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It is a pleasure to be challenged to rethink aspects of one's work and I am grateful to David Enoch who organised and chaired the symposium, and to the contributors. Their comments are wide-ranging, and touch on many more issues, and raise more points of criticism than I could comment on. Nor are detailed point by point replies needed. Ruth Chang writes mainly about the relations of my views to the views of a large number of other writers. Not always do I see the connections as she does, but all readers will be grateful to her for suggesting analogies and disanalogies. Both she and Ori Herstein suggest some alternatives to my views on certain matters. Even in the many cases in which they do not offer arguments to show that the alternatives are better, readers will benefit from being shown those alternatives and from reflection on them.¹

Ori Herstein and Ulrike Heuer manage to explain some of my views better than I did, and reading their contributions is enlightening; both, especially Ori Herstein, suggest ways of developing some of my points. With so many helpful comments, I can choose just a few to react to, mainly not by way of developed arguments, more through conversational reminders of where I stand on these issues. The only detailed argument I offer is triggered by the detailed argument supporting the criticism offered by Ulrike Heuer.

1. On my methodological ambition

Contrary to observations by Ori Herstein and Ruth Chang, at no point do I rely on intuitions, mine or anyone else's. Intuitions, properly understood, have an important

¹ Sometimes, as with Ruth Chang's comments on my knowability condition, I believe that the criticism finds replies in other parts of the book (e.g. in the part on reasoning).

role in philosophical argument. But they did not seem to me relevant to the argument of my book. I imagine that it was my methodological ambition that led them to think that I rely on so-called intuitions. It is, I believe, possible to distinguish in a rough and ready way between substantive normative beliefs ('respect your parents', 'be loyal to your friends', 'be willing to stand on your rights', 'compensate people for wrongs you did them', etc.) and general structural properties of our normative thought (that people have duties and rights, that under certain conditions they are responsible for their conduct, that they can have friends, and other attachments with normative components, that there are reasons for action, and for beliefs, and for emotions, etc).

The latter, the structural features of our thought, are presupposed by the former, by our substantive views, which are expressed in propositions structured by those features. While for the most part we hold our normative views unreflectively, we continuously examine some normative views or others, as we move through our daily lives. The thought that normative beliefs can be mistaken is familiar even to those who think that some or many of their views cannot possibly be mistaken. Reflection about the structural properties of our normative thought is rather rare. We hear grumbling about being a blame culture, or about suffering from rights inflation, but these assume rather than challenge understanding our normative situation in terms of blame and rights. I am not suggesting that the structural properties of our normative thought do not change, or that they are universal.² They do change, mostly as a result of and along with significant cultural shifts. The writings of some thinkers may trigger or affect these changes. But they are relatively stable, and understanding them and the way they change, and the implications of such changes, is and should be the stuff of historical and philosophical explanations.

My book is an essay about some of the central features of our normative thought. As I indicated it assumes that the demarcation of the class of structural properties is rough and ready; it does not assume that one set of them is common to everyone today, and it assumes that their explanation is relevant to the case for and against certain normative beliefs, and *vice versa*. It also assumes that the structural properties of normative thought

² See chapter seven of *Engaging Reason* for an explanation why such changes do not presuppose radical relativism, nor that there is one correct or best normative structure.

are displayed in normative thought, and are in a way familiar to all those who are familiar with that normative thought. The result is that arguments draw on what we know, or think we know, and this can sometimes be mistaken for reliance on intuitions.

2. Being in the world

My use of the term was meant to be suggestive, and I left it to reverberate without explaining it. Ori Herstein is of course right to point out that it applies to the way we engage with the world as well as to the kind of beings who are capable of that kind of engagement. I meant to indicate that this is a large topic, familiar from other philosophical traditions, and too big for me to tackle directly, let alone comprehensively, in the book.

I feel that my vague abstract point is related to influential trends in contemporary philosophy, in particular to the pervasive influence of ‘externalism’ in various areas of philosophical inquiry. Think of externalism in semantics and epistemology. It claims that what we know, believe, say and mean – depends on how we are hooked into the world, how we are situated in it; it is not just a function of psychological factors or of what goes on inside our skin. It is not the product of a transcendental self or something like that, and it is not entirely transparent to us or controlled by us. My reflections in the book – as Ruth Chang and Ori Herstein remarked – focus on our connectedness as manifested in action, or more broadly in our activities, and that leads to the normative, as action for a reason is a central case of human action.

The various aspects of the ways we are hooked to the world are interconnected, first and most obviously by relating to the boundary between us and what is outside us, and by affecting our sense of who we are, what kind of creatures we are. But they are also connected by being all governed by normative considerations. A point not always noticed. This is clear regarding action and responsibility for our contribution to how things are. We are not responsible for all the causal effects that we have in the world. In determining when we are and when not, in determining, for example, that we are responsible for locking the door but not for the effect of our sweating on the local humidity, the doctrine of responsibility – a normative doctrine – contributes both to a determination of who we are, what is ours, and where are the boundaries in the chains

of dependency and causation that interconnect everything, the boundaries separating us from what is not us and separating that which is ours – and our responsibility – and what is not ours. There are several boundaries involved, and I cannot even begin to explore them here. I will just remark that as the crucial doctrine in drawing these boundaries is that of responsibility, and as responsibility depends among other things on what we believe and know, it takes only a limited degree of holism to think that the dependence is two-way. That is that the boundaries of what we know, believe and mean not only affect what we are responsible for but are also affected by the doctrine of responsibility. It is a factor in justifying conclusions in epistemology and semantics. With these oracular remarks I will leave this topic.

3. Responsibility

As Herstein explains, the doctrine of responsibility also connects to people's sense of who they are, and to their ability to be proud of the way they are, to enjoy self-respect and like emotions. My suggestion was that a sphere of secure competence, whose contours differ for different people, plays a crucial role here. Herstein is right to say that competence relates to people's sense of who they are in many different ways, and some of them relate to how important the competence is for the life, the pursuits and relationships, of the person concerned. However, the book discusses one kind of competence, which I dubbed the sphere of secure competence, and its importance is to be understood rather differently, as is evident from the fact that it mostly relates to simple actions, like the ability to hold a cup without spilling its contents, to walk securely in the direction one decided on, etc. It is marked, broadly, by the fact that one knows that one would succeed in performing an action of the kind that belongs to one's sphere of secure competence if one tried to perform it. That means that regarding those actions deliberation does not include assessment of the likelihood of success, or the consequences of failure. There are exceptions and qualifications, and some of them are explained in the book and will not be repeated here. The crucial claim is that in taking (as is manifested in one's thought and action, but rarely in deliberating about it explicitly) some kinds of actions to be within one's sphere of secure competence one becomes responsible for them. One can avoid taking certain actions in that way, and then one is

responsible for them only if one is unreasonable or careless in one's decisions to take them or in the degree of care with which one engages in them. But, and that is crucial to our understanding of agency, we all have, and must have to be persons with capacity to act, spheres of secure competence.

That suggests that responsibility is non-comparative: we either are responsible for an action, or omission, or activity or we are not. But, as Herstein points out, we can and should allow that it is also used comparatively, that when we are responsible we may be more or less responsible. I did not discuss comparative responsibility, and it is not an easy subject, but I do not think that what I wrote is inconsistent with the possibility of degrees of responsibility.

The view of responsibility offered in the book, like most of the topics covered in it, is meant to be uncomfortably double-edged. On the one hand it is presented as an explanation, an interpretation, of the meaning of responsibility and its role in practical thought. On the other hand, being an explanation of a structural feature of our practical thought, it is a normative view, whose application to specific cases may well be inconsistent with common beliefs about whether or not people are responsible in the circumstances of those cases. It may well lead to an argument for revising many people's views about when people are actually responsible. So suggesting, as Herstein does, that my views do not conform to some aspect of the law may be taken to be a criticism of the law, rather than of my views. This does require, however, a more extensive discussion of the relation between legal doctrines and their moral foundations than would be appropriate here.

One discrepancy between common views related to judgements of responsibility and the doctrine of responsibility that I suggested is however clear. I was following Bernard Williams in rejecting much of the prevailing understanding of blame. It seems clear that my views of responsibility are at odds with that understanding of blame, and it was part of my aim, as it was the aim of Williams when writing about moral luck and more, to point to the need to reject it.

4. Toleration and its limits

Ruth Chang mentioned one aspect of my approach which I am proud of, namely its tolerance of alternative accounts, its rejection of a claim to exclusivity. This seems to me to be a consequence of the methodological ambition of the book. Toleration does have its limits, and I am not sure that denying that epistemic reasons are reasons in the same sense in which practical reasons are reasons – for if they are reasons in the same sense then they are also normative in the same way that practical reasons are normative – does not stretch toleration too far. What unites epistemic and practical reasons is that they indicate that a response is appropriate to how things are, and it is a response that can be guided by realisation that that is so. Moreover, proper functioning of the mental faculties involved, and they are largely the same in both the epistemic and the practical case, in recognition that the response is appropriate, shows that it is a rational response, and failure of their functioning shows that it is irrational. So there are compelling grounds for thinking that normativity applies to belief as well as to actions.

It is possible of course to provide accounts of partial fields, which do not notice that the partial field is part of a larger one. Such accounts need not make any false claims so long as they do not deny that the partial is part of the wider domain.

5. Value and practical reasons

The book offers some arguments, joining many offered by others, that value is irrelevant to epistemic reasons, and therefore that it cannot be part of the explanation of normativity at its most general and abstract. One crucial point, noted by Chang, is that the value of having true belief or knowledge cannot explain the normativity of epistemic reasons because not every time we have adequate epistemic reasons do they vindicate a belief that it is valuable to have, or valuable to have if true.³ By way of contrast, value is central to practical reasons: at their root it is the value of an option that is the reason for taking it. But, that an action, omission or activity would be valuable is not always a reason to take it. Suppose that the action would be bringing a miracle cure to Nelson (in 1805) thus saving his life. I do not have a reason to do that for I cannot. It fails – as

³ The same is true of understanding. Not every possible understanding is worth having. But that is yet another matter.

Ulrike Heuer pointed out – the *nexus* test (which requires that normative reasons can potentially explain conduct they are reasons for, an explanation that depends on and presupposes their normative force).

So it is not that the value of actions is always a reason for them. It has to meet further conditions to be so. One is that it can guide us – what is good is one thing, what is a reason is another. This is crucial to the understanding of the relations of good, and practical reasons. And if it means that we must ask two questions: is it good and if so do we have a reason to pursue it? So be it.

6. Broome and examples:

Ruth Chang thinks that the examples I use in explaining why John Broome's understanding of normative reasons is mistaken would not convince him. Therefore they are not neutrally effective. And indeed they are not. They never are, and are not meant to be. This is not the place for a thorough examination of why the aspiration for a neutral basis from which to proceed is illusory, and indeed has been abandoned as such by many. But two apparently conflicting, but in fact complementary, remarks may help. First, one of the misconceptions I tried to dispel in the book was the assumption that we account for our mental life by detailing our attitudes (beliefs, desires, hopes, aspirations, intentions, emotions, and the like). Powers and capacities are ultimate elements in our being the kind of animals we are (some powers and capacities are essential to any animal life), and they play a central role in our ability to function rationally. Therefore it is in principle possible rationally to persuade persons who do not share our assumptions. They possess rational powers that enable them to see the force of arguments that they did not anticipate, and that are based on assumptions that hitherto they did not consider. The second point is that the force of any example or illustration is based on some further assumptions. None is self-standing, with force that does not depend on and does not affect any other belief we may have. Being persuaded by an example involves seeing the case for some assumptions that we may not have accepted before. But by the same token a rejection of those assumptions will mean that conversations (arguments) that started with examples have to proceed to an examination of their assumptions, if they are to reach a conclusion. That is why

neutrality is neither possible nor necessary for conversation and argument. And that is why my examples in the argument against Broome did come with arguments explaining their force.

Chang writes:

'for example, Raz thinks that Broome's view of a pro tanto reason as something that figures in an explanation of why one ought to do something cannot account for cases of akrasia. But I didn't see why this was so unless one already thought that a pro tanto reason was an inherently normative force, as Raz does (see Raz 23). Broome can allow that a pro tanto reason on which one acts in cases of akrasia is a consideration that plays an against-x role in an explanation of why one ought to x, that is what one didn't do.'

And she is right that Broome can explain that normative reasons are relevant to determination of what we ought to do. That is common ground. What Broome cannot explain is how akratic people are acting for reasons, though ones that they take to be defeated. Given that they act for reasons, it follows that the normativity of normative reasons is not exhausted in their contribution to what one ought to do.

7. Non-standard reasons

To remind ourselves: not always is the value of actions a reason for them. It has to meet further conditions to be so. And the same goes for the value of intentions to conduct ourselves in a certain way at some future time or if some condition is met. The value of such intentions is not always a reason for them. Some intentions we cannot have. One such condition is that we cannot intend to Φ at some future time unless we believe that there will be reason to Φ at that time. That I took to be part of what it is to have a future-directed intention.⁴

If this is so then that it would be good to have an intention to φ cannot lead one to have such an intention when one does not believe that there is some good in, some reason to, φ . One cannot do the impossible, and one does not have reasons to do the impossible, even when it would be wonderful if one did the impossible. Does it follow that the value of having the intention, when independent of the value of the action intended, and unaided by another reason for the action itself, is not a standard reason for having the intention since it is impossible to follow it directly?

⁴ More generally, having an intention to φ involves believing that there is a reason to φ . With future-directed intention we may believe only that there may be a reason to act when the time comes, in which case our intention is conditional: we intend to act if there is a reason to do so.

In the book I gave an affirmative answer, and that is why, in arguing that the unaided independent value of an intention is not a standard reason for forming it, I did not invoke a maxim regarding intentions. Perhaps there is a case for such a maxim on other grounds. But I did not think that it is needed to establish this conclusion. I claimed that it follows from a condition for future-directed intentions.

One may ask: why did I say that it is not a standard reason rather than simply that it is not a reason *tout court*? Because given that it is good to have the intention there is a reason to have it and it is a reason that we can, and other things being equal, should, conform to. For example, if we believe that there is a reason for the action (e.g. because we generated one) it will no longer be impossible to intend the action. We could therefore conform to the reason in two steps: first, for example, produce a reason for the act, second, form an intention to perform it. Once we form the intention the reason for having it will have been conformed with and the good in having it is realised.

Ulrike Heuer says that I use ‘practical reason’ in two senses: One, of my invention, as a value-based reason, the second, and correct meaning, a reason for action. She makes me realise that I did not explain my view on the point, and probably did not fully grasp its complexity, adequately at the time. So here is another attempt. ‘Practical reason’ is used in philosophical writing as a philosophical expression, one whose meaning is either stipulated or established by its role in a theory or account of action or thought etc. In common discourse it is probably used to mean a reason that should be put into practice. So, let us start by agreeing that reasons for action are practical reasons (without committing to whether they are the only practical reasons). The book argues, mostly indirectly, that reasons for action are value based. That may be wrong, but no one in this symposium challenged the claim, so I will stay with it.

Now, there are also reasons for omissions, and for activities, and they too, by the same reasoning, are value based. So it appears sensible to think that they are reasons of the same kind, differing in the type of object they take (action, omission, etc.) but not in the kind of thing that constitutes the reason (the value of their object). So they are all practical reasons. Analogous reasoning suggests that as reasons for intentions are also value based they too are practical reasons, and the same goes for (some) reasons for emotions. Further reasoning, some aspects of which we examined above, suggests that

practical reasons form one of two broad categories, and that they are all value based, some of them being standard and some non-standard. In sum: 'practical reasons' being a philosophical expression is used in what may be taken to be a stipulative meaning, namely value based reasons. However the stipulation is acceptable and helpful because of a substantive truth, namely that reasons for actions, omissions, activities, intentions and some reasons for emotions and beliefs belong to one kind of reasons, the one I use 'practical reasons' to designate.

One advantage of that understanding of practical reasons is that it reduces the need for endless distinctions that make no difference (normatively speaking). Suppose you have a practical reason to be in a certain state. That very same reason is a reason to bring it about, if you are not in it yet, and the same reason is a reason to keep it in existence, or to prevent its disappearance or change, if you are in it, etc. In all these cases one fact is the core reason that, given different conditions, is a reason to bring about the state, given other conditions is a reason to protect it from threat, etc.

It is time to return to Ulrike Heuer's objection to my view of reasons for intentions. She considers the following two cases. First

'Cinema. Ellie has a reason to now intend to meet her good friend Paul at the cinema tomorrow, the reason being that Paul is very nervous because he plans to go there with a new love-interest, and knowing that Ellie intends to come as well would calm Paul's nerves now'.

Second: **'Amended Cinema.** Just vary the example slightly by assuming that Ellie would actually like to see the film'.

She observes: 'All this is, by the way, covered by Raz's formulation, because the reason (in Amended Cinema) is not 'unaided' anymore. It has received help from the fact that Ellie is interested in the film. But it seems strange that a non-standard reason [changes its] stripes in this way, and become a standard reason.'

There are two pertinent questions: First, can one follow directly an independent unaided reason to intend to φ ? Second, if the answer to the first is affirmative, is such a reason a non-standard reason?

Let me start with the second question. Does not an affirmative answer follow from the definition of non-standard reasons? Perhaps. But while the question is suggested by the definition, it is less clear that the answer is affirmative. Heuer suggests that it is not. Though she would not put it so impolitely, in effect she blames me for cheating: by the definition reasons are standard if their necessary features make them possible to follow in some circumstances, and they are non-standard if their necessary features make them

impossible to follow in any circumstances. A reason is either standard or not. It cannot be standard in some circumstances and non-standard in others. If so then independent reasons for intentions are standard. They can be followed directly when the agent believes that there is a reason for what is intended. I obscured the fact that it is only sometimes impossible to directly follow independent reasons for intentions by writing about unaided independent reasons as if being unaided is part of the reason. But it is not. It is merely one context to which they apply.

That was a mistake. But perhaps the way to remedy it is not to deny that such reasons are non-standard, but to change the characterisation of non-standard reasons. Perhaps, but how? Just about all reasons cannot be followed directly some of the time. Perhaps there is something special about unaided independent reasons for intentions. It is impossible to specify an intention in a way that identifies its nature except by specifying its object (what it is an intention to do or omit, or have, etc.), and its existence necessarily implies belief in the value of its object. So intentions are tied to their object, as it were secondary to their object. Their point and purpose is to realise their object. That does not mean that there is anything wrong with 'using' an intention, or allowing it to have some other use, just as there is nothing wrong in using a watch as a paperweight, or a hammer as a doorstopper. Merely that when they are serving another purpose, i.e. when they are independent, intentions cannot be directly followed unless aided. That point helps in seeing something important about intention just as non-standard reasons for beliefs show us something important about belief.

That is what I was trying to capture in arguing that unaided, independent reasons for intentions are non-standard reasons. But the solution was not, as Heuer shows, entirely successful, to say the least. That task, showing the dependence of intentions on their objects, suggests that all independent reasons for intentions are non-standard. My test does apply to all independent reasons, but only in some circumstances. There may be nothing wrong in that, because these are the circumstances in which the dependence of intentions on their object is most clearly manifest. But it has the problem noted above. If the characterisation of non-standard reasons is to be extended to allow for some reasons being non-standard because they cannot be directly followed in some special circumstances that would have to be backed by an independent argument about

the dependence of intentions on their object. Heuer sensibly proposes that the problem can also be tackled by introducing a maxim for intentions that privileges reasons for intentions that depend on, derive from, reasons for their objects. In some ways this is a simpler, more elegant way to proceed. It too presupposes an independent argument for the dependence of intentions on their objects. But I am still reluctant to go this way because independent reasons for intentions can and sometimes do generate reasons for their objects (as I explain in the book) and there is nothing wrong with that. When they do they are not unaided and they can be followed directly. The matter requires further thought. Here, I will leave the answer to the second question incomplete and the problem unresolved.

How about the first question? Is it really impossible to directly follow unaided independent reasons for intentions? In the book I argued that when self-deception or conceptual confusion leads one to believe that one is following such a reason one is not in fact following it. One mistakenly thinks that one is. But what if one is simply mistaken about the existence of another reason for the act that one has an independent reason to intend? And on the other hand, what if there is another reason for the act but the agent does not believe that there is one? It seems that I should have written that it is impossible to directly follow independent reasons for intentions unless one believes that they are aided. This claim is not challenged by Heuer⁵, and it is important. Whether or

⁵ Though she does raise the issue of self-deception. In the book I explained why self-deception, or indeed mistake, about the nature of concepts does not change the concepts, and therefore you may think that you instantiate a concept without doing so. Someone who believes that non-standard reasons are standard is not making them into standard reasons. If one believes that gaining the good opinion of Cameron is a good epistemic reason to believe that he is a good prime minister one nevertheless has no epistemic reason to believe that Cameron is a good prime minister. One's misunderstanding of epistemic reasons may explain (be an explanatory reason for) why one came to believe that Cameron is ... but that belief is still not based on any (normative) epistemic reason, and was not reached by following one.

The same holds for a person who believes that he can have intentions without believing that there is a reason for their object. Does that false belief remove the impossibility of having such intentions? No, he still cannot have that intention. He can think that he has it, but that is because he does not know what intentions are. He has some other mental state, and David Enoch, or someone else may say that it does not matter that it is not an intention. And of course, for some purposes it does not.

Note that in no case is it claimed that a reason is non-standard because following it is irrational. Think of someone who tells me: you will be happy if you believe that you are immortal. Suppose that is true, and I acknowledge that and add: unfortunately I cannot believe that I am. All the evidence is that none of us is. My friend responds: just be irrational and believe it. It does not matter if it is irrational, you will be happy. I cannot believe it. I cannot make myself believe it.

not such reasons are or are in those circumstances, non-standard reasons, the fact that they cannot be directly followed is – as the book suggested – the key to a variety of problems including the Toxin Puzzle.⁶

Heuer has another important objection

‘Friendship.’ There is some evidence that my friend has committed a heinous crime. I find the evidence strong, but not absolutely conclusive. In this case, my loyalty to my friend may be my reason and it may even require me to suspend belief. I accept, however, that those who do believe her guilty on the very same evidence are not irrational: they have sufficient reason for doing so. Here again it looks as though I am following a non-standard (because non-truth-related) reason directly – again defying the relevant maxim.’

The book suggested that the considerations that determine the weight of reasons that is required to warrant belief are not reasons for belief and need not be truth-related. Is this right? Think of a person who is never (rarely) epistemically irrational. Call him John. He always believes when failure to do so would be irrational, and suspends belief when it is irrational to believe (given the evidence). But there is an in-between zone where it is neither irrational to suspend belief nor irrational to believe – given the evidence. John has evidence that his sister, Rachel, has given information about activities of her employer to one of his competitors. But he does not believe that she did. ‘But’, you say to him, ‘your cousin, who has exactly the same evidence, nothing more, does believe that. Is he irrational?’ ‘No’, he replies, ‘He is rational, but I am different. I have a more suspicious, more doubting, disposition than his. I require stronger evidence, and that too is rational’. His suspicious bent is an explanatory reason why, in the in-between zone, his epistemic behaviour differs from his cousin’s. Note that, as in my example, he may be aware of the fact at the time. He is also aware that the case falls in the in-between zone, and that therefore there is nothing amiss in his disposition leading him to an epistemic position that is not required by reason.

What you can do for me is give me a happiness potion that will make me believe anything believing which will make me happy. He gives me the potion and now I believe that I am immortal. But I do not believe it because it will make me happy. I do not present that as my reason. I probably say I do not remember the reason. My belief is irrational, but that did not make me follow the reason. Nor would things be different if the potion made me believe that happiness is a reason for belief. Suppose it makes me believe that if 3 is green I am immortal, and that 3 is green. Do I follow a bad reason when I then believe that I am immortal? I simply do not know what reasons are etc.

⁶ But can one really follow the independent reason when it is aided? How could the presence of another reason effect that transformation? It was not transformed: the impossibility to follow it once removed, obviously the reason can function as a standard reason.

Suppose, however, that John is proud of his disposition – I am not a sucker, he thinks, or thoughts to that effect. That affects this disposition. He does not merely observe and understand his reactions. He checks to see whether he is confronted with enough evidence to maintain the self-image that he is proud of, etc. Even so, no new normative reasons have been introduced; merely a new higher-order disposition to maintain his suspiciousness. And that is so even if he is aware of all this. Neither his suspiciousness nor his proud self-image set a norm requiring a higher level of evidence. His epistemic conduct is explained by these dispositions but is not normatively guided by them. If on occasion he fails to live up to them there is nothing wrong with him.

Turn now to the case of friendship. Suppose that when asked why he does not believe that Rachel did what the evidence suggests that she did he says: ‘She is my sister.’ Can we now say that his conduct is explained by his loyalty and is not normatively guided? (I am assuming, with Heuer, that the example is one where it would be disloyal of him to be persuaded by the evidence.) Perhaps the virtues have, among other things, a non-normative impact on people’s feelings and conduct, which is one, perhaps the main, reason to reject attempts to explain their possession as merely a reliable adherence to the related reasons. So the question is: is John normatively guided by considerations of loyalty or friendship that are practical reasons. This last qualification is crucial. We are not interested, not challenged, by cases in which one’s loyalty leads to knowledge of a person, which in turn enables one to predict that person’s conduct and motivations.

Is John’s suspension of belief guided by a practical reason? After all, I am assuming that John would have been rational had he believed that Rachel behaved as the evidence suggested, even though in that case his rational belief would have shown him to be disloyal, or less of a good friend than he ought to be.⁷

We can imagine that John is aware that but for Rachel being his sister he would have believed that she divulged the information, on the basis of that same evidence. Does that show that he is normatively guided by reasons of loyalty, rather than being pleasingly aware of the explanatory, non-normative, reasons for his response to the evidence? It is

⁷ It may even be the case that when the evidence is so strong that, knowing it, failing to believe is irrational, believing is nevertheless a failure of friendship. Whether this is possible depends on one’s understanding of the duties of friendship.

the sort of case in which analysis exceeds the questions that people ask of themselves, or about others, in ‘real life situations’. This may invite a conclusion of indeterminacy, or something like that. But we can make progress by observing that it is natural to invoke the virtue, rather than a mere awareness of a reason, when thinking of the case.

Furthermore, we are helped by changing the example: suppose that John having believed that Rachel acted in some unbecoming way, or even an immoral one, comes across some evidence that points to her innocence of that act. As in our previous example, this places the case for believing in her innocence in the in-between zone: not irrational to suspend belief, and not irrational to maintain the belief in her guilt. John suspends belief. Now, it seems to me that he will have to deny that his loyalty was for him a normative reason to change his mind. He can allow that it non-normatively affected him, now that the case falls in the in-between zone. But if he allows that it is his (or part of his) normative reason he will be condemning himself for some confusion and mistake and will have to change his mind again. That seems to me a strong indicator that practical reasons cannot be reasons for belief that can be followed directly.

I have discussed Heuer’s arguments in a defensive mode, trying to see what faults they reveal in my work. None of this shows that her positive suggestions are not viable, or indeed that they do not improve on my suggestions. But that had better be left to another occasion.

8. Rational Powers

Ruth Chang sees two red flags when distinctions (she has in mind my discussion of which of our powers belongs and which do not belong with our rational powers) are in murky domains or rely on murky considerations. I feel: Oh, now we are getting closer. Those whose distinctions are crisp, not in their presentation, but in their demarcations, are either blind to the complexities of the phenomena or simplify too much, inviting us to ignore complexities.

I mentioned that explaining rational powers contributes to our understanding of personhood, but I did not suggest that there is a test there. Rather, the thought is that developing an account of Reason, namely of the rational powers, goes hand in hand with, contributes to and benefits from, developing an account of being a person. And it is

worth remembering that the divide between powers that belong with our rational powers and those that do not may be incomplete. Clearly some powers are and some are not among our rational powers. Possibly there is no answer regarding various other powers. Many concepts are like that. And they may function well being as they are. I did suggest the non-derivative rationality test as a tentative test. It seems to work well regarding the powers that I applied it to. But it may fail with others. In any case it does not stand on its own. In part it is merely suggestive, and its results stand only if they can be independently verified. But in part it is an independent test. For example, by it forgetfulness is not irrational, and memory, at least some aspects of it, are not among the rational powers. That seems to me to be true of a common understanding of Reason. But there may be no significant theoretical point underlying this exclusion. Another concept, the cousin of our concept of Reason, which would be like ours except that memory will be among the rational powers, would be theoretically just as good.

9. Reason to be rational?

Chang writes: 'If you ask, however, what reason there is to conform to this way of identifying and responding to reasons, there is no answer. You just are.' Later she adds: 'Why should you do what it's good to do/what gets you what you want? To avoid the regress, Raz, like others, "goes constitutive". Instead of appealing to a further consideration that justifies the activity of identifying and responding to reasons in this way, Raz holds that "rationality, namely responsiveness to reasons, is...constitutive of being a person" (97-9). So if you're a person, it makes no sense to ask for reasons to do and be what constitutes your personhood. And since we can't avoid being persons, it seems that the regress is stopped.'

It sounds odd to me to suggest that an account that avoids some fallacy is what it is in order to avoid that fallacy. Surely, it is what it is for the reasons that make it a correct account. I do not 'go constitutive' to block the regress problem, and if my account is not flawed by vicious regress that does not recommend it as a good one. Moreover, as I pointed out in the book, we can avoid being persons. Some people do that, and there may be good reasons to stop being persons. It just so happens, I believe, that there is no general reason for people to stop being persons, certainly it is not necessarily the case

that there is such a reason. Nor is there, nor can there be, a general reason for people to be persons. That is because they are already persons. So they cannot become persons, and the only reason there may be is to continue to be persons, to which the answer is as above.

The same applies to using or refraining from using our rational powers. While awake we use them, just as we have sensations and some perceptions whenever we are awake, and it makes no sense to ask: 'do I have reasons for having sensations?' But while taken literally there is no possible reason to use our rational powers when awake, there can be reasons to refrain from using them (by going to sleep, getting extremely inebriated, etc.) and there can be reasons to avoid conditions in which we cannot use them (e.g. reasons to stay awake all night tonight). None of this is denied by my account. It does however point out the basic fact that rational powers are among the powers that are engaged and active during wakefulness. They differ from the power to walk or to speak, which (assuming normal conditions) we use when deciding to do so, as it were, and whose use always raises the question: was there a good reason to use them?⁸

⁸ A couple of points about the source of normativity. First, Chang, to show that the question 'what is the source of normativity?' is in good order, even if the answer is that it has no source (which she takes to be of the same order as saying 'I have no children') gives many examples of questions of the form 'in virtue of what is that p a reason to φ ?'. My suggestion that there is no good sense to the question about the source of normativity does not imply that there is anything amiss in any of the 'in virtue of what is one thing a reason for another?' questions. Which are not questions about the source of anything, let alone the source of normativity. Second, she seems to think that because the claim that there is no room for a question about the sources of normativity can be false it cannot be a claim of a conceptual truth. But claims of conceptual truths are as likely, some will say, much more likely, to be mistaken as any others.