying reasons, beliefs that in turn explain her actions. (Smith 2004, 175)

Smith is arguing that Dancy is requiring too tight a connection between justifying and motivating reasons. Smith argues that the necessary connection between motivating and normative reasons is satisfied by an explanation of how an agent's beliefs about her justifying reasons came to be formed by those reasons themselves. To the extent that it needs to be satisfied, Smith's Humeanism can satisfy it in that relevant facts, and thus normative reasons, play a role in explaining an agent's actions.

The issue here is whether or not we need to take the normative constraint literally in order to explain how agents act for a good reason. I think we do. It is possible to use normative reasons to explain the actions of an agent, indicating that agents do act because of normative reason, and that consequently at least some of the time a normative reason can play a motivating role. If the fact that we need onions for supper can both be a reason why I should go to the store, and can explain why I went to the store, normative reasons can be motivating reasons. The three-part story requires, not merely that normative reasons need not be motivating reasons, but that normative reasons cannot be motivating reasons. Since it is possible for normative reasons to be identical to motivating reasons, the three-part story is mistaken at least some of the time, and thus is inadequate as an account of reasons. Conversely, that normative reasons and motivating reasons can be the same kinds of things is a reason to think that Dancy's literal reading of the normative constraint is appropriate.

Furthermore, to summarize Dancy's (2003b) response to Wallace, according to the three-part story, the reason for an agent's action is a belief, and an agent acting on a belief is acting for a good reason. But a belief about a normative reason is not, itself, a normative reason, and if such a belief is the reason for action, the agent is not acting for a good reason. Beliefs are not themselves normative. As Dancy, Smith and Wallace all agree, normative reasons are objective and not psychological states.[71] Consequently, an agent whose reason for acting is her belief is not acting on a good reason, since beliefs are not good reasons. The only way an agent can act for a good reason is if normative reasons are the sorts of things agents can act on.

The second problem with a literal reading of the normative constraint, according to Wallace (2003), is that it undercuts what many philosophers take to be important distinctions between the explanatory and justificatory roles of motivating and normative reasons, respectively. These are distinctions which the three-part story respects. According to Wallace, normative reasons are facts or states of affairs, whereas motivating reasons are the motivations (meaning, specifically, the psychological motivating states) that the agent has. Normative reasons are facts about what you should do, and are from a first-person perspective and about the future. Motivating reasons are the psychological states that motivated an agent, and are generally ascribed from a third-person perspective and about things that have happened. By relying on a less literal conception of the normative constraint, we are better situated to distinguish between the different roles different kinds of reasons can play. Since we can better account for the different roles of normative and motivating reasons without the normative constraint, and since we can account for agents acting for a good reason without the normative constraint, according to Wallace, the three-part story is superior to an anti-psychological approach to reasons, which results from a strict interpretation of the normative constraint.

However, while viewing normative reasons as anti-psychological and motivating reasons as psychological is common practice, there is a tradition of treating reasons as being one

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[71] Although psychological states can be anti-psychological reasons in the right circumstances, in that your (or my, assuming the form of the explanation is maintained) psychological states, such as your fears or desires, can give me a reason to act. Your desire for a glass of water can anti-psychologically explain my actions.

kind of thing with two dimensions, normative and motivating. Williams, for example, holds that there is only one kind of thing with these two separate but connected dimensions. I would suggest that a philosopher's approach to normative and motivating reasons is not independent of the theory of reasons that they espouse. In particular, those who hold that motivating reasons are psychological while normative reasons are anti-psychological are going to think about reasons very differently than those who think that motivating and normative reasons can both be anti-psychological (or, in Williams' case, that there is one thing, a reason, which is psychological and both normative and motivating). So naturally, there will be differences of opinion about how motivating and normative reasons work, and what sort of things we can expect from normative or motivating reasons. These differences in opinion will result from the theory of reasons one holds in the first place, and as such should not be used to settle which theory of reasons is superior. To the extent that a difference of opinion about the nature of normative and motivating reasons is dependent on the underlying theory of reasons being espoused, that difference of opinion should not be used to settle underlying disagreements regarding theories of reasons.

Furthermore, Dancy points out (2003b) that in practice there is not the sort of sharp distinction between normative and motivating reasons that Wallace suggests. Reasons that justify an action can be used in an explanation to explain the action, as well. That I need onions for supper can be both a reason to go (or to have gone) to the store to get onions, and an explanation of why I am going, will go, or went to the store to get onions. Reasons are more fluid than Wallace is giving them credit for.

The final, rather significant problem for the normative constraint and an anti-psychological account of reasons is the problem of agents acting in the light of false beliefs.

> The biggest headache for anti-psychologists such as Dancy however is
> furnished by cases where the agent's belief is false. The fact of Angus'
> being fired is naturally adduced to explain his punching his boss in cases
> where he has indeed been fired. But in cases where Angus punches his

boss, believing mistakenly that he has been fired, it seems quite wrong to say he acts so because he has been fired. In such a case we surely must retreat to a psychologised explanation if we are to have a credible motivating reason at all. (Lenman 2009, sec. 6)

Dancy argues that normative reasons are facts. The normative constraint requires that, if normative reasons are states of affairs, motivating reasons need to be capable of being states of affairs as well. The problem for Dancy is explaining how motivating reasons for an agent's actions can be states of affairs when those states of affairs play no obvious role in the motivating states of an agent. Without an adequate explanation of how an agent can have anti-psychological reasons for acting in cases where the agent acts on the basis of a false belief, anti-psychologism about reasons cannot get off the ground. Often agents are mistaken about how the world is. Jim thinks he sees a spider – but it's just a dust bunny. Jenna thinks the theatre is on fire – but she is only under that impression because of a clever trick played by Harry. In order to advocate an anti-psychological account of reasons, Dancy needs to be able to account for these all too common cases where an agent acts seemingly from a false belief. If he cannot do so, it looks like fundamentally our action explanations need to contain psychological accounts of reasons.

Part of the problem is the two constraints (taken from Dancy, 1995) that I discuss in chapter 2. The essence of these two constraints is that first, states of the world are not motivating reasons apart from an agent recognizing them as such; and second, whether or not an agent's beliefs are true cannot affect the form of the explanation of the agent's actions. The second constraint indicates that an explanation of an agent's action must have the same form, regardless of whether or not the agent's beliefs are true or false. If an agent's action is explained by anti-psychological states when the agent's beliefs are true, then the same form of explanation should apply when the beliefs are false. However, because of the first constraint, we cannot explain the agent's action by claiming as reasons states of the world that the agent is not aware of. If the agent did not know the theatre is on fire, we cannot explain her running from the theatre for the reason that the theatre is on fire. Since we cannot use the same form of anti-psychological reason explanation, by all appearances, in the case where the agent has a false or incorrect belief,

it looks like we cannot use anti-psychological reasons explanations to explain the actions of agents.

There are a couple ways to resolve the problem false beliefs present. One option is to reject anti-psychologism. A second option is to show how the apparent inconsistency that results from anti-psychological reason explanations between cases of true and false beliefs is illusory. The third option is to show how there are non-arbitrary differences that independently justify a difference in form of explanation based solely on whether an agent has true or false beliefs – that is to say that there are non-arbitrary exceptions to the second constraint.[72] There might be other possibilities, but I think these possibilities I've listed are the most likely to be successful. Dancy tries the second approach and, while his approach shows promise, I aim to show in my next chapter that it is unsuccessful. In its place, I will take the third option. I propose a combined position, according to which reasons are psychological when an agent's beliefs are false, and anti-psychological when an agent's beliefs are true. This position will be based on McDowell's epistemological disjunctivism.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined Dancy's argument for anti-psychologism about reasons. Dancy's anti-psychologism has the advantage that it helps to explain how agents act for a good reason. Normative reasons are capable of directly explaining what it is about an action that made it, by the agent's lights, a good action. The normative constraint closes the gap between the demands of practical rationality, on the one hand, and the demands of morality, on the other, by providing a framework according to which they are ideally the same thing.

However, Dancy's position is viable only if other theories of explanation are not clearly better. His anti-psychologism is at its best when it provides us with a way to explain the actions of agents who are acting rationally, and have true beliefs. When agents have false

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[72]   I have suggested, above, that the set of motivating reasons might consist of both psychological and anti-psychological reasons. This second approach to resolving the second constraint is necessary in order to justify my position.

beliefs, it is difficult to explain their actions anti-psychologically. In the next chapter, I will discuss how Dancy explains actions from false beliefs, and how his approach to explain agents acting from a false belief is ultimately problematic. I will then provide an alternative account of explanations of agents acting from false beliefs.

Chapter 4: False Beliefs and the Combined Position

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have outlined the justification and motivation for Dancy's anti-psychologism about reasons. In chapter 1, I argued that Williams' argument for internal reasons does not exclude the possibility of anti-psychological reasons. In chapter 2, I argued that Smith's account of motivating and normative reasons is inadequate, and that we should conclude that our motivating states and motivating reasons need not be identical. Since motivating reasons and motivating states do not need to be identical, I discussed the advantages of Dancy's anti-psychological account of reasons in chapter 3. Since motivating states and motivating reasons do not need to be identical, our motivating states can be psychological, while our motivating reasons can be anti-psychological. At the end of chapter 3, I concluded that if Dancy cannot provide an account of how agent's act when acting in the light of false beliefs, his position will not be viable.

In this chapter, I will focus on explanations of actions taken by agents who are acting in the light of false beliefs. How to explain actions taken in light of false beliefs presents a problem to those who espouse an anti-psychological account of action explanations, since in the case of false beliefs, there is no state of the world that can explain the agent's action. It looks like the agent's actions need to be explained by their false beliefs. Dancy's constraint 4 (Dancy 1995: 13) gives us reason to think that the form of our action explanations should be the same regardless of whether the agent's beliefs are true or false. If our action explanations must be psychologistic when an agent has false beliefs, our action explanations must also be psychologistic when an agent has true beliefs. Those who advocate an anti-psychological account of action explanation need to be able to provide an account of how actions can be explained when an agent has false beliefs.

In order to establish an anti-psychological account of action explanations when agents have false beliefs, I will do three things in this chapter. First, I will examine Dancy's approach to resolving the problem that false beliefs present to his position. Dancy claims that action explanations are non-factive, in that reasons for actions do not necessarily

need to exist for an action explanation to be true. Second, I will outline two criticisms of Dancy's attempt to resolve the problems that false belief presents to his position. The first criticism I will make, based on a criticism made of Dancy's position by Jay Wallace (2003), is that Dancy's claim that action explanations are non-factive is *ad hoc* and inadequately justified. The second criticism I will make is that a result of Dancy's solution is that the beliefs of the agent, not the anti-psychological states the beliefs are about, are what explains the agent's actions, regardless of whether or not the agent has true or false beliefs.

Finally, I will present an alternative to his account of how an agent acts when she has a false belief, drawing on McDowell's disjunctivist conception of perception. The resultant position is an original theory of reasons explanations. It is anti-psychologistic when agents have true beliefs, but psychologistic when agents have false beliefs, and incorporates the strengths of Dancy's anti-psychologism without having the same problems with false beliefs that Dancy's position does. Using McDowell's disjunctivism, I will argue for a position that is able to capture the strengths of an anti-psychological account of reasons, while still allowing for a psychological explanation of the agent's actions when an explanation by psychological states makes the most amount of sense, such as in the case of an agent with false beliefs.

4.2 Believings, and What is Believed

The biggest problem with Dancy's argument stems from the difficulty of providing an anti-psychological explanation for instances of agent's actions when those agents are motivated by false beliefs. Dancy's solution to this is his claim that there is no distinction between factive and non-factive action explanations. If this claim does not turn out to be true, he has not provided an adequate explanation of how an agent can have anti-psychological reasons in the case where the agent has a false belief. Without such an explanation, his anti-psychologism about reasons cannot get off the ground. Often agents are mistaken about how the world is. Jim thinks he sees a spider – but it's just a dust bunny. Jenna thinks the theatre is on fire – but she is only under that impression because of a clever trick played by Harry. In order to advocate an anti-psychological account of reasons, Dancy needs to be able to account for these all too common cases where an

agent seemingly acts from a false belief. If he cannot do so, it looks like our action explanations need to contain psychological accounts of reasons.

In chapter two, I discussed two constraints (out of a set of four) on what counts as a good reason, originally taken from Dancy (1995). Dancy does not discuss these constraints in *Practical Reality*, but does support Williams' (1980: 102) claim that "the true-false distinction should not be allowed to affect the form of the relevant explanation" (Dancy, 2000: 121). These constraints are:

> 3. States of the world and facts cannot motivate unless recognized by the agent.

> 4. The distinction between true and false beliefs on the agent's part cannot affect the *form* of the explanation which will be appropriate to his actions. (1995: 13)

As a result of these two constraints, it looks like 'believed that *p'*, rather than 'that *p'* is a more reliable account of the agent's reasons. It looks like the beliefs of the agent, rather than facts of the world, are needed to explain the agent's actions. This is because that the agent 'believed that *p'* consists of the recognition of states of the world and of facts where the agent rightly believes that *p* (meeting constraint 3), but does not distinguish between true and false beliefs (meeting constraint 4). False beliefs provide a significant problem for the anti-psychologist about reasons, because false beliefs appear to motivate. If false beliefs motivate, an anti-psychological explanation is not readily available to explain the agent's actions, since there are no states of the world that are the bases for the agent's action. How the agent acted is not completely based in how the world is, and thus how the world is cannot explain the agent's actions. In order to show that a theory of the agent's reasons based on that the agent 'believed that *p'* is inferior to a theory of the agent's reasons according to which the agent's reasons are just 'that *p'*, Dancy needs to show that there are problems with the 'belief that *p*' account of reasons that the 'that *p*' account does not have, and that his anti-psychological account of reasons can deal with false beliefs.

These two constraints would reduce all reasons explanations to explanations in terms of psychological states, rendering impossible any attempt to explain actions anti-psychologistically. There are a few ways to resolve this problem. One way to resolve this is to show how the apparent inconsistency that results from anti-psychological reason explanations between cases of true and false beliefs is only illusory. Essentially, one could accept the two constraints, and argue instead that they are not the problem they seem to be. Given the intuitive nature of the two constraints, I think there is a certain amount of appeal to this approach. Dancy tries the first approach and, while his approach shows promise, I aim to show it is unsuccessful.

Another way to resolve this is to reject one or both of the constraints. This is the approach I will take. Specifically, I will reject constraint 4, which states that the distinction between true and false beliefs on the agent's part cannot affect the form of the explanation which will be appropriate to his actions (1995: 13).[73]

To undermine the 'belief that p' account of reasons, Dancy argues that, while these considerations do pose a potential problem, it is not the case that the 'belief that p' account is the right account of reasons, as it is in light of how (we believe) the world is, rather than consideration of our beliefs, that we act. Generally, the agent takes it herself that if the world is other than how she thinks it is, she has reasons to act other than she currently does. It is not in light of 'that I believe p', but 'that p', that I act. I may, to paraphrase Dancy, take my belief that there are pink rats in my shoes as a reason to call the psychoanalyst, but this is different than (my belief) that there are pink rats living in my shoes being a reason to call pest control (2000: 125). Explanations of actions generally explain with respect to the features of the situation, rather than with respect to the beliefs of the agent. Dancy's claim that agents act in light of 'that p', and that as a result the best theory of reasons is an anti-psychological theory of reasons has the advantage of appealing to our 'naïve' practices. The philosophical appeal lies in reflection on the combination of the normative and explanatory constraints, and the resultant ability

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[73]   I have suggested, above, that the set of motivating reasons might consist of both psychological and anti-psychological reasons. This second approach to resolving the second constraint is necessary in order to justify my position.

to explain how it is that facts explain an agent's actions. This is particularly appealing to moral realists, who want to be able to explain how the agent does the right thing for the right reasons. Anti-psychological accounts of action explanations have advantages over psychological accounts of action explanations, and the best account of action explanations is going to be the account that facilitates the best explanations of actions. However, in order to establish that his anti-psychological account of reasons explanations is the right one, Dancy needs to demonstrate that he can provide an anti-psychological account of agent's actions when those actions are based on false beliefs. This is, however, something he cannot do.

In order to show how anti-psychologism can deal with false beliefs, Dancy first gives an account of the role of beliefs generally, true or false. This is a necessary move, because 'that an agent is in such-and-such mental state' obviously plays a role in explanations of actions (123). There are a number of circumstances where, even anti-psychologically, an agent's psychological states can be reasons for the agent's actions. For example, if I am aware that I (unintentionally) react poorly to the possibility of an encounter with a spider, my fear of spiders may, on deliberation, be a reason for me not to go into attics and basements. Furthermore, certain psychological states might generate non-psychological obligations, and thus be reasons in that capacity. For example, your discomfort can give me a reason to make you more comfortable (offer you a chair or a glass of water). Such a reason is clearly anti-psychological. However, if your discomfort can give me a reason, surely my own discomfort can also give me a reason. Additionally, there may be requirements either to act or refrain from acting, given certain combinations of beliefs and obligations. There may be an obligation that, if you believe someone is in trouble, you should help them (even if your belief is false). Given Dancy's argument for non-detachment (Dancy 2000: 70-76), the belief that one should act cannot be detached from the objective, anti-psychological duty to act, and as such the obligation to act is anti-psychological, even if beliefs have some part to play in the obligation.

Explaining the role of beliefs in an anti-psychological theory of reasons is particularly important, as a change in beliefs, all things being equal, results in a change of action in an agent. If Dancy wants to argue that reasons are anti-psychological, he needs to be able to

explain why a change in psychological states can determine what action an agent will take. Since 'that *p*' can only be a reason for an agent if that agent 'believes that *p*', and if the agent's beliefs change such that the agent no longer 'believes that *p*' the agent will act differently, it looks like the real reason for the agent's action is that the agent 'believes that *p*', rather than 'that *p*' (Dancy, 2000: 123).

An agent cannot act because of *p* unless the agent first believes that *p*. Consequently, believing that *p* looks like an enabling condition for the agent to act because of *p*. "[I]n the absence of the believing, what in fact explains the action would not then explain it, either because the action would not then have been done at all, or because, if it had, it would have been done for another reason and so explained in another way" (127). It is a puzzle what Dancy's enabling condition that beliefs fill exactly is. He himself admits that there is no clear theoretical background he can provide to flesh it out (127). It is a necessary condition? Certainly, if the belief is not present, as he indicates, there will either be no action, or there will be action but for another reason. Is it a sufficient condition? It does look like, if the belief is present but the world is different than the belief presupposes (which is to say, the belief is false), the action will go ahead regardless. Thus, there are reasons for thinking that the enabling condition that beliefs fill look to be both necessary and sufficient for the action at hand. And if a condition is both necessary and sufficient for an event (in this case, an action by an agent), it is awfully difficult to dismiss that condition as a motivation for the event.

Dancy's claim that beliefs are enabling conditions is a little puzzling, but there are some things that can be said to make the claim clearer. It has already been discussed how the epistemic filter that Dancy introduces restricts the states of affairs that we consider as possible reasons for the agent to have acted. Since we are interested in good reasons for the agent's actions *by her lights*, it is not all possible states of the world we consider as possible reasons, but only those that could reasonably be reasons for her actions. Beliefs are enabling conditions in that they determine the scope of the filter. As such, they are neither directly necessary nor sufficient conditions (nor are they epiphenomenal, despite being present when action occurs). Beliefs are not sufficient, since an agent can have a belief and be unmotivated by the belief. I can believe that I should floss daily, but be

unmotivated by that belief. Regardless of our theory of motivation, agents can act irrationally, not acting as we would expect them to be motivated to act. Furthermore, beliefs are not directly necessary for a state of the world to count as a reason. A function of Dancy's epistemic filter is that we might take the agent to have good reasons that the agent is not acting on. Certain states of the world count as reasons for an agent even if that agent is not aware of those states, since we would reasonably expect the agent to be aware of those states. Of course, an agent's beliefs are going to be indirectly necessary for a certain state to count as a reason, even under Dancy's epistemic filter. What states of the world we could reasonably expect an agent to be aware of is going to depend to no small extent on the states the agent is already aware of.

Instead, beliefs are enabling in that they determine which states of the world we can take as reasons for the agent. As Dancy states,

> The 'as he believes' functions paratactically here, attaching itself to the '*p'*. ... [I]t is not part of the specification of his reason, but it is a comment on that reason, one that is required by the nature of the explanation that we are giving. That explanation specifies the features *in the light of which* the agent acted. (129)

The belief serves as a condition that specifies the possible states of the world in light of which the agent could have acted; it is not a reason for the action itself. If the agent acted in light of *p*, by necessity, the agent believed that *p*, and thus it serves no explanatory purpose to refer to the agent's beliefs, and not the fact that *p*. The agent's beliefs and the facts only come apart in cases where the agent has false beliefs. In all other cases, there is no explanatory advantage to explain the agent's actions in terms of the agent's beliefs, whereas explaining the agent's actions in terms of the agent's beliefs is more complicated than explaining the agent's actions with respect to how the world is. The main pull to thinking psychological states are reasons for an agent's actions comes from the problems raised by explanations where the agent acted because of a false belief.

Dancy's response to the existence of false beliefs is to explain "an action by laying out the considerations in light of which an agent acted without committing ourselves to

things being as the agent there conceived them to be" (132). Dancy argues that explanations in terms of motivating reasons are not committed to the truth of how things are from the agent's standpoint. This account of action explanations treats explanations in terms of motivating reasons uniquely among explanations. Dancy's assertion is that, in the case of action explanations, the explanation need not be 'factive', which is to say it need not be the case that the reasons for the action are actually the case. Normally, for a true explanation, if the explanation is "The reason for p is q", one can infer both that q and that p (Dancy 2000, 131). However, the central claim Dancy makes in order to resolve the apparent problems his anti-psychological approach has with false beliefs is to argue that explanations of actions (alone amongst the different possible kinds of explanations) are non-factive. If action explanations are non-factive necessitates that "Jenna fled the theatre because it was on fire" and "Jenna fled the theatre because she believed it was on fire" are equivalent, even if the theatre was not on fire. The object of the agent's belief can explain the agent's action, even if the object of the agent's belief does not exist. By arguing that explanations of actions need not be factive, Dancy shows a way of articulating false beliefs in anti-psychological terms. Because action explanations are non-factive, according to Dancy, we can explain Jenna's actions either way, and we are still providing an equally good explanation in either case. As a result, we can explain Jenna's actions anti-psychologically, even though Jenna had a false belief and she acted for reasons that were not actually the case.

Explanations as a general rule are factive, in that the thing being explained and the reason being provided as an explanation are both the case. The account of motivating reasons being provided, however, is non-factive, in that the reasons being provided are not the way the world is. So, for example, we might explain the actions of someone under the false impression it is raining in an anti-psychologistic way by saying either:

1) His reason for taking his umbrella with him is that it was raining.

2) He took his umbrella with him on the mistaken grounds that it was raining.

Explanation 1 is non-factive, since it was not in fact raining. However, it serves as an adequate explanation of the agent's actions, since the agent's reason for acting was that it

was raining, even though he was mistaken about that. Explanation 2 is factive, however, although that which is doing the explaining (that it was raining) is not. Such an explanation reveals the reasons for which the agent acted, without committing to the truth of those reasons and indicates what actually the fact of the matter is. Consequently, while explanations are generally factive, in the particular case of explaining motivating reasons, they are not necessarily factive, nor is it clear they need to be, since they adequately explain things as they are, according to Dancy.

Dancy's justification for this is that from the agent's standpoint, the factive and non-factive explanations are equivalent. The assumption being made by those who hold that action explanations should only be factive is that, in moving to a third-person explanation, we are forced to move to a different form of explanation, "one whose general structure consists in a relation between the action and the psychology of the agent rather than in a relation between the action and the light in which the agent saw it" (Dancy 2000: 135). However, Dancy asserts both that there should be only one form of explanation, and that the privileged explanation should be the explanation as seen from the agent's point of view.

The temptation is to treat 2 as though the agent's reasons for acting were the agent's false belief. However, the aim of the anti-psychologist is to treat the reference to the agent's beliefs here as explaining actions as discussed above – the beliefs are only serving to indicate which possible states of the world (in this case, fictional ones) count as reasons for the agent (states we should take the agent as having acting in the light of). Dancy tries to resist this in a couple of ways. Firstly, he points out that the factive and non-factive ways of explaining the agent's action both seem viable. As such, we don't explicitly need to include a reference to the agent's mental states. Secondly, he suggests that we can avoid a reference to the agent's beliefs through different terminology, thereby sidestepping the issue of false beliefs. Rather than explaining the agent acting because of the belief that p, we should rephrase the agent to be acting because of p, using words like 'supposedly' or 'he imagined' (in reference to the agent), as we must.

4.3 Factive and Non-Factive Explanations

Dancy's non-factive account of action explanations has a number of problems. There are two specific criticisms of Dancy's position that I am going to focus on. The first criticism is that Dancy's non-factive account of action explanations is inconsistent with our normal explanatory practices,[74] to the extent that it is not clear how non-factive explanations can explain. Furthermore, he has not provided an adequate argument to think that action explanations are somehow an exception to our normal explanatory practices, nor an explanation of how they could explain, given that they treat true and false explanans as equivalent, each with purportedly equal explanatory power. The second criticism is that, if action explanations are not factive, then the reasons for action are psychological, not anti-psychological, on the grounds that the truth or falsity of action explanations, as far as the explanans are concerned, hinge only on the beliefs of the agent in question. Consequently, if we want to argue for an anti-psychological account of reasons, we should reject Dancy's claim that action explanations are non-factive.

My first criticism of Dancy is that the claim that action explanations are non-factive is *ad hoc*. Dancy is arguing that uniquely in the cases of action explanations, a false explanans can explain the action as well as a true one. However, generally a false explanans cannot explain anything, since a false explanans cannot be a reason[75] for a real explanandum (non-existent state or entities generally being unable to be the reason for existing states or entities). It is a basic truism that the explanandum must be, in some sense, because of the explanans (Sandis, 2012a), and it is hard to see in any context how a real explanandum can be because of a false explanans. What Dancy is saying goes against how explanations typically operate. If Dancy is going to claim that in the specific cases of action explanations the explanans can be false and yet still explain, he needs to provide a clear and sufficient justification for why in the particular case of action explanations, and in no other context, a false explanans can explain the explanandum. Without such a justification his claim that action explanations are non-factive is *ad hoc*.

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[74] Dancy acknowledges that our explanations in all other contexts are factive (2000: 132).

[75] Note that Dancy does not think that action explanations are a species of causal reasoning.

In a similar vein, Wallace argues that taking the normative constraint as literally as Dancy does results in implausible explanations of cases where the agent suffers under a false belief, such as an agent pursuing a wrong-headed course of action in order to increase his pension because he labours under a false belief about what will increase his pension. Wallace identifies Dancy's claim that action explanations are non-factive as a necessary consequence of embracing the normative constraint, but finds Dancy's non-factive approach to action explanations to be *ad hoc*. Wallace's criticism, consistent with what I've claimed so far, is that as a general rule our explanations are not non-factive (they are sensitive to whether or not the explanans is factual), and Dancy's claim that action explanations uniquely are non-factive is remarkably *ad hoc*.

Dancy's response to the accusation that his espousal of non-factivity is *ad hoc* is that it is a necessary result of his arguments for anti-psychologism. Dancy then proceeds to discuss the strength of his own arguments for anti-psychologism (2003b, 468-469). He points out that his claim that action explanations are non-factive is consistent with his general position that from the agent's standpoint, "the psychologized explanation and the non-psychologized explanations are effectively equivalent" (Dancy 2000: 135). This claim could be taken to provide some justification for the claim that action explanations are non-factive, as from the agent's standpoint, the factive and non-factive explanations are equivalent. An agent running from a theatre because she believes the theatre is on fire does not distinguish between her belief that the theatre is on fire and the actual state of the theatre. We can only distinguish between what she believes to be the case and the actual state of the theatre from a third-person point of view, and thus we should treat as equivalent factive and non-factive explanations of the agent's actions since the agent herself would do so. Explanations should privilege the first-person perspective, and explain the agent's action from the agent's point of view.[76]

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[76]   While elsewhere Dancy has indicated that beliefs should play a role in determining which facts are of explanatory interest (with the facts still being anti-psychological reasons for the agent's actions), a consequence of the approach he is expounding here seems to be that beliefs, rather than facts, are explanatorily primary.

I don't think this is a good justification for thinking that action explanations are non-factive. It is not clear why we should privilege the agent's perspective over a third-person perspective, especially if the agent is wrong. According to Dancy, ideally, "the explanation of an action succeeds to the extent that it enables us to see how the agent might have taken certain features of the action as good reasons to do it" (2000: 95). There are two elements in play, here. The explanation renders what the agent understood to be good about the action intelligible. The explanation also, crucially, does this *for us*. There is some audience (some 'us') whom the explanation is for. If the explanation does not explain the agent's actions to the audience, it is a failure. Consequently, the explanation must adopt the standpoint that best facilitates the audience's coming to understand why the agent acted. The explanation is making intelligible actions from the agent's first-person perspective, but there is no reason to think that the best way to make those actions intelligible is to adopt that first-person perspective, since those having the action explained to them may well not be able to understand an explanation from that perspective. If we are going to explain to a three-year old why Mommy and Daddy go off to work every day, we are going to need to do so not from Mommy and Daddy's respective first-person perspectives, but from the perspective of the three-year old, in such a way that Mommy's and Daddy's actions taken from their perspectives are rendered as intelligible as is possible from the three-year old's perspective. Similarly, if we are going to explain why Jenna fled the, by her lights, burning theatre to Fred, who knows the theatre is not on fire, one would expect that explaining Jenna's actions as though her perspective is what is actually the case to Fred would not improve the explanation, but could instead engender confusion, since he knows the theatre is not on fire. Instead, explaining the gulf between Jenna's understanding and Fred's understanding looks like it would be a central part of explaining Jenna's action. Even if we do provide a non-factive explanation ("Jenna ran from the theatre because it was on fire", for example), that explanation is only going to work if Fred understands the difference between how he (correctly) takes things to be and how Jenna takes things to be, when the explanation is from her standpoint. In some cases, we might be best off explaining the agent's actions from a first-person perspective. However, it is not clear that generally that is the perspective we are best off adopting, and Dancy's claim that action explanations should

privilege the first-person perspective seems unwarranted. This concern is not dependent on explanations involving causal reasoning (which Dancy rejects).

If it is understood why an agent acted, no explanation of the agent's action is necessary. If it is not understood, there is going to be some gulf between the agent's understanding of the situation and the understanding of those needing the explanation.[77] Bridging this gulf is necessary for any explanation. However it is not clear what reasons there are or could be for thinking that this is consistently best done by privileging the first-person perspective of the acting agent when explaining the action, if explaining the action from the first-person perspective conveys less of an understanding of the action in those whom the explanation is for than an explanation from the third-person perspective would. We should, instead, privilege the perspective of those the explanation is for. The first-person perspective will feature in our explanations, but as an object of the explanation, rather than the perspective from which the explanation is made. I would think that generally explanations will be made from the third-person perspective, since explanations from that perspective will be widely understood.

A further reason for thinking that privileging the first-person perspective does not favour a non-factive account of action explanations is that it is not clear that the agent herself treats explanations of her actions as non-factive. The agent might think that explanations in terms of her belief that the theatre is on fire are equivalent to explanations in terms of the theatre being on fire when she does not know the theatre is on fire, but once she realizes that the theatre was not on fire, she will no longer fail to distinguish between what is the case and what she believed, as far as explanations of her action go. If we were to privilege the first-person perspective, then we would be privileging how the agent takes things to be. But if the agent, once well informed, draws a distinction between how

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[77] Of course, often when agents act and we want an explanation for those actions, it is because of the agent is aware of something we are not. When the agent takes an umbrella because it's going to rain, or goes to the store to get onions because onions are needed for supper, the agent knows something we, who need an explanation of the agent's actions, do not. In such cases, the explanation shows us what the agent understood about the world that we did not. This is part of the reason anti-psychological action explanations work so well – such explanations show us directly what the agent knew that we did not.

she took things to be when she acted and how things actually were, if we are privileging her perspective, we should do so too.

The accusation that a claim is *ad hoc* seems to be made in precisely those situations where the claim in question has no independent good reasons for being made but is necessary to defend some further underlying position. This seems to be exactly what is going on with Dancy's claim that action explanations are not necessarily factive. It is true that his claim that action explanations are not factive is connected to his claim that action explanations are anti-psychological, but it is not clear that he has provided justification for the claim that action explanations are non-factive. Ultimately, it is not obvious that there are any reasons – apart from a desire to see anti-psychologism about reasons succeed – to advocate that action explanations, uniquely, are non-factive. The claim that action explanations are non-factive is counter-intuitive and, as Dancy agrees (2000, 132), not the case with other forms of explanation, and he provides no clear reason for thinking that action explanations, unlike other forms of explanation, are distinctly non-factive. What is needed, in order to support anti-psychologism about reasons, is either a compelling argument that action explanations are non-factive, or an alternative anti-psychological account of false beliefs that is independently compelling. Dancy provides neither of these things. Dancy's claim that our action explanations are non-factive, while useful in that it would allow apparently anti-psychological explanations of actions in the case of false beliefs, contradicts our usual explanatory practice and is not justified, aside from its ability to fortuitously resolve the problem of false beliefs for the anti-psychologist about reasons. Consequently, we should reject his non-factive approach to action explanations.

The second criticism I have of Dancy's claim that action explanations are non-factive is that it would actually undermine his anti-psychological approach to action explanations. If action explanations are non-factive, then beliefs, not anti-psychological states, are actually our reasons for acting. If it turns out that, if action explanations are non-factive, beliefs are our reason for acting, Dancy has to either give up anti-psychologism about reasons, or he is unable to provide an account of how to explain, in anti-psychological

terms, an agent's action when an agent acts in light of false beliefs. In either case, Dancy's anti-psychologism is in trouble.

The essence of Dancy's claim that action explanations are non-factive is that 'that p' and 'believed that p' are interchangeable, depending on conversational implicature.[78] The important function of the claim that action explanations are non-factive is that we can explain agent's actions, in the cases where agents act from false beliefs, in the language of facts without undermining the explanation. In order for this to be the case, we have to be able to replace 'believed that p' with 'that p' in explanations, and vice versa, as well. Such a replacement entails that there is no loss of explanatory power and thus each explanation is equally true (even if it is not in fact the case 'that p'), since a false explanation is one that does not explain. An explanation is true if the explanandum is in some sense[79] because of the explanans, and false otherwise. If the explanations 'q because p' and 'q because she believed that p' are interchangeable, one would expect them to be equally true in all cases. Were it not the case that there is no loss of explanatory power, in that the explanandum is equally because of 'that p' or 'believed that p', the two forms of explanation would not be interchangeable. The two forms of the explanation might not be entirely equivalent, but they must be relatively close to equivalent, if we can use them interchangeably. At the very least, one would expect them to be true or false generally at the same time, and thus logically equivalent, even if there are connotations of meaning that differ between the two explanations. Since they are logically equivalent, then their explanans must also be logically equivalent, since replacing 'believed that p' with 'that p' does not change the truth value of the explanation. This is something Dancy accepts (2000: 102-103), and he takes his claim that action explanations are non-factive as sufficient to show that 'that p' is more fundamental of the two equivalent statements.

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[78] See Dancy (2000: 134). He does not explicitly state that factive and non-factive explanations are equivalent. He does state that the inclusion of "believed" in an action explanation is "more in the conversational implicature than an entailment" (2000: 134), meant to guard against misunderstanding. He also says , in regards to whether or not to include an intentional context in an explanation that, "there are, then, both factive and non-factive ways of laying out the considerations in the light of which the agent acted", and that "the difference between the factive and the non-factive cannot be of any real significance when it comes to the explanation of action" (134). It is not clear in what sense factive and non-factive explanations differ, for Dancy.

[79] Note that this is not assuming that the 'because' here needs to have causal connotations.

However, I will argue that his claim that action explanations are non-factive actually establishes that beliefs, not anti-psychological states of affairs, are what are really doing the work explaining agent's actions.

The effect of action explanations being non-factive, then, is that as reasons 'that p' and 'believed that p' are at least logically equivalent. However, generally as appearing in statements, 'that p' and 'believed that p' are not equivalent at all ("The theatre is on fire" and "Jenna believed the theatre is on fire" are not generally equivalent, even if they are equivalent in some action explanation). The two statements in non-explanation contexts cannot be equivalent, as they have different truthmakers,[80] and thus will be true in different circumstances. The only way two statements can be logically equivalent is if they have the same truthmaker. Furthermore, "what makes something true must – *in some sense* – be what it is 'about'" (MacBride, 2013: sec. 1.1). So, if reason statements in action explanations are non-factive and, as a result, 'that p' and 'believed that p' are logically equivalent in an action explanation, action explanations containing either 'that p' or 'believed that p' have the same truthmaker in that context and, furthermore, are about the same thing. Note that the focus in my argument that will follow is on the truth conditions of the explanation. I am interested in various states, corresponding to the two equivalent articulations of the explanans, that determines the truth or falsity of an explanation expressed either 'q because she believed that p' or 'q because p'. I will argue that the truth of the explanation only changes with respect to the beliefs of the agent the explanation is about, and thus the explanation is 'about', at least as far as the explanans of the explanation goes, the beliefs of the agent and not any anti-psychological states. As a consequence, beliefs, and not anti-psychological states, are the reason for the action being explained in any action explanation.

It is important to note that, if the statements "Jenna fled the theatre because the theatre was on fire" and "Jenna fled the theatre because she believed the theatre was on fire" are

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[80] A truthmaker being that in light of which, or in virtue of which, a truthbearer is true (MacBride). I am somewhat reticent to use 'truthmaker' terminology here, as the details surrounding what exactly a truthmaker is are contentious. However, I think the idea being alluded to here, as it plays a role in my argument, is relatively straightforward and intuitive, and 'truthmaker' terminology provides a way to talk about it.

interchangeable when the theatre is not on fire, they are interchangeable when the theatre is on fire, too. If action explanations are interchangeable between the facts and the beliefs in the case of false beliefs, this is presumably also true when the agent has true beliefs. This is important, because conclusions drawn about non-factive explanations apply to Dancy's account of reasons both in cases where the agents have false beliefs and where the agents have true beliefs. Consequently if a non-factive account of action explanations results in the reasons for acting being beliefs and not anti-psychological states, this will be the case for all actions, regardless of whether or not the agent acting has true or false beliefs. As a result, if beliefs are reasons for actions under a non-factive account when the agent is acting in the light of false beliefs, beliefs are reasons for actions when the agent is acting in the light of true beliefs, too.

Dancy indicates that it may be the case that some action explanations are non-factive and that others are factive, while providing no criteria to distinguish between the two cases (2000: 133). If it turns out that some action explanations are factive then, if there is a false belief in those cases, Dancy's anti-psychological account of explanations fails to work and there are some instances that require a psychologistic account of action explanations. Dancy has not provided any reason to distinguish between the form of explanations in the case of false beliefs and true beliefs, so he cannot maintain without further justification that action explanations are only non-factive in cases of false belief, or only factive in the case of true beliefs. Dancy has left it open in what he has written as to whether or not action explanations need to be factive in some cases. If he would want to claim that there are necessarily factive action explanations, however, such explanations must be pretty exceptional and not the norm. Such explanations have to be exceptional, because if they are not exceptional, his claim that action explanations are non-factive is not going to be a very good solution to the problem false beliefs present to his anti-psychological account of reasons. Consequently, I am going to ignore, in critically discussing Dancy's non-factive account of action explanations, the possibility that there might be some cases of factive action explanations, since such explanations must be quite non-standard, according to his account, and because he has not outlined any criteria for distinguishing factive from non-factive action explanations. Furthermore, there are no reasons to think that there are any grounds from which he could provide such criteria.

Not all action explanations are true, even if action explanations are non-factive. If Dancy is correct, it will be true that Jenna ran from the theatre because it was on fire, even though it was not actually on fire, because she believed that it was true and, given the non-factive nature of action explanations, the "it was on fire" part of our explanation does not need to be true to be part of a true explanation. It will not be true, however, that Jenna ran from the theatre because there was a rabid bear in the theatre, when Jenna ran from the theatre because she believed the theatre was on fire. Even though the explanans is non-factive, the enabling condition of believing is absent in the case of the rabid bear, but not in the case of the theatre being on fire, since Jenna does believe the theatre is on fire (and does not have the belief that there is a rabid bear in the theatre). For an explanation, "q because she believed that p", which is interchangeable with "q because p", there are two possible psychological states of the agent (she either does or does not believe that p) and two possible anti-psychological facts about the world (either p or not p). While the explanans 'believed that p' is logically equivalent to '(non-factively) that p', the very issue being addressed here is that beliefs can come apart from how the world actually is, in that beliefs can be false. The agent might believe the theatre is on fire, but the theatre itself may or may not actually be on fire.

There are a total of four possible combinations of psychological state and anti-psychological state that will, solely with respect to the explanans, determine the truth of the explanation "q because p". If we explain Jenna fleeing the theatre for the reason that it is on fire, there are four possible circumstances, resulting from possible combinations of Jenna's beliefs and the state of the theatre, that determine the truth of the explanation, as far as the explanans goes:

    1) Jenna believes the theatre is on fire, and it is.

    2) Jenna believes the theatre is on fire, and it is not.

    3) Jenna does not believe the theatre is on fire, and it is.

    4) Jenna does not believe the theatre is on fire, and it is not.

Given an explanation of Jenna's fleeing of the theatre on the grounds that it is on fire, if circumstances 1 or 2 are the case, the explanation is a true explanation. On the other hand, if circumstances 3 or 4 are the case, the explanation is a false explanation. These can be generalized for any explanation (with their respective truth conditions) as follows:

The truth of the non-factive explanation "*q* because *p*", under varying conditions

		Anti-psychological state	
		It is the case that *p*	It is not the case that *p*
Psychological state	The agent believes that *p*	1: **True**	2: **True**
	The agent does not believe that *p*	3: **False**	4: **False**

In both boxes 1 and 2, where the agent believes that *p*, the explanation "*q* because *p*", under Dancy's non-factive account of action explanations, is true. Whether or not *p* actually is the case is not relevant to the truth of the explanation. The explanation is false in box 4, where neither *p* is the case, nor did the agent believe that *p*. Box 3 explanations are going to be of the form, "Jenna ran from the theatre because there was a fire in the theatre", where there actually was a fire in the theatre, but Jenna did not have the belief that there was a fire in the theatre, and was in fact running from the theatre in the light of some other belief (such as the belief that there was a rabid bear in the theatre). In such cases, the agent does not have the requisite belief, which is required as an enabling condition for the fact that the fire is in the theatre to count as a reason for the agent's actions. Consequently, "*q* because she believed that *p*" is non-factively equivalent to "*q* because *p*". Furthermore, the explanans 'believed that *p*' is equivalent to the non-factive explanans 'that *p*'.

The important point of all of this is that only the belief, and not the anti-psychological state, determines the truth of the explanation. Anti-psychological reasons are irrelevant to the truth of the explanation, whereas the psychological states of the agent determine whether or not the explanation is true. If, under Dancy's account of action explanations,

anti-psychological reasons are irrelevant to whether or not an action explanation is accurate, and psychological states determine whether or not an action explanation is accurate, psychological states are what determines, as far as the explanans goes, whether or not the explanation is true. Consequently, psychological states, as far as the explanans goes, is what the explanation is 'about'. If the truth of the explanation varies only with the psychological states of the agent if explanations are non-factive, then the explanandum can only be because of the psychological states of the agent, given that the truth of an explanation depends on the 'because' relationship between explanandum and explanans. The psychological states of the agent, then, are what are explaining the explanandum in the case of action explanations, if action explanations are non-factive. Anti-psychological states cannot be reasons under a non-factive account of action explanations, since the truth of the explanation does not hinge upon whether or not some anti-psychological state is the reason for the agent's action. Only psychological states are capable of being reasons under a non-factive account of reasons. Since this is the case regardless of whether or not the agent's beliefs are true or false, although in the case of true beliefs, the belief happens to match up to the corresponding anti-psychological state, there can be no anti-psychological reasons.

One possible objection to this would be to reject the claim that an explanandum needs to be because of the explanans, and thus rejecting that the 'because' relationship between the explanandum and explanan determines the truth of the explanation. Rejecting that an explanandum needs to be in some sense because of the explanans would undermine my criticism, since my criticism is that the truth of a non-factive action explanations hinge on beliefs, not anything anti-psychological, and thus beliefs are the actual explanans in non-factive action explanations. Rejecting the conception of explanations wherein an explanandum needs to be because of the explanans looks like it would be an inherently bad move, however. If an explanandum does not need to be because of an explanans, explanations generally would cease to work. It is unclear how explanations could work if not because of the 'because' relationship between explanandum and explanans. If we explain my going to the store to get onions as being because the martians told me to (when they did not), or because Paris is in France (which is irrelevant), what makes those bad explanations? What is it in virtue of which an explanation is a good or bad

explanation, if not whether or not the explanandum is because of the explanans? If it is true that explanations are good or bad to the extent that the explanandum is because of the explanans, then if action explanations are non-factive, what determines whether or not an action explanation is a good or bad explanation is the beliefs of the agent. If it is not true that explanations are good or bad to the extent that the explanandum is because of the explanans, then we are simply unable to explain.

4.4 An Alternative Solution to False Beliefs

I have discussed Dancy's solution to the problem false beliefs present an anti-psychological account of reasons. Specifically, he argues that explanations of agent's actions are non-factive, in that the reasons given for the agent's actions do not need to be the case, but only need to be the case from the agent's perspective. I have rejected his claim that action explanations are non-factive for two reasons. Firstly, other forms of explanations are only factive, and Dancy has provided no reasons for thinking that action explanations are different from other forms of explanation. Secondly, if he is right that action explanations are non-factive, then it turns out that an agent's reasons for acting are really the agent's beliefs, and not the facts that the agent believes, since the truth of action explanations, if action explanations are non-factive, only depends on the agent's beliefs. Consequently, he cannot provide an account of how agents act in the light of false beliefs. In this section, I will outline my alternative account of explanations of agent's actions in the light of false beliefs.

Dancy's condition 4 (above) requires that the form of the explanation cannot be affected by a distinction between true and false beliefs. Anti-psychologism about reasons is incompatible with this condition. When an agent acts under the effects of a false belief, what best explains the agent's action is not the anti-psychological states in light of which she acted, since there are no such states. Rather, what needs to be explained is what the agent thought was the case, such that she acted as she did. The only explanation for the agent's actions are the agent's psychological states, since it is the false belief itself that best explains why the agent did that which stands in need of explanation.

Given the importance of condition 4, it could use a little clarification. Condition 4 states that the distinction between true and false beliefs on the agent's part cannot affect the form of the explanation which will be appropriate to his actions (Dancy, 1995: 13). The aim of condition 4 is to block *ad hoc* distinctions between cases of explanations of actions involving true beliefs compared to false beliefs. The difference between true and false beliefs on the agent's part cannot affect the form of the explanation which will be appropriate to the agent's actions, all things being equal. However, if there are non-arbitrary differences that arise independently, which justify a difference in form of explanation based solely on whether or not an agent has true or false beliefs, then a distinction in form of explanatory form between true and false beliefs is justified.

It is difficult to imagine an anti-psychological solution to condition 4 that shows how actions in the case of false beliefs have anti-psychological reasons. Dancy's non-factive approach is probably the best possible approach, but it subtly assumes that action explanations are actually psychologistic in nature. Consequently, the only approach that can maintain an anti-psychological account of reasons to at least some degree is to reject Dancy's condition 4, and to argue that actions in the case of true beliefs and actions in the case of false beliefs require separate explanations. Such an approach needs justification, and condition 4 should not be rejected arbitrarily. A non-arbitrary difference between true and false beliefs, which requires that the form of the explanation of the agent's actions differs between cases of true beliefs and false beliefs needs to be demonstrated to exist. Condition 4 is intuitively appealing; if it is going to be rejected, there needs to be grounds to reject it.

Such grounds can be found in McDowell's disjunctive conception of perception. McDowell's disjunctivism provides objective grounds to distinguish, in an explanatory context, between cases of otherwise subjectively indistinguishable true and false beliefs, and as such provides a non-arbitrary basis for explaining action differently depending on whether or not the agent acting has true or false beliefs. McDowell's disjunctivism justifies treating explanations in cases of true and false beliefs differently, and as such justifies the rejection of condition 4.

The appearance that some state, X, should be read disjunctively, as either a mere appearance of X, or that X is actually the case. When I interact with another person, such as a cashier at Tim Horton's, he appears to have a mind. This appearance should be read disjunctively, as it being either the case that he has a mind, or that he only acts as if he has a mind. It is common to both that it appears to me that the agent has a mind. That being said, it is what is actually the case that determines my epistemic standing. Whether or not the cashier actually has a mind determines what kind of standing I have with respect to the mindedness (or lack thereof) of the cashier. Thus what my belief actually is depends on what is actually the case. My experience is the same regardless, but I am only justified in believing that the cashier has a mind if he, indeed, has one. Consequently, what is the case with respect to what my beliefs are about is not external to the beliefs themselves. What beliefs I have are determined, in part, by how the world actually is.

Subjectively, true and false beliefs are indistinguishable. The agent does not know if her beliefs are veridical. However, McDowell's claim is that the criteria for beliefs are objective, not subjective, and thus that subjectively true and false beliefs are indistinguishable does not mean that they are actually indistinguishable. An important component of determining what beliefs the agent has is what is actually the case. Specifically, what makes a belief the belief it is, rather than some other belief, is determined in part by how the world is. Beliefs, then, are individuated in part by how the world actually is.

This in turn justifies drawing an explanatory distinction between cases of true belief and cases of false belief. When an agent has a true belief, the agent has the appropriate epistemic standing to have that belief. That the agent has a mind gives me appropriate epistemic standing to believe that the cashier has a mind, which is not the case when he only seems to have a mind. Since what the beliefs are about is not external to the beliefs themselves, those anti-psychological states that justify our beliefs best serve to explain our actions. Such anti-psychological states are essential to our beliefs and determine precisely what beliefs we have, and thus serve to better explain our actions than our beliefs, which are dependent on those anti-psychological states. Consequently, when our

beliefs are true, an anti-psychological explanation best explains the actions taken in light of those anti-psychological states.

On the other hand, when beliefs are false, those beliefs are grounded not in how things actually are, but in mere illusory appearances. When an agent's beliefs are false, she lacks appropriate epistemic standing in relation to her beliefs, and thus anti- psychological states cannot explain her actions taken in light of those beliefs. Instead, an agent's false beliefs best explain her actions when she acts in light of a false belief. An agent's true beliefs are best explained by what is actually the case, whereas an agent's false beliefs are best explained only by how the world seems to be for the agent. False beliefs are distinct from true beliefs in that true beliefs, unlike false beliefs, are justified by the particular epistemic standing the agent has as a function of being in an appropriate relation to the object of her beliefs. When an agent has false beliefs, her action is best explained through Dancy's 'pure cognitivism', which explains her actions by her (in this case, false) beliefs.

An agent's belief that X is best read disjunctively as either X being the case or that X only appears to us to be the case. If X is the case, then X best explains the agent's actions taken in light of X, since what is the case is not external to the agent's beliefs, and it is because X is the case that the agent has the belief she has. Conversely, if X is not the case, then the agent's false beliefs best explain the agent's actions. What is actually the case with respect to our beliefs is intrinsic to the beliefs, and thus provides non-arbitrary justification for rejecting Dancy's condition 4.

As I argue in chapter two, McDowell's disjunctivism is a form of mental content externalism. The agent's beliefs are individuated by what is the case, and the agent has the beliefs she does because the world is the way it is. There is a difference in content between the true belief and the false belief that the cashier has a mind. This difference in content is determined by how the world is. In the case of the agent having true beliefs, the content of the agent's beliefs is individuated by anti-psychological states, and since those states determine the content of the agent's beliefs, those states best explain the agent's actions. Conversely, when the agent has a false belief, the belief itself is of explanatory interest.

4.5 The Combined Psychological/Anti-Psychological Position

McDowell's disjunctivism draws a distinction of kind between instances of true belief and instances of false belief. This distinction makes anti-psychological states intrinsic to true beliefs, in that it individuates the content of true beliefs. Consequently, this distinction justifies a rejection of Dancy's condition 4. True beliefs require a different form of explanation than false beliefs do. Motivating states are not identical to motivating reasons, when an agent has true beliefs, but motivating states are identical to motivating reasons when an agent has false beliefs. Different kinds of reasons, depending on whether or not the agent acts in the light of true beliefs, best explain the agent's actions. This distinction is warranted by the different epistemic grounding of true and false beliefs.

In the case of true beliefs, the agent's actions are best explained by anti-psychological states. In the case of true beliefs, the reasons why the agent acted can also be the reasons for which the agent acted. The agent can act for the right reasons. Consequently, in the case of true beliefs, the normative constraint is satisfied, in that motivating reasons are a kind of thing such that they can also be normative reasons.

In the case of false beliefs, the agent's actions are best explained by the agent's psychological states. Rejecting Dancy's condition 4 resolves the problem that false beliefs create for an anti-psychological account of reasons, at the cost of admitting that sometimes, a psychological explanation of the agent's actions is the best explanation of the agent's actions. There is, in such cases, no other possible explanation of the agent's actions. I agree with Dancy that the best form of psychologism is his pure cognitivism, and thus expect that the agent's beliefs are best used to explain the agent's actions in the cases where an agent acts because of false beliefs. That being said, in the case where an agent acts because of a false belief, the false belief does not represent anything, nor do the psychological states explaining the agent's actions represent the world in any way. Consequently, nothing is directly at stake in which psychological states are used to explain an agent's actions.

The resultant position maintains the strengths of an anti-psychological approach to reasons, while able to account for false beliefs. This position abides by the normative constraint in the strongest sense possible, in that normative reasons can be the reasons for which an agent acts. At the same time, unlike Dancy's original account of anti-psychological reasons, it is capable of explaining the actions of agents when those agents have false beliefs. Furthermore, drawing on the strengths of Dancy's position, it does not have the problems that plague the Humean theory of motivation, as it does not rely on the poorly defined notion of desire to explain an agent's actions.

4.6 A Critical Discussion of the Combined Psychological/ Anti-Psychological Position

In this section, I will discuss two possible objections to the combined position I am arguing for, and provide responses.

Objection 1: One possible objection that could be made against the combined position is that it gives up the normative constraint. The normative constraint states that "a motivating reason, that in the light of which one acts, must be the sort of thing that is capable of being among the reasons in favour of so acting" (Dancy, 2000: 103). Under the combined position, all normative reasons are anti-psychological, but some motivating reasons are psychological. Since motivating psychological reasons cannot be normative reasons, it looks like the combined position runs afoul of the normative constraint, since under the combined position, motivating reasons can be psychological in a way that normative reasons cannot be.

Response 1 I don't think this is something that the combined position needs to worry about. Dancy did not articulate the normative constraint with the possibility of both motivating and normative reasons in mind. He did say, however, in addition what I have quoted above, that "it must, in this sense, be possible to act for a good reason" (Dancy, 2000: 103). Taken in this light, the combined position is consistent with the normative constraint. The essence of Dancy's concern is that our theory of action explanations should allow us to be able to act for a good reason (2000). The combined position always

allows that agents can act for the right reason, but only if agents know what those right reasons are.

Furthermore, under any account, since normative reasons are objective facts, an agent who is not acting because of the facts cannot be acting for the right reason. An agent who has false beliefs, when acting in the light of those false beliefs, cannot be acting on objective facts, since those beliefs do not reflect what is objectively the case. Consequently, for every theory of motivating reasons, if normative reasons are objective facts, agents acting on false beliefs are not acting for good reasons. The combined position is thus consistent with any account of reasons that holds that normative reasons are objective. Under all such positions, the motivating reasons for agents acting in the light of false beliefs cannot be normative reasons, and agents acting in the light of false beliefs cannot be acting for good reasons. The advantage of the combined position, then, is that it provides grounds for drawing this important distinction between motivating reasons in cases where the agent has true and where the agent has false beliefs, whereby only agents acting in the light of true beliefs can act for good reasons.

This observation provides further grounds for being skeptical of Dancy's claim that action explanations are non-factive. Under non-factive action explanations, agents acting in the light of false beliefs can be portrayed as acting for good reasons. However, agents acting in the light of false beliefs can only be taken to be acting for good reasons if we, like Williams, hold that all reasons are psychological in nature (which is, in fact, exactly what I claim that Dancy's claim that action explanations are non-factive reduces reasons to). If we hold that normative reasons are objective facts, the possibility of non-factive action explanations misrepresents an important feature of motivating reasons in cases where agents act in the light of false beliefs.

Objection 2: A second possible objection to the combined position is that it looks to be *ad hoc*. The combined position solves the problem of how to deal with false beliefs while maintaining an overall anti-psychological approach to reasons. However, it may be argued that there are no reasons to adopt the combined approach aside from a desire to

provide a solution to the problem that false beliefs present to an anti-psychological approach to reasons.

Response 2: Firstly, it should be noted that the combined position is motivated in part by a commitment to externalism about belief individuation generally and a commitment to McDowell's epistemological disjunctivism specifically. It seems natural that if our beliefs are individuated by anti-psychological criteria, then those criteria will play a role in explaining our actions done in the light of those beliefs. McDowell's disjunctivism does not merely solve the problem of false beliefs, but it also provides independent reasons to think that an anti-psychological approach to actions in light of true beliefs is the right way to go. McDowell's disjunctivism provides support for an anti-psychological account of reasons, and as such applying McDowell's disjunctivism to an anti-psychological account of reasons for the purposes of solving the problems that agents acting in light of false beliefs presents to such an account is not *ad hoc*.

Secondly, I argue above that an important role of an action explanation is to render what the agent understood to be good about an action intelligible, and to do this for 'us' (for some audience that requires the explanation).[81] If the agent's action stands in need of explanation, there will be some information that the audience is lacking that makes the explanation necessary. There are two cases where the agent's actions need explanation:

1) The audience is missing information about the world required to make sense of the agent's actions.

2) The audience knows the relevant information about the world, but does not understand why the agent acted a given way given how the world is, and thus needs information regarding the agent's psychological states in order to make sense of the agent's actions.

The first case involves explanations in terms of anti-psychological states. If I explain that I'm going to the store to get onions because we need some, you are able to make sense of my actions by finding out more information about the world. The second case involves

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[81]   I do this in discussing my first objection to Dancy's claim that actions are non-factive, on page 14 of this chapter.

explanations in terms of the agent's psychological states, due to the agent having false beliefs about how the world is. If Sue is unsure why Jim took his umbrella with him when he went outside, and we know he took it because he's under the false impression it's going to rain then, when we explain Jim's action to Sue, we will need to couch his action in terms of what his false beliefs were. In either case, the explanation makes plain the first-person perspective of the agent to the audience of the explanation. However, depending on what the audience is missing, this will require either an explanation in terms of the facts (if the agent is acting in the light of true beliefs, but the audience is not aware of the facts), or the agent's psychological states (if the agent is acting in the light of false beliefs). Consequently, the combined approach to explanations is justified by what actually needs to be explained, depending on different explanatory contexts.

It should be noted that, of course, when we need an explanation, we don't know whether we need an anti-psychological or psychological explanation. When I ask why Jim took his umbrella with him when I know it is not going to rain, I don't know if there is some further fact that explains why Jim took his umbrella with him (perhaps he intends to use it to ward of assailants) or if there is a false belief on Jim's part. This does not invalidate the claim that all explanations need to be in terms of facts the audience was not aware of or false beliefs the agent had (or, of course, both).

It is important to note that this account is dependent on the claim that normative reasons are objective. If normative reasons are subjective, then the reasons for which an agent acts would still be psychological. As a consequence, even if the agent had true beliefs, we would still need to explain an agent's action with respect to her psychological states in a way not consistent with an anti-psychological account of reasons in order to explain her actions to an audience.

4.7 Conclusion

In my dissertation, I have discussed and resolved the particular problem of how normative reasons can play a role in explaining the actions of agents, according to which motivating reasons can be normative reasons. I have done this by adopting an anti-

psychological account of reasons when an agent acts in the light of true beliefs, but a psychological account of reasons when an agent acts in the light of false beliefs.

In order to accomplish this goal, I began by discussing Williams' purely psychological account of reasons, according to which all reasons are necessarily connected to an agent's psychological states. By doing so, I provided important background to the debate about reasons, since Williams' position and the particular problem he posed for those who think normative reasons exist independent of an agent's motivating states began much of the contemporary discussion of motivating and normative reasons. He took himself to be presenting a particular problem for cognitivists, which would have undermined any attempt at an anti-psychological account of reasons I demonstrated that, while he is correct to think that our normative reasons should play a role in explaining the actions of agents, he was wrong to sharply divide reasons into two categories, internal and external, and reject all that he counted as external. Rather, reasons exist along a continuum, and as long as a reason can serve in some capacity to facilitate an explanation of an agent's actions, it is sufficiently connected to that agent's actions to count as a reason.. Consequently, Williams did not present the problem he thought he did.

In chapter two, I outlined Smith's account of reasons. According to Smith, motivating reasons are Humean in nature, whereas normative reasons are anti-Humean. He builds his account of anti-Humean reasons from his interpretation of Williams' argument for internal reasons, and from his own account of Humeanism. However, Smith's Humeanism is problematic, in that his conception of desire is vacuous. In that chapter, I argued that, contrary to Smith, our motivating states are often distinct from our motivating reasons.

This paved the way for chapter three, in which I outlined the arguments for Dancy's anti-psychological account of reasons, much of which I endorse. He argues for the normative constraint, according to which motivating reasons must be capable of being normative reasons. Since normative reasons are objective facts, motivating reasons must also be capable of being objective facts. The normative constraint is fundamental to the position I espouse.\

In this chapter, I have rejected Dancy's approach to resolving false beliefs. I have instead argued for the possibility that reasons can be both psychological and anti-psychological, depending on whether or not agent's have false beliefs. Dancy does not provide a robust approach to dealing with actions taken by an agent who has false beliefs. However, by utilizing McDowell's disjunctive conception of perception, I have outlined how, in the case of an agent with false beliefs, we can explain the agent's actions using psychological states while still, when the agent has true beliefs, being able to explain the agent's actions anti-psychologically. This position is a unique and original philosophical contribution. It has the strengths of Dancy's anti-psychologism about action explanations, without any of the attendant weaknesses. It is, consequently, the best account of action explanation.

In this chapter, I have discussed two problems with my proposed combined position. I considered the possibility that the combined position would violate the normative constraint. However, I rejected this possibility, because the only time the combined position could violate the normative constraint is when an agent is acting in light of false beliefs, but when an agent is acting in the light of false beliefs, the agent cannot be acting for a normative reason. Consequently, there is no possible case in which an agent can be acting for a normative reason that is not also a motivating reason for that agent.

I also considered the possible objection that the combined position is *ad hoc*. However, I rejected this possibility as well. I pointed out that the combined position is motivated by and justified by McDowell's epistemic disjunctivism, and thus was not *ad hoc*. I also pointed out that the combined position accorded with certain basic intuitions about what stands in need of an explanation in a variety of situations. If an action stands in need of explanation, that is because there is some information that those who need the explanation are lacking. When an agent acts in light of a true belief, given that normative reasons (reasons in favour of an action) are objective, someone who needs an explanation of the agent's action is someone who is missing information about the world. Alternatively, when an agent acts in the light of false beliefs, no information about the world will explain the agent's actions. Rather, what is needed to understand the agent's actions is information about the agent's psychological states. The combined position uniquely respects this particular explanatory split. Because the combined position is able

to explain actions anti-psychologically when an agent is acting because of a normative reason, but psychologically when an agent is acting because of a false belief, the combined position is best able to explain our actions in the different capacities in which we act.

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