

RECONSTRUCTION

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Summary [*still to be written*]

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WHY

1

On the train that took them to Auschwitz-Birkenau there was nothing to drink. Primo Levi writes that he and his fellow deportees arrived at the camp with a terrible thirst. Through a window of the shed where they were left to wait Levi saw an icicle. He reached through the window and broke off the icicle, but before he could put it to his lips a guard who was patrolling the yard outside had snatched the icicle away.

“*Warum?*” I asked him in my poor German. “*Hier ist kein warum*” (there is no why here), he replied, pushing me inside with a shove.

The explanation is repugnant but simple: in this place everything is forbidden, not for hidden reasons, but because the camp has been created for that purpose.

It’s been about twenty three years since I read this passage for the first time. I’m still trying, against counsel, to understand it.

I’m still trying to dismiss the guard’s non-explanation explanation of his action. He is a guard in a concentration camp-death camp. He is not to be believed. Suppose that you could somehow overlook the speaker’s biography and his context. Even then it might strike you that the thing he says, if it were true, would cancel any warrant for accepting it that comes from the fact of his saying it. Show me a person who makes a point of doing things for no good reason, and I will show you someone who has set himself against the truth in a way that disqualifies his speech from serving as a source for other minds.

Reading on I’m surprised to find the guard’s remark endorsed by a reliable authority, by Primo Levi. The purpose of the camp, Levi seems to say next, is to stop its inmates from doing things. Things that there is no reason to stop them from doing, things that they might have pretty good reasons to do. I am guessing that it’s not for lack of a purpose but for want of a reason that the camp lacks a why.

A few hours have passed when Levi meets Schlome, a sixteen-year-old boy and the survivor of three years in Auschwitz. Levi manages to get across to Schlome that he needs water.

He looks at me with a serious face, almost severe, and states clearly: “Do not drink water, comrade,” and then other words that I do not understand.

“*Warum?*”

“*Geschwollen,*” he replies cryptically. I shake my head, I have not understood. “*Swollen,*” he makes me understand, blowing out his cheeks and sketching with his hands a monstrous tumefaction of the face and belly. “*Warten bis heute Abend.*” “Wait until this evening,” I translate word by word.

The teenager gives the newcomer some advice. He tells Levi that he should not drink the water, and he helps him to see why that would be a mistake. In passing along what he knows about Levi’s reasons Schlome acts for the reason he has to help Levi act for those. That’s what comrades are for. Here there is a why.

In this book I’m concerned with an aspect of life as it’s lived among other people that the young prisoner appears to get right after the guard gets it bottomlessly wrong. I’m concerned with the reasons for action that a person faces because there are other persons who are themselves called on to act for the reasons they have.

To uncover the problem will require an understanding of reasons and of the action that a person does for the reason she has to do it. I am going to work toward this in the way that I can, through a dispassionate discussion of the dependence structures of practical principles and values. After its prologue that discussion will seem frivolous. Bloodless philosophical thinking about morality is not doomed to unseriousness just because it lacks blood. But to be serious is a constant struggle, and I’m putting this material in the front where I hope it will remind me to try.

Levi writes that he has attempted “to furnish documentation for a quiet study of certain aspects of the human mind”. His book is called *If this is a person*, and it’s left for his readers to say what follows.

2

This book’s second topic is freedom, the freedom of persons in society. Is it possible to live as one free person among others? I live in America, among Americans, and when I think about freedom I think about slavery. Some orientation by a primary source will be helpful here, too.

Frederick Douglass believed himself to be twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old when he wrote the *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, an American slave*. At around the age of twenty Douglass left Baltimore, where he’d been working in a shipyard for wages that every week he handed over to his master, and made his way north, first to New York and eventually to Massachusetts. His flight is anticipated in several intense chapters of the *Narrative*. For example one tells of a disastrous first attempt at running away. On a casual reading it can seem that the whole arc of this character is toward his physical exit from the territory of the

slaveholding South. But when Douglass finally makes his move you hear almost nothing of how it happened. “On the third day of September, I left my chains.”

Douglass explains that he’s omitting the particulars of his journey so as not to betray the tactics and methods of the activist network that helped him to get away. That he is not yet free to tell his whole story reminds us to check for other respects in which though removed from a slave state he is not yet free.

This might leave you wondering why the book succeeds so brilliantly as the story of a life even as it violates the norms of storytelling that recommend a well-placed climax wherein the hero solves his problem. The answer, I would guess, is that Douglass’ physical passage is not after all the climax of this story. Douglass does not solve his problems by leaving Maryland. His trip up the Atlantic coast is dominated in importance by two events, one that has come earlier and one that lies ahead.

A future event that surpasses Douglass’ physical escape as a focus of narrative interest does not take place within the autobiography. It had not happened at the time he wrote. Douglass’ becoming a fully free person requires a general abolition of American slavery. Are we there yet?

But the book also arrives at its own extraordinary release, a turning point if not a climax. In his chapter about the year he spent at Covey’s farm on the Eastern Shore, Douglass shows how he came to understand that he should be free and how for the first time he acted from that understanding.

Mr. Covey entered the stable with a long rope; and just as I was half out of the loft, he caught hold of my legs, and was about tying me. As soon as I found out what he was up to, I gave a sudden spring, and as I did so, he holding to my legs, I was brought sprawling on the stable floor. Mr. Covey seemed now to think he had me, and could do what he pleased; but at this moment—from whence came the spirit I don’t know—I resolved to fight; and, suiting my action to the resolution, I seized Covey hard by the throat; and as I did so, I rose. He held on to me, and I to him. My resistance was so entirely unexpected, that Covey seemed taken all aback. He trembled like a leaf. This gave me assurance, and I held him uneasy, causing the blood to run where I touched him with the ends of my fingers.

It was “the turning-point in my career as a slave.” Though he remained a slave for another four years “I was never again what might be called fairly whipped.”

For another six months Douglass grew corn for Covey. For another four years he was a slave. Though the fight spared him further whippings he does not show it conducing in any direct way to his escape. But his life turned at the point of his deciding to stand up. “I felt as I never had before. I now resolved that how ever long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact.”

This reminds me of a surprising remark about slavery that Douglass’ close contemporary and look-alike Karl Marx makes in the course of expounding a

related thought about wage labor. Labor power's "recognition of the products as its own," he writes,

and the judgment that its separation from the conditions of its realization is unjust—forcibly imposed—is an enormous advance in awareness, itself the product of the mode of production resting on capital, and as much the knell to its doom as, with the slave's awareness that *he cannot be the property of another*, with his consciousness of himself as a person, the existence of slavery becomes a merely artificial, vegetative existence, and ceases to be able to prevail as the basis of production.

It's a fairly strange thing for Marx to be saying when he says it. The middle-aged materialist who wrote this sentence can't really be claiming that slavery is undermined by thoughts of freedom. Can he? That the slave frees herself by coming to understand that she's a person? I would ignore this as so much philosophy had we not heard the same from Douglass, who was there.

The emancipation from slavery of four and a half million American slaves during or just after the Civil War is an action that originated in the slaves' earliest struggles against their masters. If that resistance sometimes took the form of coordinated rebellion on the scale of a plantation or a county, it was more often seized individually and moment by moment. Slaves resisted by working slow or by putting up a physical fight, through acts of sabotage or the repossession of goods claimed by the owner. They also walked away.

By raising the costs of slavery's maintenance these actions helped to cause the Civil War, the Union victory, the Emancipation Proclamation, the Reconstruction amendments to the US constitution, and Reconstruction itself. How severely did slave resistance disrupt the slave economy? What share of credit for the military defeat of the Confederacy goes to slave or freedman soldiers? To what degree were the Emancipating and Reconstructing politicians following the lead of insurgent slaves?

I think that these causal questions do not account for the entire fascination of resistance. It demands to be kept in mind and not only because it hastened slavery's destruction. Considered as the free action of the slaves resistance was already slavery's negative.

I want to know what Douglass did when he defied Covey. I hope to understand his action of, first, springing free of the rope, then, after falling, gripping the throat of the person who was trying to tie him up with it, and, finally, rising to his feet while holding onto the other man so as to hold him off. I will explore the possibility that this action was free. I'll propose tentatively that it was the beginning of Douglass's freedom, not because it caused his escape, but because in improvising this momentary reversal of expectations Douglass acted freely. His action was antislavery, and antislavery is freedom.

ONE **PRINCIPLE**

1

A person should do the right thing for the right reason. She should act for a good reason. She should act for the reason she has. She should so act that she does what she does because of the reason she has to do it.

These formulas formulate a practical standard, a standard for action. A person does not satisfy it by dint of her sound character or correct views alone. Instead, for some action that the person might perform, she satisfies the standard exactly in virtue of her performing that action. When a person acts for the reason she has, the fact that she's acting for the reason she has is a valuable feature of an action of hers. Her action's having the feature helps to make of it something that she should do.

I'll call this kind of action "principled," and in this chapter I'll use *P* as a name for the claim that, if some fact gives some person good reason to perform some action, and if the person may believe this with epistemic permission, then there's a possible action that constitutes this person's acting for the reason she has such that the action's being an instance of her acting for the reasons she has helps to make it the case that she should do it.

You should act for the reason you have, but how? What is it to act for the reason you have? One pretty definite answer comes to mind right away. In honor of its ready credibility I will call it the *first view* of acting for the reason you have.

This view holds, first, that there's a kind of action, *acting for a reason*, that is constituted independently of the kind *acting for the reason you have*. That a person acts for a reason is, in particular but speaking still quite roughly, the fact that she performs an action such that, for some proposition *p*, her performance of the action is psychologically explained by her formation or possession of an attitude of accepting *p* as a reason for doing the action. (A smoother statement of the view might require that the attitude explain the action in some special kind of way.)

The first view then holds that the fact that a person does x for the reason she has to do x is in virtue of two facts: first, that she does x for a reason and so that there's some p such that her x'ing is psychologically explained by her accepting p as a reason for x'ing; second, that the p just mentioned is true and that its truth or the fact thanks to which it's true really does give her good reason to do x.

A thoughtless or ill-intentioned but materially helpful action can come in for criticism because the person who acts, although she does what she has reason to do, fails to do it for the reason she has to do it. Her mistake is that she does the right thing but not for the right reason. I administer the drug that spares the terminally sick person some suffering while also foreseeably hastening her death. That delivering the drug will ease her suffering gives me good reason to do that. But I don't take that feature of the action as giving me good reason for it. Or I accept that it gives me the reason, but my acceptance of the reason does not explain my action. Instead I plunge the needle on a whim, in a burst of medical curiosity, or from a desire to reach the end of my caseload before the rush hour. Now I've acted otherwise than as I should. I've made a mistake in action.

It seems that you may mark the fact that my action is wrong or mistaken partly by saying that I've failed to act for the reason I have. And it seems that my action is mistaken at least partly *because* it's not psychologically explained by an attitude of my taking the relief of the person's suffering as giving me good reason for doing what relieves the suffering. Because I'm ready to mark the fact that I've acted mistakenly by saying about my action that it wasn't done for the reason I had to do it, and because my action apparently owes its mistakenness to the fact that it's not psychologically explained by an attitude of taking that reason as a reason to deliver the drug, I am moved to identify the standard that I've violated, in failing to act for the reason I have, as a standard requiring of me precisely that my action be psychologically explained by my attitude of taking as a reason for it that which really does give me good reason to do it.

This is powerful. As I'll now explain, it also makes me uneasy.

2

I think that when you come to believe that you should do something and that some valuable feature of that action gives you good reason to do it, when this belief is warranted for you, and when it's true, you then *discover* that the action is one that, thanks to those valuable features, you should perform. You don't in coming to take this view of your action make it to be valuable. You don't even add to its value or append to it a further valuable feature. You don't make of it an action that you should perform, and you don't even help to make it be an action that you should perform.

When I'm thinking whether to perform an action I don't often take the fact of my own attitudes for the action as counting in the action's favor. My thinking does not seem incorrect for lack of attention to those attitudes. It doesn't seem incomplete

or even abbreviated, not even faultlessly abbreviated or streamlined, for lack of attention to the attitudes.

This so-called outward orientation of my practical thinking is possibly misleading. The thinking's resemblance to a process of discovery could be a mirage. But I take these apparent marks of good practical thinking as some evidence that the occurrence of attitudes of approval of or desire for an action or its features is not a ground of the action's being valuable or of its being the thing for me to do. They lend plausibility to one part of a claim that I'll call *I*, for "independence".

In the currently relevant part *I* holds that, for any action that you should perform, there is no desire for that very action or its features, no judgment of approval of it or them, nor any other conative or evaluative attitude *pro* the action or its features such that the fact that you should perform the action, or the fact of the action's possession of the valuable features that help to make it the case that you should do it, is even partly in virtue of the fact that you have taken, are taking, or will take that attitude.

I'm not sure that this is true. *Of course* I'm not sure. The claim is too big and far too vaguely stated for certainty to be sane. But I'm so far inclined to accept it, and so I'm eager to explore its relations with other apparent truths about what you should do. In this book I will point out some ways in which independence might help to explain some other such truths. But where an appearance of inconsistency with other truths about practical principles and standards crops up I'll want to look into their disagreement.

There is reason to worry that Independence is at odds with *P*. Some writers seem to oppose the one idea in the name of the other. Christine Korsgaard has argued against something like *I* on the ground that it puts something like *P* out of reach. Judith Jarvis Thomson can be heard criticizing something like *P* by appeal to something like *I*. I will now argue that these two ideas are indeed inconsistent (or close enough) if the first view of acting for the reason you have is true. Against the background of a couple of plausible further assumptions the triad of *I*, *P*, and the first view is inconsistent.

3

Suppose that some fact *R* gives me good reason to walk. And suppose that I may believe this with epistemic permission. Then by *P* there's an associated event of my possible action that is valuable because it's principled. The action's principled character makes of this action something that I should do. Which action is that?

It might be that the only relevant event of my action is my walking. Then this walking that I do is the principled action whose being principled helps to make it the case that I should do it. Or, for a second possibility, consider that my walking for *R* might itself constitute an event of my action numerically distinct from the event of my walking. Then my action of walking for *R* might be the principled

action of which it's true that, thanks at least partly to its being principled, I should do it.

Let's take the first possibility first. My walking is the principled action. My walking is principled only if and because my walking is or will be my acting for the reason I have. That I should walk is a fact partly because my walking is or will be my acting for the reason I have.

On the first view of my acting for the reason I have, the fact that my walking is or will be my acting for the reason I have is in virtue of the fact that my walking is or will be psychologically explained by my taking R as a reason to walk. So by the current proposal the fact that my walking is or will be psychologically explained by my taking R as a reason to walk helps to make it the case that I should walk by making it true of my walking that it is or will be my acting for the reason I have. And so the fact that I should walk is partly in virtue of the fact that I do or will take R as a reason to walk.

I doubt that that's right. I doubt that my taking this attitude in favor of my walking helps to make it the case that I should walk. Keeping faith with Independence I resist this consequence of the first of the two possibilities I've distinguished.

Let's have a look at the second. I can walk in such a way that my walking for R is itself an action that I perform. This action is principled, and its principled character helps to make it the case that I should walk for R. The action event that satisfies this requirement just is my walking for R. On the first view this action's occurrence partly consists in my taking R as a reason to walk. So the action's being required of me is not itself conditional on or grounded by any fact as to whether I take R as a reason to walk. And because the reason-taking attitude thanks to which I walk for R approves of my walking rather than of my walking for R, my walking for R does not depend for its principled character on an evaluative or conative attitude that I take toward this very action.

Independence seems safe, on this second hypothesis. But the principled principle *P* is not safe.

4

My walking for R is now taken to be an action that I should perform. Like other things that I should do, this action has some valuable features that make it to be an action that I should perform. Its possession of those features gives me good reason to do it. It will happen sometimes that I may believe these things to be true. In that case, by *P*, I should [walk for R] for the reason I have to do it.

Let *R'* be the fact that gives me good reason to [walk for R]; *R'* might be distinct from R, or it might be R. On the first view of acting for the reason you have, my acting for the reason I have requires that I take *R'* as giving me good reason to [walk for R] and that my taking *R'* as giving me good reason to [walk for R]

psychologically explain my walking for R. When and because my walking for R is explained by that attitude, some action that I perform is principled. Which one?

I've just argued it can't be my action of [walking for R], lest in violation of Independence this action depend for its being good and for its being the thing to do on my attitude toward it. There must be a third action of my ([walking for R] for R') that is itself principled. Let's suppose that's so. There's an action of my ([walking for R] for R'). This one is also one that I have reason to do and so one that, by *P*, I should do for the reason I have to do it. I satisfy the latter requirement only if and because I approve of this action in a way that psychologically explains my performance of it. If I'm to walk fully correctly and well I must approve of my walking on grounds of R, I must approve of my walking for R on grounds of R', and I must approve of my ([walking for R] for R') on grounds of some R''.

And I am just getting started. You probably see where this is headed. You've probably seen its like before. Iteration of the argument would sprout an infinite hierarchy of actions to be performed, an infinite To Do list. Each action in the hierarchy must be psychologically explained by my attitude of taking some reason to count in favor of an action one level down if I'm to satisfy all of the *P* requirements that apply to my walking on this single occasion of my having good reason to walk. I will have to climb down this beanstalk before I can take a single step. I don't have time for this, for these all these rounds of causations. And I don't have the space, mental space, for all those attitudes. I am a finite human who in the course of coming to walk performs only finitely many actions severally and time-consumingly caused by the occurrence of mental-space-taking attitudes of mine. I assume that, if *P* is true, finite humans can satisfy the practical requirements that it entails. I conclude that *P* is not true on the current hypothesis.

To save time and space, to save principled action, we might go reflexive. On a tip from Christine Korsgaard we might think of my [walking for R] as an essentially self-endorsing action, an action that's partly made up of an attitude of approval of itself. That I [walk for R] is the fact that I walk psychologically because I take R to count in favor of my [walking for R]. I am motivated to act by my approval of this very motivation and so of this very action. Now there is no distinguishing my action of [walking for R] from my action of ([walking for R] for the reason I have to do it.) My walking for R just is an action that's explained by an attitude of approval of itself. *P* requires of me that I perform this action that consists in my walking's being psychologically explained by my approval of itself. If I'm capable of such a self-referential content—a hard question that I will have to leave for the experts—then I can satisfy *P* in finite time. I can do it in one blow, by striking this attitude in a way that explains my performing the rest of the action.

But as an earlier branch of the argument has predicted, this rescue of principled action forfeits independence. This last proposal holds that there's something that I should do that partly consists in my endorsing it and that depends for some of its value and its correctness on my endorsement of it. I doubt that anything I do is made to be good, made to be the thing to do, by the fact that I endorse it.

5

The first view of principled action holds that, when I act for the reason I have, this consists in my acting in a way that's explained by my correct approval of an action. If the action approved by the attitude just is the principled action that this attitude helps to constitute, *P* and *I* are inconsistent. If the action approved by the attitude is distinct from the principled action that the attitude helps to constitute, the latter action does not itself originate from the person's taking reasons for it, and so on the first view I can't satisfy all the requirements of principled action that apply on any one occasion of my having reason to walk. In this case *P* must be false lest it generate requirements I will never satisfy in time to walk.

It's seeming that on the first view we'll have to choose between *I* and *P*, between independence and principled action. Because I would hate to have to choose, I'll want to give this kind of action a second look.

The discussion so far is perfectly mechanical, a succession of moves and countermoves. I'll be trying in the next several chapters to understand principled action by trying to understand why it matters: why it might matter whether and how a person might act for the reasons she has.

TWO **ACCIDENT**

1

A person who walks, on some occasion of some fact R's giving her good reason to walk, but who does not walk for the reason she then has to walk, falls short of a fully correct or worthwhile walking action. How so?

One demerit or shortfall of her action is brought out in the well-worn remark that, although this person performs an action that R supports, it's an accident that she does what that reason supports. Her action falls short because it's a merely accidental doing of what's supported by the reason.

Can I do better? Can I avoid an accident?

2

Some thinking about accidents is causally or counterfactually or statistically minded. An accident is an event whose occurrence is not the outcome of some disposition for events of its kind to occur. Or whose occurrence is improbable. Or absent from nearby counterfactuals. However they're developed, and however faithfully they follow the understanding of accidents that figures in causal explanation or probabilistic thought, these ideas are not on the track of a normatively significant accident/no accident distinction.

I take it that, among these three, the dispositional idea has the best shot at drawing such a distinction. Why would it matter, to the value of my performing some action that some fact gives me reason to perform, that my doing what was supported by the reason was improbable? Why would it matter that in certain counterfactual situations I wouldn't do what it gives me reason to do? Presumably these are indexes. They indicate that my action did not result from a reason-tracking disposition of mine. But then I doubt that any such dispositional fact can matter in this way either.

For one thing I doubt that any person is disposed to do what she has reason to do. A disposition to do what you have reason to do seems to me to require that the normative facts as to what's a reason for what stand in causal relations to the occurrence of concrete events that have a partly physical and mental and biological nature. I doubt that they do.

I might be wrong about this. Maybe dispositions to do what's f don't require causal relations that directly relate f-ness and action events. Such dispositions might derive from more basic and unproblematically causal dispositions. It might be that the property *being supported by R* supervenes on unproblematically causally involved physical or chemical or biological or psychological properties. The property *being supported by the reason I have to hydrate my body* might supervene on *being a bodily action that causes water to be introduced to the body*. It might be that I am disposed to perform such actions as have the second property in a way that explains my doing them. And that might in turn make it the case also that I'm disposed to do what's supported by that reason.

But the production of my action by a hydration-reason-tracking disposition that I have in virtue of my disposition to hydrate myself wouldn't dispel the appearance of *accident*. If my action is finally explained by a disposition to do what hydrates, it's still an accident that, in doing what results from a water-tracking disposition, I do what the body's need for water gives me reason to do.

But suppose I'm wrong about this, too. Reason-tracking dispositions are real and efficacious, and they qualify the reason-supported actions they generate as nonaccidentally reason-supported. Then a hydration-reason-supported action's being the result of such a hydrating disposition helps to make it good, and helps to make it required, by making it to be no accident.

Disagreeing with this conclusion, I deny that a disposition to perform actions of some kind can help to make any one of the actions of that kind good or the thing to do. If I can be disposed to put water into my body, then there's a fact of the matter as to whether I should have that disposition. I think that whether I should have the disposition depends on whether I should perform actions of hydration. But whether I should have the disposition can't depend on whether I *do* have it. This has me thinking that these actions can't depend for their value or correctness on whether I possess the disposition. Whether some hydrating action is something that I should do can't depend on whether I'm disposed to do what hydrates. So it can't depend on my being disposed to do what's supported by a hydrating reason if my possession of that disposition is in virtue of my disposition to do what hydrates me.

3

In the first chapter I've acknowledged signs that acting for the reason you have requires that you act psychologically because you accept the reason. This brings to mind another way in which to avoid an accident.

When does my performing an action x that R gives me reason to do count as a more than accidental doing of what R gives me reason to do? Maybe it's when I've represented the x 'ing as something that R gives me reason to do and when this representation psychologically explains my action. And maybe that's because a feature's being non-accidental in an action just is the fact that the action is represented as having the feature within the person's antecedent representation of the action that psychologically explains her performance of it.

This falls in with a main way in which people class actions or their features as accidents within their thinking about the actions of persons. My knocking the pickle jar off the fire escape was an accident if and because it did not psychologically originate in a representation of this event as being a knocking of the pickle jar off the fire escape.

The proposal raises the question whether P is content for the valuable nonaccidentalness of a doing of what R supports to be itself an accidental feature of that action. If it's not, and if the nonaccidentalness of a feature consists in its psychological explanation by an antecedent representation of the event as having the feature, then P requires that my doing x for R originate in a thought about the value of its nonaccidental character. And from there, as you've heard, it will be hard to stop.

A second problem is probably more urgent. The issue of acting for the reason you have is far from the only point in philosophy at which people find themselves wondering how events that satisfy normative standards can count as fully-valuable-because-more-than-merely-accidental satisfactions of them. The question of how to avoid an accident comes up all over the place. And at many of the other points where people are wringing their hands over this the present proposal offers no help. About the events of these other domains there is no temptation to believe that the nonaccidentalness of an event's satisfaction of some standard consists in its psychological explanation by an antecedent representation of that event as satisfying the standard.

Think of the person who visually perceives a red square in front of her, who believes that a red square is there, and who in coming to believe this follows the rule that permits or requires a person, in the absence of evidence of illusion or good contrary reasons, to believe that things are as they visually seem to her. To follow the rule is to satisfy it and not by accident. But in order to have followed the rule she need not have represented her red square belief as satisfying the rule. She need not have thought about or otherwise represented either her own belief or the rule itself as a stage in the psychological prehistory of her belief. This cannot be required for rule following, lest it turn out that this rule is almost never followed. I'm prepared to believe that, because of some aspect of the actions of healthy adult humans that's special to the nature of those actions, a feature of such an action is accidental unless it's antecedently represented. This will need arguing. The necessity of antecedent representation for nonaccidentalness in action will need to be shown to follow from the truth of a more general account of nonaccidentalness that does not identify nonaccidentalness with production by an antecedent representation. If the nonaccidentalness of the nonaccidental reason-supportedness

of some action is to be of a kind with the nonaccidentalness of nonaccidental satisfactions of other normative standards, its nonaccidentalness can't *consist* in its psychological explanation by an antecedent representation of the action as drawing support from the reason.

What else might make some feature of an event to be no accident? An event's having that feature might help to *explain* the event. It might be that the feature is no accident because the event's having the feature figures in an explanation of the event's occurrence.

4

The existence of reasons for action is connected to a possibility of explaining what happens when the person who has them does what they support.

The guard says that there's no why in the camp. He refuses to explain his action by mentioning a reason for denying water to a thirsty person. And because there is no such reason there is no such explanation. When Schlome reaches out to Levi, on the other hand, reasons are on the scene. Instructing Levi to wait before drinking is the thing for Schlome to do because it will help Levi to spare his health at a time when he needs it badly. I think that Schlome's action is explained by this reason for doing it that holds independently of his approval of it or of any other attitude that might bring him to do it.

Some philosophers find in reasons' connection with explanation an all but immediate refutation of the thesis of reasons' independence. They are thinking that action is explained in the first place by what causes it. They are thinking that it's explained in the first place by its immediate psychological antecedents, by the occurrence of practical attitudes that favor it and that function or tend to bring it about. They conclude that if Independence is true—if the reason-giving relation neither consists in nor depends on the person's subscription to attitudes of desiring or endorsing the action or its features—then the fact that gives the reason is shut out of the action's explanation.

Because this is not literally immediate, I'll elaborate. It might be true of some person that she walks to the square because fish are for sale there. This presents itself as the explanation of an action: an explanation of the fact that she walks to the square by the fact that fish are for sale in the square. Let's try for a moment to take this at face value. Let's explore the possibility that the fish fact really does explain the walking fact. Which kind of explanation would that be?

Well, it *might* be causal. That fish are for sale in the square might cause the person to believe that fish are for sale there, which might cause her to want to go there, which might cause her to walk there.

I don't expect that a causal understanding will make sense of other respectable-looking explanations that share a form with this one. For example: she walks to the

square because Mubarak's rule is unjust. Injustice has never caused a person to walk, I think. A belief about injustice might get you walking. But the belief is not an effect of the injustice. Nothing is. If this is a true explanation of some walking by some injustice, the explanation is not causal.

We don't need a property as terrible as injustice to make us wonder about causality. She walks to the square because the fact that fish are for sale there gives her good reason to walk there. The diction is a little precious for the fish market. But I am ready to believe that some person somewhere in the world is now walking toward a place because some valuable feature of her arrival there gives her good reason to go. This fact is on its face the fact of an explanatory relation between two further facts. The sentence by which I've expressed it presents what it puts to the right of its "because" as explaining what it puts to the left. That the person walks is explained by her having reason to walk. But I doubt that events like walkings are caused by facts as to what's a reason for what.

5

You might take the credibility of this explanation as a sign that I'm wrong about the nature of injustice or wrong about the nature of the fact that something's a reason. I do them an injustice when I call them causally impotent. These facts are competent to cause actual concrete events of a partly mental and physical and biological character after all. The fact that some R gives her good reason to walk might figure in a causal explanation of an event of the person's walking. That she has the reason is identical with the fact that she's in some way motivated to walk, and motivations can explain what they motivate. The fact that R gives her this reason might be the fact that she has some major desire such that her walking would help to constitute or to cause the desire's fulfillment. That she wants something that she can have only by walking toward it might cause her to walk that way. Now you can take the apparent explanation of the walking by the reason literally. You may understand it as a psychological explanation of the walking by the motivation that constitutes her having reason to walk. You'll explain the action's occurrence by citing that motivation under the name of a reason.

But I can't believe it. I can't believe that a person's having reason for an action is the fact of her being motivated to do it. Or even, for some one kind of motive, the fact of her having a motive of that kind. This is backward. Whether I should be motivated toward the action, whether I should want to do it, whether I should judge that I should do it: each depends on whether I have reason to do it. Whether I should have the motive does not depend on whether I have it. My having the reason can't depend on my having the motive, and it can't just be my possession of the motive.

If I could bring myself to accept this equation of reasons facts with motivational ones, that would be in one way wonderful, terrific. It would allow me to regard my action of doing what's supported by a reason as more than an accident. It's no accident that I do what I want. Like some other people who reject this view of the

nature of reasons, in favor of an Independence-minded, realistic understanding of them, I am prone to explanation envy. I hope to discover a respect in which reasons facts of my queer kind can after all explain a person's doing what they support for all that they are not themselves facts about the person's motivation. Why do I care? It's not because I use the same word, "reasons", for the contents of certain thoughts that motivate action and for the facts that truly justify it. I hope that true reasons explain the performance of good actions because I hope that a person's doing what she has reason to do is sometimes no accident.

Explanation envy can draw the partisan of independence into postulations of "substantive rationality". She might understand such rationality as a species of reason-tracking or reason-responding disposition. For example she might hazard that *I'm* a rational person and mean by this that I'm disposed to do what I really have reason to do. She might go on to suggest that my disposition to do what I have reason to do helps to explain my walking where I have reason to walk. The walking happens because I'm a tracker of reasons and so because the reason calls for me to walk. Since the fact of that support figures in the action's explanation, it's no accident, when I walk, that I do what the reason supports.

We've rounded back to a mode of explanation and justification—explanation and justification by reason-tracking disposition—that I've rejected in section 2. Because I am skeptical of reason-tracking dispositions, I doubt that even a rational person is disposed to [do what has she reason to do]. A person can track water, maybe, but there's no divining rod for reasons. And because I doubt that an action will ever owe a part of its value to the fact that a person is disposed to do its like, I also deny that a reason-tracking disposition, if it were real, could help to make the action that it produces good.

6

If like me you're not content to identify the reasons fact with a motivational fact, and if you join me in denying the reality or the explanatory or justificatory power of reason-tracking dispositions, you may despair of taking the explanation of a walking action by the person's good reason for walking at face value. You may resign yourself to taking it a lot less literally. You may end up taking this to hold just in virtue of the fact that the person walks, that her walking is psychologically explained by her taking the proposition that R as giving her good reason to walk, and that R gives her good reason to walk. In effect you'll be taking the first view of principled action and identifying this with [doing an action because some fact gives you good reason to do the action.]

It's an awkward outcome. I'd been thinking of the fact that she walks because R gives her good reason to walk as the fact of an explanatory relation. I guessed that this fact is without remainder an explanatory relation between an event of walking and some further fact. The normative fact that the reason truly counts in favor of the walking seems irrelevant to a psychological explanation of the walking by the attitude. An attitude of taking some proposition as a reason to x seems to explain

the action by motivating it, and an occurrence of an attitude of the same propositional content would furnish the same explanation by providing the same motivation whether or not it were true. When my true belief that it's raining explains my carrying an umbrella, that's because my forming or holding a belief of that propositional content motivates the action. The occurrence of a belief of the same content will explain it by motivating it even if out of my sight the rain has stopped. I would have to wonder why the explanatory fact [she does x because R gives her good reason to x] is freighted with an explanatorily extraneous commitment to the truth of an attitude that's equally potent true or false.

Of course English wasn't invented for the purpose of explaining actions. It's not to be expected that English action explanation sentences mirror the structures of the explanations they express. This may be the correct account of the explanation sentence. In that case the sentence's truth leaves unmet the demand for a non-accidental dependence of the action on the reason. If the reason-taking attitude's truth is a spare wheel in the action's explanation, then for all that this explanation entails the person's doing what she has reason to do is still an accident.

7

If you're lucky enough to bring to your thinking about reasons a full and settled conception of human persons and their action, you may go on to solve for reasons as the sort of thing that's apt to explain the behavior of creatures like that. But if this way of connecting reasons to explanation carries too high a cost in ethical credibility—if by making your reasons to depend on your motivations it coughs up too many wrong answers as to which actions you have reason to do—you may want to try another way. As Thomas Nagel pointed out quite a while ago, there is an alternative. You may try to understand certain actions of persons as events explainable by the reasons for them. You may think to solve for the person as a living being the course of whose life is sometimes explained by the reasons she has for proceeding in worthwhile directions.

A philosopher's preference between these programs, if it's not an outright ideology, is going to reflect the relative confidence of her view of what we should do and her view of what we're like. In my case that is a lopsided comparison. My certainty about what's to be done falls short of Leninist levels these days. But the doubts that trouble me on the ethical side are no match for the ignorance of human persons and their psychology that I'll acknowledge when I remember that the thing to be understood goes from Schlome to the guard.

I don't know much about psychology. I don't know much about action. I hear that *psychology* doesn't know much about action. I gather that there *might* be a kind of action of walking such that a person counts as performing a walking action of this kind in virtue of facts none of which is the fact that R gives her reason to walk and none of which is any fact that holds in virtue of her having such a reason. For one crude example it might be that the fact that you perform a walking action of this kind is wholly in virtue of the fact that your body is moving in a certain fashion,

that this motion is in certain delimited ways caused by certain special representations of itself realized in that body's brain, and that the body's motions of that type tend to be caused in such ways by mental states of that type as realized by that brain.

The occurrence of an event of this kind within some circumstance might be valuable in some way. It might bring the body closer to something that's good for it. It might do the body good. The event's possession of that feature might give the person whose action it is reason to do it. It is then a property of this action that the action's possession of the valuable feature gives the person good reason to do it in the circumstance. In case you care, it's then a necessary truth about the action that, in its circumstance, the person has reason to do it. To say this is not to say that the person's having reason for the action is in the nature of the action. It's not to say that an event constitutes an action of this kind in virtue of the person's having the reason.

But we might *try* to say such things. We might try to say them about a different way of walking.

There might be an action of walking that just is a doing-of-what's-called-for-by-the-fact-that-R-gives-a-person-good-reason-to-walk. This action would have the person's possession of the reason in its nature and in its constitutive conditions. When you perform an action of doing-what's-called-for-by-the-reason, the fact that you do it is in virtue of the fact that you have reason to walk. That you have reason to walk is part of what it makes it the case, when you walk this way, that you do it. Your having the reason helps to explain your action by helping to constitute it. The import of saying that you're walking to the square because the injustice of Mubarak's or Morsi's or al-Sisi's rule gives you good reason to walk there lies with the constitution of this action. The import is that you're performing an action of this reason-constituted kind. The facts that make it the case that you are performing this walking action include the fact that the injustice gives you reason to walk. Evidently it's no accident, when a person performs this walking action, that she does what's supported by the reason. The action that she performs just is a doing-of-what-the-fact-that-R-gives-her-reason-to-walk-calls-for-her-to-do. To walk this way, if only you could do it, would be special. That would be some principled walking.

THREE AFFORDANCES

1

Reasons are for persons. You'll hear it said in explication of this slogan that persons can respond to the reasons they have. A person's having good reason for an action requires a possibility of her responding to the reason by accepting it in a way that brings her to perform the action it recommends. Her situation and the reasons it gives her must be such that, if in her situation she were to accept the reason, this acceptance would bring her to do what she has reason to do. The proposal I mean to consider runs slightly less roughly as follows. Necessarily, if a person has in some situation S good reason to do x, then: it is possible in S that she accept the reason; and if she were in S to accept that she has this reason, and if things were going normally otherwise, her acceptance would suffice for her x'ing.

This continues the search for a mode of nonarbitrary, nonaccidental service of reasons that began in the last chapter. But the ambition seems smaller. It's not now demanded that the reason itself—my *having* the reason—explain my performance of the action it calls for. What's wanted is that my psychological acceptance of a reason explain my performance and that the reason's existence set the scene for such an explanation by presupposing that if I were to accept the reason that would bring me to comply.

Even this diminished hope is a tall order. I asked for water; Bernard Williams gave me gasoline. I don't know that it's gasoline. Williams says it's water, that's what I should believe, and I believe it. My accepting that I have reason to refrain from drinking gasoline is no guarantee that I'll refrain from this portion. If I want to drink some water I might go ahead and drink *this* gasoline for all that I've accepted that I have reason not to drink gasoline. Acceptance does not suffice for compliance. Compliance is not assured even on the assumption that my practical thinking is procedurally or instrumentally rational, whatever that comes to. Whatever such rationality comes to, I would have also to believe or to be on my way to believing that there's gasoline in the glass, in order that my acceptance of the reason be sure of rationally motivating an omission of my drinking it. But even

where I don't and won't believe that there's gasoline in this glass I have reason not to drink gasoline.

Maybe the reason to which I can respond has been misdescribed. I have reason not to drink from this glass. I can hope that, if I were to accept that the glass's containing gasoline gives me reason not to drink from the glass, that would suffice for my not drinking from the glass. This reason admits of a response. And maybe *this* belief-independent reason fact is the one that I act against when I drink the stuff.

Other examples are not so readily disarmed. These tend to feature temporally extended, instrumentally mediated practical challenges. It can happen that I have reason to perform an action *x* that I won't come to perform simply by deciding to *x* in a way that causes my *x*'ing through an intention whose content is that I will do *x*. And in the episodes that I have in mind that's because I'll come to perform the action only if I first perform some preparatory or facilitating action whose eventual success will make the first action immediately available to me later on.

I have reason to stand in the square at an hour when this communicates my condemnation of the regime. This won't happen unless I take first one, then another, and then many further steps across the bridge that spans the river that separates me from the square. If my judging that I have reason to stand in the square is to suffice for my standing there, it must true against a suitably normal background that this judgment will also bring me to take a step. But I have reason to stand in the square even if I don't now believe and should not now believe that I'm not yet standing there. If I'm in Square One believing falsely but with good reason that it's Square Two, my acceptance of the reason I have to stand in Square Two will not send me there.

This problem of the possibility of responding to reasons for actions of mediated availability calls for more work. Let's consider another drinking problem.

2

My action of taking a drink would provide my body with some of the water it needs. I'll use *R* now as the name of this fact. I am not in immediate bodily control of something I can drink. I will drink only if I extract a drink from the vending machine that's in front of me by putting a dime into the machine. (It's an antique from 1970.)

R gives me good reason to drink sometime soon. About this reason I make another claim of independence. The fact that *R* gives me good reason to drink is not conditional on, in virtue of, or otherwise dependent on any fact as to whether I'm going to procure the drink by putting the dime into the machine. That I have reason to drink is true of me even as I stand here thinking whether to insert the dime and even if I will not put it in.

But I *can't* drink over the next half hour unless I insert the dime. Because I don't have reason to do what I can't do, it may seem that, if I'll never put my dime into the machine, I don't have reason to drink. This suggests in turn that I'm wrong about the status of the relevant *positive* reasons claim. That claim is itself conditional if it's true at all. The truth of the matter is that I have reason to drink if I am going to extract the drink that's in the machine. You may think of this conditional claim in a so-called narrow-scope way: if I am going to insert the dime, then it's the case that I have reason to drink. Or by giving wide scope to the reason: I have reason [if I will insert the dime, to buy the drink.] In any case it's not true without condition or complication that I have reason to drink over the near future.

The resistance to an unconditional reason probably does not turn on issues of possibility or ability, on "reason implies can." If I bring out the drink I will poison it and so deprive my drinking action of its value as something that's good for me. Since drinking would hurt me it's not what I have reason to do, for all that I'm *able* to do it.

The apparently simple truth that R gives me reason to drink what's in the machine gives way to something weaker: that R gives me reason to drink if I am going to insert the dime, if I will not poison the drink, and if I will act otherwise to enable and facilitate the action without hindering it or leaching it of its value.

If this is what it comes to that I have reason to drink—if it comes to the fact that I have reason to drink if I'll act in a way that facilitates and does not hinder my drinking or make it to be bad rather than good—then my having reason to drink can't itself give me reason to facilitate my drinking or to abstain from hindering or debasing it. It can't give me reason to insert the dime or to keep the drink clean. A recommendation that I drink if I've put a dime into a slot doesn't care whether I satisfy it by drinking after inserting or by refraining from insertion. A recommendation that I drink the drink if I've not first fouled it is content for me to drink but equally happy for me to foul.

We need a new source of reasons for the facilitating action. Which fact gives me reason to insert the dime where that's what I should do? Maybe it's not the fact that I have reason to drink. Maybe it's the fact that my putting the dime in will help to cause a valuable hydration of my body.

Drinking's hydrating value, which is now conjectured to give me reason to procure a drink, is also what gives me reason *to drink* where I indeed have reason to do that. My reason to drink and my reason to procure a drink are each traced directly to the common reason-giving value of hydration. That value offers in parallel several mutually independent, direct recommendations of actions available at different times and within different practical situations. Hydration's value gives me reason to drink in the circumstance wherein I'm holding or will come to control a drink. And it gives me reason now to insert a dime if my inserting the dime will lead to my hydration by leading me to drink. Each action is recommended for its circumstance if and because the action in its circumstances helps to cause or to constitute a sufficiently valuable event of hydration.

This proposal *flattens* the apparent hierarchy of instrumental reasons. I'm not given reason to insert the dime by my having reason to drink. Each action—the purchase, the consumption—is, against the right causal background, an instance of my doing what will cause or constitute hydration. In each case that's why I have reason to do it. These reasons are sisters or brothers, not parent and child.

3

I think that this remodelling forfeits important structure. It won't bear the load. I can't swap out the reason I have to drink for the reason I have to bring about my body's hydration.

Sometimes I have good reason to drink even as I lack good reason to do what's necessary and sufficient for introducing water into my body. I will overcome my irrational fear of the vending machine so as to get a drink out of it only if I bring myself to believe that the vending machine is a pencil sharpener and that I'm inserting a dime into my pencil sharpener. And I'm *into that*. But I should not bring myself to act from these pencil sharpener beliefs and desires. They are false, opposed by evidence, pointless, or insane. In this situation I should not do what it takes to water myself. But if my fear of the machine were to pass so that I might simply remove the drink from it and not by means of deliberately conjured insanity, that would be good. It would be good because I could then proceed sanely to do what I will all along have had good reason to do: take a drink.

And here is another troubling consequence. If my reason for a facilitating action is that it helps to cause some final value, then, in deciding whether to extract a drink, I will do well to take, as part of the case for my extracting it, the fact that if I extract it I will drink it. That's the causal background against which my buying the drink causes hydration. When I am deciding whether to do what will put myself into immediate control of a drink I should first work out whether that's a situation in which I'm going to drink. I should ask whether, unlike a horse that's led to water, I can in being led to soda be made to drink. It's as though I were my own vending machine. Faced with the machine, I wonder: Does this thing work? And by that I mean: Will the dropping of the dime cause a dumping of the bottle into a chute, its extraction from the trough, the removal of its cap, its levitation to the height of my head, and the passage of its contents into the gullet?

It seems to me that causal research of this Rube Goldberg variety is usually the wrong way to make up my mind whether to put a dime into a vending machine. There are exceptions. If I know that I have issues when it comes to opening bottles or drinking what's in them, I may need to take my aberration into account when I'm deciding what to do with my dime. If I am an idiot I may need to work around my idiocy. But when things are going altogether well with my action and practical thinking there is no need for such self-prognostication or self-manipulation. That is not because I can be sure, without looking into the matter observationally or introspectively, that I will drink what I procure. There is no need to be sure that I will drink. I am not leading myself to soda so as to make myself drink. I am

thinking only that I *should* drink, that R gives me reason to drink, and so that I have reason to do what's necessary for my drinking. That way of thinking is true to the relevant reasons. That I have reason to achieve control over a beverage by putting a dime into a slot is altogether because I have reason to drink what then comes out and not at all because I will.

4

Drinking would provide my body with some water that it needs. That gives me good reason to drink. Hydration's value gives me this reason whether or not I am going to buy a drink, whether or not I will otherwise facilitate the drinking action, whether or not I will do what serves and protects the value of a possible drinking. This independence of the reason for my drinking from the actuality of my helping myself to drink is a consequence of the hierarchy among reasons that we recognize when we give up the flattening view of them.

My having reason to drink gives me reason to buy a drink. My having reason to drink gets its grip on my buying a drink by giving me reason to buy a drink. The one reason folds back into my other reasons so as to help to determine what else I have reason to do. My inserting the dime draws its support from the value of hydration not directly, as something that promotes hydration, but indirectly, as something that's necessary for my doing what's called for by the fact that hydration's value gives me reason to drink. The fact that [the fact that drinking would provide my body with the water it needs gives me good reason to drink] gives me good reason to insert the dime.

Suppose that's right. And suppose that my having reason to drink depends on whether I'll insert a dime after all. It can happen that I lack reason for drinking, and that's because I won't insert a dime. Then whether I have reason to insert the dime depends on whether I will. But whether I have reason to do a thing does not depend on whether I will.

The independence this transgresses is elementary. It's the independence of reasons for an action or attitude from facts as to whether that very action or attitude is happening or will happen. My reason for the facilitating action is given by *my having reason for* the action that it facilitates. So my having reason for the facilitated action must not be in virtue of the fact I'll be performing the facilitating action. Otherwise my having reason for the facilitating action will be in virtue of the fact that I'm going to do it.

We can go on folding reasons into reasons. The fact that drinking provides my body with the water it needs gives me good reason to drink. The fact that [the fact that drinking provides my body with the water it needs gives me good reason to drink] gives me good reason to insert the dime. The fact that [the fact that [the fact that drinking provides my body with the water it needs gives me good reason to drink] gives me good reason to insert the dime] gives me good reason to take the dime out of my pocket.

Or so I would hope. Maybe I have a drinking problem of a special sort. If I take the dime out of my pocket I will put the dime into my pencil sharpener. Lodged in the sharpener the dime will keep me from sharpening pencils, and it won't stand me any drinks. It strikes me that this fact can make it the case that I lack good reason to take the dime out of my pocket.

That I will put the dime in the wrong place if I take it out deprives me of the reason I would otherwise have to take the dime out. But it can't deprive me of my reason to drink. This difference in the robustness of the two reasons reflects their unequal standing in the instrumental hierarchy. In the order of instrumental justification the drinking comes first, the inserting of the dime into the machine is second, and the taking it out of the pocket is third. The proposal that my reason for taking out the dime depends on whether I'll put it into the machine does not draw the same objection from Independence. For my having reason to insert the dime is not in virtue of my having reason to take the dime out of my pocket.

Projecting from these observations, I would guess that an action *x* can depend, for its being a thing that I have good reason to do, on the actual or upcoming occurrence of a second action *y*, only if my having reason for *y*, where I have it, is not in virtue of my having reason for *x*.

5

I am guessing that the hierarchy of reason-given reasons can explain the robustness of my reason to drink—its invariance with respect to whether I'll take actions that enable my drinking—even as it allows my reason for taking the dime out to depend on what I'll then do with the dime. It will help to compare that explanation with a possibly more familiar account.

For each deliberative or practical situation to which reasons are assigned, it's possible to distinguish the matters that are "up to me" in that situation from the matters that are not. The actuality of some incipient event—the fact that it's going to happen—can determine what I have reason to do there only if it's on the side of what's not up to me. I have good reason to perform an action if and only if it will have certain good features and will be immediately available to me in virtue of some *possible* configuration of the matters that are up to me that is compossible with the state and trajectory of the things that are not up to me. Whether the dime enters the machine is up to me. If it goes in I'll be able to drink what it sends out. So I have reason to drink what's in the machine even where in fact I'm not going to facilitate this action by sending the dime where it needs to go.

My taking the dime out doesn't depend for its availability on whether I will go on to insert it. But it does depend for its value on what I then do with the dime. Taking the dime out will prevent my drinking drinks and sharpening pencils. That's a considerable point against my taking the dime out. Common sense concludes that I have good reason not to take out the dime. But if a matter's being up to me is the fact that I can bring it about by deciding or trying to do it, then my

inserting the dime into the coin slot rather than into the pencil sharpener is up to me after all. There is a possible configuration of the up-to-me matters thanks to which my taking the dime out will promote my hydration. For all that can be said here I have reason to take out the dime. I have reason to do it even if I am going to jam the pencil sharpener with the dime if it comes out of my pocket. That's hard to believe.

I'm trying to explain the appearance that reasons for taking the dime out are vulnerable to my tendency of misdirecting the dime while reasons for drinking are robust. Maybe that difference rests on another apparent dissimilarity between the two practical issues. While drinking depends for its eventual *availability* on my inserting the dime, taking the dime out requires an insertion of the dime into the machine for its *value*. But a difference in robustness recurs when this asymmetry is erased. Suppose that I'm going to poison any drink that I will buy. The fact that I'm going to poison what's in the machine if I extract it stands to deprive my eventual drinking action of its value. But if I'm now deciding what to do—whether to buy, whether to poison, whether to drink—I should acknowledge that I have reason to drink. Suppose that I'm not completely crazy: if I poison the drink I won't go on to drink it. So my poisoning the drink will stop me from drinking it. I think it's partly because I have reason to drink that I shouldn't stop myself from drinking by putting poison into my drink. My reason to drink is robust against the fact that I'm going to do what would deprive my drinking of its value.

You can make the value question into an availability issue by redescribing the drinking reason. You can redescribe my reason for drinking what's in the machine as a reason for drinking a fluid that will hydrate me without poisoning me. Then the fact of my upcoming adulteration of the drink I'm going to buy removes from availability the drinking action for which I would have reason if it were available. But symmetry with reasons for taking the dime out can be restored by redescribing the dime-extracting action for which I have reason. I have reason to take out of my pocket a dime that's going to be inserted into the machine and so bring about some hydration. Here the fact that I'm not going to insert the dime seems to beggar my reason for this action. But that can't be just because the actual tendency of my behavior is making this action unavailable to me. The same would be true of my reason for drinking a nontoxic fluid where I'm going to spike the drink. If I am going to poison the drink that's now in machine I cannot drink a drink that will not poison me.

6

We might want to rethink what is up to me. Perhaps we're wanting a field of matters that fall under the control or causal influence, not of any activity of mine whatsoever or of my mind or body in general, but of my possible decision or intention to perform the very action on which I'm trying to decide. My decision to drink, if I were to decide to drink, would, through the intention to drink that it forms, bring it about that I will insert a dime. That's why my having reason to drink doesn't depend on whether I'll insert a dime. But it's false that my decision

to take the dime out will bring it about that I put the dime in the right place. That's why my having reason to take it out can depend on where I'm going to insert it.

What does it come to that my decision to drink controls my inserting of the dime? That the drinking decision controls the dime-inserting action might be in virtue of a tendency of drinking decisions to cause dime insertions against a causal background that includes my other proclivities and attitudes. I tend to do what I believe will enable me to do the other things I decide to do. I believe that my inserting the dime will enable my drinking. Thanks to that disposition and that belief my inserting of dimes falls under the sway of my decision to drink. The decision is apt to produce a drinking. And this causal responsiveness secures, for my reason to drink, an invariance with respect to my inserting of dimes. It would be silly to decide not to drink just because drinking's not immediately available. I can see that, if I were to decide to drink, that decision would *make* the drinking available by bringing it about that I put the dime into the machine. Like a coin slipped through a slot the decision itself throws this machine into motion.

But if I'm a dumbbell or a deviant, if my decision to drink won't bring me to buy a drink because I don't tend to do what I take to be required for what I decide to do, I might lack reason to drink in virtue of this imperviousness. That is not easy to accept. Not to buy a drink is a mistake. I think that it's a mistake partly because I have reason to drink.

It's widely held that you can't decide or intend to do something while failing to take your decision or intention as causally sufficient (or sufficient somehow) for the occurrence of what you decide to do. Someone who already believes that drinking calls for inserting a dime can't decide to drink unless she's taking that decision as settling that she'll also insert the dime. And so she won't recognize my description of her situation as one in which, for all that this view holds, she lacks good reason to drink. It will seem to her instead that the matters falling under the control of her drinking decision will include some actions that eventually make that drinking immediately available to her.

It has to bother us, watching from the side, that she might be wrong about that. Her drive to put the dime in the wrong place might be hidden from her at the point of her deciding to drink. Even when she decides to drink and takes that decision as sufficient for her drinking, it's not. On the current proposal this person's dime inserting is not controlled by her drinking decision. It's not up to her. So the fact that she won't insert a dime can make it false that she has reason to drink. I think that she has reason to drink all the same.

That the drinking decision controls the drink buying might instead consist in a causal sensitivity of the person's drink buying to her drinking decision that would hold if the person were rational. Rationality requires, maybe, that she not (intend to drink and fail to intend to do any action that she believes she can do and that she believes is necessary for her drinking.) If the person's drink buying escapes the influence of her intention to drink because she irrationally fails to intend what she regards as the means to other actions she intends, her drink buying action might nonetheless fall under a normatively conditioned, "moralized" control of her

drinking decision: the decision would cause the purchase if she were in compliance with means-end rationality. In that way it is up to her, and so her tendency against buying the drink fails to unseat her reason for drinking.

But if the person doesn't and shouldn't believe that drinking requires inserting the dime—a prankster or neoconceptual artist has covered up the coin slot on this Nixon-era vending machine with an ersatz credit card reader; the drinker falsely but justifiably believes that a swipe of her Master Card will make the drinking happen—then the impotence of her drinking decision to cause her insertion of a dime is not irrational and is not in virtue of any irrationality of hers. The current view holds that she lacks reason for drinking because her deciding to drink won't bring her to drink even if she's rational. By making the person thirsty enough you can make this very hard to believe. The prankster should not have pulled this prank. The prankster's mischief keeps a thirsty person from taking the drink she has reason to take. A bystander who sees what's going on should let her know that she needs to put a dime in and so help her to take the drink for which she has reason.

7

An alternative was already coming into sight. The matters that are “up to me” insofar as I'm deciding whether to *x* are the matters that *should* be settled in some particular way *because R gives me reason to x*. The actual state of those matters is not eligible to determine whether I have reason to *x*, on pain of a violation of the “elementary” independence of reasons for an action from the fact of an action's own performance. The fact of a matter is eligible to determine whether I have reason to drink just in case that matter is not itself subject to reasons that would derive from my having reason to drink if I were to have reason to drink. Otherwise my oncoming failure to buy myself a drink would help to make itself permissible. It would drum up its own permission by silencing the reason for drinking that would otherwise call for me to get my hands on the drink.

If my tendency against buying a drink can't deprive me of reasons to drink, that's not because my drink-buying is actually responsive to my drinking decision. It's not because the decision, if I were to make it, would stimulate the action on the condition that I tend to intend what I regard as the means to other actions I intend. If the actuality of my dime-inserting has no bearing on my reasons for drinking, that's because my dime-inserting *should* “respond,” not to my drinking decision, but to the reason for buying a drink that I'm given by the fact that I have reason to drink.

It had seemed that my having reason to perform an action in a situation requires that this action be something that's available to me and that's valuable in virtue of the facts of that situation. But this has the incredible consequence that I lack reason to do whatever I'm not going to help myself to do. In order that in some situation *S* some *R* give me good reason to do some *x*, I would guess instead, it must be that

my x'ing will be immediately available to me and fully valuable *if I perform the other actions that R's giving me reason to x gives me reason in S to do.*

The reason that I have to drink—the independent existence of that reason, not my psychological acceptance of it—arranges for the conditions of its own availability and value. It doesn't *cause* those conditions to materialize. Reasons aren't causes. But by giving me reason to do what ensures the action's availability and value, the reason makes it the case that, if I now start doing what this reason calls for me to do, my doing what it calls for will culminate in a fully valuable drinking action. The reason that lights my way also paves it. It paves my way by lighting it.

8

Thinking out loud, I've guessed that there exists a kind of action, a *principled* action, that consists, for some true reason R and action x, in my doing what's called for by the fact that R gives me good reason to x. I'll now take this up in earnest. That I have reason to drink gives me reason to provide myself with a drink. It's a fair guess that, when I do what's called for by my having reason to take a drink, I do that partly in virtue of my inserting a dime into a vending machine. That I have reason to demonstrate in the square gives me good reason to walk there. It's a fair guess that, when I do what's called for by the fact that I have reason to demonstrate, I do that partly in virtue of steps I take toward the square.

The reason I have to perform the finally valuable action affords me an approach to that action. It makes immediately available to me an action of [doing what's called for by the reason] that culminates in my performance of the finally valuable overt deed.

It had seemed that in conditioning the existence of the reason on the possibility of a response I was craving some assurance that my having the reason, or my recognition of it, will bring me to comply, given a sufficiently cooperative external environment and individual psychology. Often enough that assurance is not to be had, as when I lack bellwether instrumental beliefs. And then again it's not really to be insisted upon as a condition of my having the reason. That insistence would make my having the reason to depend corruptly on my actual tendency to respond to it by doing what I know to be necessary for the action's value or availability.

Once we've seen that this kind of assurance is impossible or undesirable, we should try to understand the underlying desire in a more abstract way so that it's something worth having and something that can be had.

More abstractly, then, and for the moment more rhetorically: I seem to want some assurance that the reasons that I have in a situation, whatever those are, are not condemned to sit to one side of my actual life, grading my deeds as they transpire. The hope is that the reasons I have could cross over to the side of my actual, contingent activity, my so-called life, and there become a part of the particular contingent things I end up doing. The abstract conjecture is that, where I have a

reason, there is for me a course of action that owes its occurrence or its nature or its value or ... something of importance about itself ... to my having that reason.

The original response requirement sharpens this admittedly fuzzy hope by stipulating that my reasons be such that my acceptance of them would, against a normal background, make the difference of causing me to do what they request. The instrumental considerations have pointed toward a different understanding of "response." If I'm to have reason to perform some action, this new idea goes, it must be that I would come to do that action, with its value intact, if I were to do-what's-called-for-by-the-reason. By throwing down a reason-given reason to walk toward the square, the reason I have to stand in the square secures this possibility of an approach. It makes it the case that my now going on to do-what-that-reason-calls-for-me-to-do suffices for my standing in the square. This is how the reason to demonstrate in the square can come into my actual life long before I reach the square. It makes available to me an action of doing what's called for by the fact that I have reason to demonstrate, an action that culminates in my demonstrating.

This is why it doesn't bother me so much that a person who has reason to join a demonstration might lack the evidence or the access to empirical warrants thanks to which she's already permitted to believe that appearing in the square on Friday at noon would oppose injustice. It doesn't bother me so much that I have reason not to drink from the glass that I believe to be filled with gin. In holding out for a possibility of response we are not insisting that the subject of a reason be psychologically positioned to perform a reason-supported action if things unfold normally. Instead we are after the possibility of a principled action that culminates in the overt deed. That action must be possible for the reason to exist.

I am guessing that this affordance is not just a prerequisite of my having the reason. It's part of what it comes to that I have the reason. That I have good reason to do an action *x* is, in the first place, the fact that *x*'ing has some valuable feature in virtue of which it's to be done. But also it's the fact that there exists a possible action of my doing what's called for by my having this reason, an action that arrives at the reason-supported *x*'ing. If the fact that I have the reason does not *cause* the action that brings me to the complying deed, it helps to constitute a possible action that would form my approach. Instead of a push it gives me an opening. It gives me something I can do.

FOUR **SHADOWS**

1

I can join the crowd that's trying to change the government only if I cross the river that separates me from them. If I take a first step onto the bridge I will not take a second. I'll stop right there, go no further. Should I step onto the bridge?

The postulate of reason-given reasons, and the thesis of the independence of reasons from actual or forthcoming performance, serve together to insulate my reason to perform an action, where I have reason to do it, from dependence on the fact that I'll perform other actions that facilitate it or that secure its value. My reason for demonstrating can't depend on the fact that I'll take a step lest my reason for the step depend on whether I'll take it.

This independence leaves open the prospect that my failure in respect of one such facilitating action might undermine the case for another. It might be that because I'll stop short of my destination I lack good reason to set out in its direction. I would guess that often enough that's true. A step that will only strand me on the bridge is not one for which I have good reason.

It follows that my having good reason to take a first step, where it's true, is true in virtue of some contingent fact. Which contingent ground would that be?

2

I know three things about it. This ground for my having reason to take a first step must, first, be such as to be a plausible ground of the fact that [the fact that R gives me good reason to stand in the square] gives me good reason to take a first step. It must stand some chance of explaining the fact that the one reason gives me this other reason. Second, this ground must be such that, if I'm not going to take a second step, then the ground does not hold so that I might after all lack good reason to take a first step. But, finally, the ground, where it holds, must not itself hold in virtue of any such fact as that I will take a second step if I've taken a first.

The third condition reflects my own experience of deciding whether to set out toward a destination. It seems to me that when things are going altogether well

with my action and deliberation, when no signs that I'll break down mid-route have come to my attention, I consider only the reason I have to reach my destination and the necessity, for my reaching it, of my taking steps toward it. I don't look into such intermediate matters as whether I am going to take a second step having taken a first.

I'm guessing that this is not because I am usually well-supplied with evidence that my first steps are followed by second steps. Nor because I am nonevidentially entitled to believe that I'll take a second step. I'm guessing that it's not because I'm otherwise entitled to *act* in a way that's made appropriate by the fact that I'll keep going. If any of these were right it would follow that, although I'm not required to look into the matter while thinking whether to leave, I might do well to check up on myself and confirm that my one step will be succeeded by others. My impression is that on a good day a pause to consider whether I'll keep going if I leave is not just supererogatory but irrelevant, a waste of a thought. On a good day my first step doesn't depend for its being the thing to do on the fact that I'll keep going.

3

Normative practical success is not in symmetry with normative practical failure. They have different dependence structures.

On a good day the reason I have to demonstrate in the square encloses a space of practical questions—whether to head out the door, whether to bring my gas mask, whether to take a first step onto the bridge, whether to take a 203rd step—each one being capable of correct resolution independently of how the others are turning out. Each is settled by the fact that my having reason to demonstrate gives me reason to do what facilitates my demonstrating and to omit what interferes with it. The reason I have to demonstrate in the square defines a prediction- and strategy-free space—an enclosure, or paradise—wherein I'm free to concern myself only with what, thanks to that reason, I should do, and not at all with what I will.

On a bad day, by contrast—on a day that's bad because I am going to stop short on the bridge if I step onto it at all—the fact that I'm going to stop short can make it the case that I lack good reason to take that step. On a bad day the facts as to whether I should do something in this practical space are in virtue of the facts as to what else I'm going to do there. Prediction is in order. Strategy is in order. It's in order to try to make the best of this bad situation, to minimize damage by performing a “best response” to my own incipient mistake.

This way of dividing the deliberative labor between two modes of decisionmaking, happy and sad, edenic or fallen, can seem arbitrary. It looks to be an arbitrary mixture or superposition of the two views that Jackson and Pargetter called “possibilism” and “actualism.” Why would my incipient bad acts require that I perform a best response to them even as I'm supposed to ignore any forthcoming *good* deeds in favor of my doing, at each point of decision, something that should

be done independently of what else I'm going to do? I seem to be saying that I should perform one piece of a worthy pattern, however the others are coming out, *unless* those other outcomes go against that pattern. In that case, I'm heard to add sheepishly, I should do the best I can do with the one thing given the other bad things I'm up to. With this proposal I show myself to be so firmly in the grip of the self-manipulating, best-response practical style that I'm willing to follow its nonpredictive, nonstrategic alternative only where they coincide in their recommendations. When my bluff is called by the reality of my bad behavior I'll acknowledge that the game I've been playing was always against myself.

This objection is hard to answer, I'll bet, so long as we're thinking that the only stakes in the alternation between these modes are the values realized by the relevant overt, nonnormatively constituted deeds: the value of hydration that counts in favor of drinking, the importance of swelling the crowd count by walking toward the crowd. It's pretty plausible that if these deed-borne values are the only values there's also just one correct structure through which to recognize and pursue them. Either my every move should help me to realize those values to a maximal or adequate degree given how my other actions are turning out. Or in each case I should perform the action that belongs to the most-reason-supported profile of actions, period, or to an absolutely sufficiently reason-supported profile. Between an abject prostration before the proclivities of my actual conduct and a high-minded obliviousness to them I will just have to make up my mind (and that won't be hard.)

But I believe that my physical arrival in the square is not the only value. It also matters how I get there.

4

Suppose for a moment that this bad day/good day contrast is false. The dependence of reasons for one step on the actuality of others holds for good days as well as for bad. So: if and because I won't take the one step, I lack reason for another. But also: if and because I'll take the one step, I have reason for the other.

I've argued that the relevant reasons are reason-given reasons. Let's assume that's so. The fact that I have reason to demonstrate gives me reason to take a first step toward the site of the protest. The supposition requires that my having reason for a first step is also in virtue of the fact that I'll take a second. I am given reason to take a first step by the facts that I have reason to demonstrate and that my first step, because it will be followed by further steps, will bring it about that I demonstrate.

I've conjectured that, where some fact R gives me in some situation S reason to do some x, there is an action that I can in S begin to perform that is my doing what's called for by the fact that R gives me reason to x. I have a principled approach to the final action. I would guess that it's in the nature of my having reason to demonstrate in the square that, because I have reason to demonstrate in the square,

there's a possible action of my doing what's called for by the fact that I have reason to demonstrate in the square.

Say that the *incidents* of my acting for the reason R that I have to x are those events in virtue of whose occurrence I count as acting for the reason I have. Whether a first step is an incident of the approach turns on whether it's one of the events that my having reason to be in the square, possibly in concert with other relevant facts, calls for me to perform. By the current assumption whether R gives me reason to take a first step depends on whether I'll take a second step. I have reason to take a first step because I have reason to be in the square and because I'll take a second step if I take a first. The principled action can't include a first step among its incidents unless the fact that I'll take a second step is admitted as defining that action—unless the principled action is an action of my [doing what's called for by the fact that I have reason to cross and the fact that I'll take a second step].

But if that's the approaching action, the approaching action can't include my *second* step among its incidents. My taking a second step isn't made to be correct by the fact that I have reason to be in the square and by the fact that I'll take a second step. A good answer to the question "which things are made correct by my having reason to demonstrate and by the fact that I'll take a second step?" will not include my taking a second step. This would go against the elementary independence of reasons for actions from the fact of their own occurrence.

I conclude that this approaching action must omit as an incident either my first step or my second. If it omits a step it won't get me to the square. (I can't just *skip* a step.) The so-called approaching action does not bring me to demonstrate in the square. It is not an approach to my demonstrating. There is no action that I can now begin to perform, as I stand on the left bank of the river thinking whether I should stay or go, and that would be my doing what's called for by the fact that I have reason to be in the square. I have no approach.

5

I've just argued that my having reason for one step must be independent of the fact that I'll take the others if my situation is to afford me a principled action. Maybe you are in no hurry to conclude that those reasons are independent. It could be true instead that there is no such action and so that it's false that I have reason to demonstrate or false that my having the reason presupposes one.

The conclusion of independence is in need of some independent motivation. I should be able to say what makes it the case that I have reason to take a single step, on the good days when I have reason to take it, such that my having reason to take that single step is not in virtue of the fact that if I take that step I'll keep going.

My taking a step is necessary for my demonstrating in the square. I have reason to demonstrate in the square. I'm claiming that these facts suffice to make it the case

that I have reason to take a first step. Why suppose that these facts suffice for my having reason to take a step? What value does my taking the step have such that this value is not also in virtue of the fact that the other steps will happen?

It can't be the value of bringing it about that I demonstrate or of helping me to demonstrate. These virtues of a single step presuppose success further out on the bridge. They presuppose the taking of further steps.

But my first step, because it's necessary for my demonstrating in the square, and because I have reason to stand in the square, is also necessary for another possible valuable action of mine. It is necessary for my acting for the reasons I have. The step's necessity for my demonstrating suffices to make the step necessary for my acting for the reasons I have. Because in my situation I have reason to demonstrate, my step is necessary for my acting for the reasons I have, period. If, for all the reasons for action that I now have, I am to perform an action of doing what's called for by those reasons, then, because I have good reason to demonstrate in the square, I must take a first step.

Why should we suppose that a person is given reason to facilitate some action by the fact that *she has reason* to take that action? This is liable to provoke grumbling of the kind that usually greets the veneration of a motive of duty. Grumblers complain that such veneration makes a fetish of the duty. A person should act for the sake of the valuable features of her action that make it to be her duty rather than for the sake of doing her duty. And likewise if I'm not to fetishize reasons I should take my reason for the means, not from my having reason for the end, but from the end's valuable features and from the fact of the means' causal or constitutive contribution to the end.

It seems sensible. But as I've argued in the last chapter it runs into trouble when we ask which contribution the means must make if it's to ride the reason-giving coattails of the end's valuable features. If a causal or constitutive necessity suffices, then I have reason to perform one would-be facilitating action even where I'm not going to perform others and even where the one action, if it's unaccompanied by those others, will be bad in ways that give me reason not to do it. But neither can the contribution be causal or constitutive sufficiency, for then I'll have to establish that I'm going to perform the other actions before I can do a good job of deciding whether to do this one.

In these chapters I'm in the course of arguing that it's good for its own sake to act for the reasons you have. My first step is necessary for my demonstrating. So it's necessary for my acting for the reasons I have. If it's good to act for the reasons I have, that might be why I have reason to take the first step.

But this fact—that my step is necessary for my acting for the reasons I have—must not hold in virtue of the fact that I'll take other steps. If the one step were to depend for its reason on the performance of the others, there would be no possible action of my doing what I have reason to do in this situation. As I've just argued, any such would-be principled action is bound to exclude either my second step (if it's constituted as what's called for by the fact that I will take a second step) or my

first step (if its constitution omits the fact that I will take a second step). My first step's necessity for my acting for the reason I have can give me reason to take the step only if, after all, that necessity *suffices* for my having reason to take the step. If it did not suffice—if this case for taking a step were to depend on my taking a second—the first step would not be necessary for my acting for the reasons I have in my situation because no such kind of action would exist.

6

Suppose that I won't take a second step. Then a first step will strand me on the bridge. Or it will delay by the duration of one step forward and one step back my doing some worthwhile thing that I have reason to do given that, because I won't take a second step, I won't ever reach the demonstration. These points against my first step are a novel consideration about it. When to the considerations broached so far—that my first step is necessary for my demonstrating, and that I have good reason to demonstrate—you add the further fact that because I won't take a second step my first step will strand me on the bridge or divert me from worthwhile activity, you are bringing to light a bad aspect of my first step that receives no attention from a decision that considers only the first two facts. Suppose that this further consideration is admitted as a fact of my practical situation that helps to determine what I have in that situation reason to do.

A situation that includes the fact that I won't take a second step is one that makes available to me no principled action of acting for the reasons I have. If I don't take a first step I don't do what's called for by the fact that I have good reason to demonstrate. But if I take a first step I don't do what's called for by the fact that, because I won't continue to the square, the first step will strand me on the bridge or waste my time.

Suppose that's right. I can't in taking a first step or omitting to take a first step act for the reasons I have. No such action is defined for my situation. So my having reason to demonstrate does not give me reason to take a first step as a way of acting for the reasons I have. Because I can't act for the reasons I have, the question of what I'm to do, whether I should take a step, will need to be settled in some other way. Presumably by considering which alternative has the best features given a state of the world that includes my disposition not to take a step. I should stay off the bridge that I will not cross.

7

You may wonder about this. You may be thinking that I could simply scoop up (i) the fact that I have reason to demonstrate and (ii) the fact that I have reason not to waste my time by stepping onto a bridge that I won't cross, take these two facts together, and conclude that the two facts together give me most reason to stay off the bridge. It's the familiar phenomenon of practical conflict between mutually

opposed reasons. Reasons manage often enough to pronounce together in favor of a course of action that one of them opposes even as the other supports it. Here too the demonstration reason might join the anti-time-wasting reason in a joint all-things-considered approval of my staying off the bridge. If the two reasons together recommend that I take no first step, maybe I can act for the reasons I have just by staying off the bridge.

I don't have a good general grip on how reasons combine or interact to determine all-things-considered recommendations for action. I'm not entirely sure that the question is well posed: that reasons combine to offer all-things-considered recommendations. But I am guessing that, if opposing reasons combine to issue a joint verdict in favor of an action that one opposes even as the other counts in its favor, they do this in virtue of some relation of priority or weight that holds between the two reasons. Weight or priority is itself a *principle* enjoying force over the relevant actions. I would guess that this principle is independent of the facts as to whether the person is doing what those reasons call for her to do. If the relative weight or priority of the two reasons were instead sensitive to the very action they're meant to regulate, my upcoming failure to do what a reason requires me to do can serve to make a reason less important. For that's what it comes to that the one reason gets less weight or lower priority in determining what I have most reason to do. It seems backward. The fact that I won't do one thing that my having reason to demonstrate calls for me to do can't make this reason a less important consideration in respect of some other action on which it bears.

My reason for staying off the bridge wins this contest, not because of its priority, but by default alone. The fact that I won't take a second step settles the issue in favor of my taking no first step by ensuring that my first step does not send me to the demonstration.

What's the alternative? Suppose I'm right that, because I won't take a second step, it's false that my first step is necessary for my acting for the reasons I have in this situation. There's no action that constitutes my acting for the reasons I have in this situation. Then my first step is not made to be one that I should do by its necessity for such an action. And so my having reason to demonstrate does not give reason for the first step. It just stands to the side, disapproving of what I do.

This seems more honest. The reason I have for demonstrating washes its hands of me. It does not stick around to participate in an all-things-considered approval of my omission of a first step. Rather than join a grand coalition, the reason goes into opposition. It forms a shadow government of my action and bides its time.

8

It's easy to mistake this argument for another. I won't take a second step. A second step is an incident of my acting for the reasons I have. And so I'm *not* going to act for the reasons I have. Because that principled action is not going to happen, and

because my first step is valuable as part of a principled action, I lack reason for taking a first step.

I've recommended the first step on grounds of its being merely necessary for the principled action. The argument just sketched seems to take this back. For all that the first step remains necessary for the principled action, this gives me no reason to take the first step. That's because the principled action is not going to happen. Again I seem to be vacillating between a view on which a step's necessity for the principled action is sufficient and one on which it's not.

But this misunderstands the significance of the fact that I won't take a second step. That I won't take a second step is not keeping me from performing, at the point of my first step, a well-defined principled action. By giving me good reason not to strand myself by taking a first step, my oncoming omission of the second step is helping to determine the reasons that characterize my situation. To the reason-giving facts that I would need otherwise to be considering, it adds the fact that my first step will strand me on the bridge or waste my time and shoe leather. Because there is no possibility of acting for that reason while also acting for the reason that I have to demonstrate, this change removes acting-for-the-reasons-I-have as an action that's well defined for my situation. The necessity of a first step for my acting for the reason I have has not lost its force. There is no such necessity. The first step is not necessary for my acting for the reason I have because there is no such action.

Here's another way to see the point. The assumption that my not taking a second step gives me reason not to take a first step yields an impossibility of acting for the reason I have. You might ask why I don't just give up that assumption. If it were out of the way I could act for the reasons I have. That was how I argued in the case of a good day. On a good day, I claimed, we should assume that my having reason for one step is not in virtue of my performing other steps. And we should assume this because it needs to be true if I'm to act for the reasons I have.

But we can't treat the bad day in this way. It would amount to throwing away some of the reasons that I manifestly have. On a bad day that's bad because I won't take a second step, the fact that I won't take a second step introduces a novel consideration against my first step. It will keep me from other tasks or enjoyments that I should pursue since I'm not going to the demonstration. That feature of the first step is passed over when I insist that I have good reason to take the first step as a way of acting for the reasons I have. I should not overlook it. To bring this consideration in I must allow the fact that my second step isn't happening to help determine what would constitute my acting for the reason I have if any such action were well-defined. But no such action is defined. And so my first step is not necessary for my performing a principled action that I can perform. And so my having reason to demonstrate does not give me reason to take a first step.

In success, on the other hand, I can make a complete case for taking a first step without mentioning my second step. My first step is necessary for demonstrating. I have good reason to demonstrate. So my first step is necessary for my acting for the reasons I have. So I have reason to do it. Having taken the demonstration

reason into account in this way, there is no “failure of coverage” in a system of reasons that ignores the actuality of my other steps. There is no need to add that my first step will help to bring it about that I demonstrate thanks to the other steps that are coming up. I have already taken the demonstration reason into account in taking it to give me good reason to take a first step by making that first step necessary for my acting for the reasons I have. I can confirm that the resulting action is a genuine doing of what’s called for by the reasons I have.

9

That my first step is necessary for my acting for reasons I have is contingent. My situation must be such that I can act for the reasons I have in it. That is not certain of being true. If I won’t take a second step I can’t act for the reasons I have. In that case no action is necessary for my acting for the reasons I have.

I think that this necessity is the ground that I was looking for. Where it holds it makes it the case that, because I have good reason to demonstrate, I have good reason to take a first step. But the fact that I won’t take a second step makes this ground to be false. That I won’t take a second step makes it the case that my first step is not necessary for my acting for the reasons I have. But finally where it’s true that my first step is necessary for my acting for the reasons I have, this is not in virtue of the fact that I’ll take a second step. That my first step is necessary for my acting for the reasons I have can’t be in virtue of my taking the second step.

I walk along thinking only of what I have reason to do independently of what I will. That’s the right way to think, the right way to walk, unless and until it turns out that I’m going to stop short.

FIVE **MOTIVES**

1

The force of a reason extends across time. It's good English to say that I have good reason to speak Italian in Rome. That's true as I type these words several thousand miles to the west and many months before I'll make the trip. If I have reason to learn Italian that's because I *have* reason to speak it later. When in Rome but also before I'm in Rome I have reason to do as the Romans.

This usage can seem odd when you're thinking that some R's giving me good reason to do some x at some time is nothing but the fact that, thanks to R, an x'ing should occur right then. What is conveyed by retrojecting the reason, back from the circumstance of its performance, and saying about an earlier circumstance that already in that circumstance I have reason to do it later?

If my having reason to speak Italian in Rome were the fact that there should occur an action of speaking Italian that is attributable to me, then it might make sense to restrict my possession of the reason so that I have it no earlier than the first moment of the action's immediate availability and full value. In the next chapter I will argue that R's giving me reason to x is not after all the fact that R makes it the case that an x'ing action of mine should take place. It is not a standard that is primarily satisfied by an action of x'ing. It is a standard that is primarily satisfied by *me* when I do what the reason calls for. And my having reason to speak Italian calls for me to learn Italian. Long before I reach the Italians I can take the preparatory steps that my having reason to speak their language gives me reason to take. These are the first steps of a principled action thanks to which I satisfy the standard.

But it's two o'clock in the morning as I think this over. The Berlitz school won't open its doors until the hungover expatriates arrive to teach the classes at ten. It might seem that there is nothing for me to do, now, in the dark of this early morning, that begins my response to the reason. I'll now try to explain why in fact it's never too soon to start acting for the reason you have.

Some value in my destination gives me good reason to walk there. I've claimed that my walking is not made valuable by its psychological origination in a belief that I have reason to walk. Independence rules out a backward-looking normative or evaluative dependence of a good overt walking deed on its actual, correct psychological origin. It denies as well that a walking action is good because it opens with an endorsement of itself which then generates the balance of the action. Independence denies that an action is good or correct because the person has seen it as being good in some way or as being in some way correct.

Suppose that's so. That I should walk, or that my walking would be good, is not in virtue of the actual deliberative path or motivational history by which I'll have come to walk if indeed I walk. You might conclude, if you were in a rush, that the deliberative paths or motivational histories that run up to a person's overt action, the motives by which the person is moved to act, don't matter within the ethics of action. But that's too fast. Slowing down, you'll see that the conclusion is not forced.

If actual paths or motives don't matter by making their actual destinations to be good or correct, they might matter in other ways. For example they might matter for their own sake. A good, correct deliberative path toward an action might be intrinsically good, intrinsically correct. Without taking an overt action to depend for its correctness or value on its actual psychological origin—without looking back—you might find that the course of events that constitutes that origination is valuable and correct in its own right.

Often enough I believe that R gives me reason to do x, I come to intend to do x, and I thereby make a change in my attitudes that is for its own sake good. Often enough in making this change I exercise a permission that I make it. Sometimes I satisfy a requirement that I make it. As a name for this potentially good and correct attitudinal change, let's say that I come to intend to x on the basis of my belief that R gives me reason to do x.

For now I will characterize an episode of intention formation of this kind with just two broad strokes. An occurrence of this kind of episode consists at least partly in the fact that my total attitudinal state shows across some interval of time $[t, t']$ the following changes and continuities: I believe throughout $[t, t']$ that R gives me reason to x; before t I did not intend to x; after t' I intend to x; and during $[t, t']$ I undergo no other change in my attitudes. And, second, this change in my attitudes is itself attributable to me as a change I make, possibly as my rational achievement or my error. At first I hold the belief but not the intention. Then I hold the belief *and* the intention. You can attribute these states to me as ones that I have at or during the relevant times. But you can also attribute to me the change itself, the very event of my coming to have an intention having earlier held only the belief and not the intention.

It can happen that my forming an intention on the basis of a reasons belief is in one way good although the belief is false and so even where the action is not one for

which I have good reason. I believe with epistemic permission that injecting you with this substance will save your life and that that's a reason to do it. On that basis I come to intend to do it. That I form the intention on that basis is in one way good. It is correct on at least one dimension. It's good and correct even if the syringe holds a placebo.

The transition does not depend for its correctness on its culmination in an intention to do what in fact I have good reason to do. But this leaves another way in which the transition might be thought to owe its value and correctness to its destination.

3

The correctness of this development of my attitudes might be in virtue of the fact it brings me into a state of good attitudinal fit as among my judgments and my intentions, an equilibrium condition that I'll call *integrity*. Having formed the intention I am now committed and disposed through the intention to do the action of which my judgment approves. It is for its own sake good that I am "living up to my own standard", a standard that's mine because I accept it. I live up to the standard set by my reasons judgment if and because I intend the action for I which judge myself to have reason. The judgment-based intention formation is good or correct because it delivers me to this valuable state of living-up-to-my-own-standards that is in one way better than my starting point, an akratic or proto-akratic condition in which I'm not doing or committed to doing a thing that I think I have reason to do.

An integrity standard might uphold Independence. As John Broome might point out, Independence will sign off on integrity provided that integrity takes a "wide scope" form. Not like this: If you think that R gives you good reason to do x, then you should intend to do x. But like this: You should [if you think that R gives you good reason to do x, intend to do x.] That I satisfy the antecedent of that second should-bound conditional—that I hold the belief—doesn't make it the case that I should satisfy its consequent by forming the intention. Its normative demands on me are constant across my possible states of belief about the reasons. Whatever I believe, I should satisfy this requirement, and I retain two possibilities for satisfying it. I can intend the action, or I can omit to judge that I have good reason for the action.

My coming to form the intention might be a good, rational transition just in virtue of its bringing me into a state of judgment-intention integrity that satisfies the wide-scope standard. When I praise the intention formation as a correct transition between attitudinal states I am not just saying that it's good because it causes my integrity. I'm saying that it owes its specifically rational goodness and its correctness as a personally attributed transition among attitudinal states to the fact that it brings me into integrity. I would not bestow the same praise on an accidental, nonrational, sub- or impersonal causation of integrity by a pill, injection, or magic berry or bud.

I can also come to satisfy the standard by changing my mind about the reasons. The availability of this second route to compliance is the appeal, for Independents, of the wide-scope format. The wide-scope standard leaves me with two “options” for its satisfaction, and so I’m not bound to intend the action. But we should ask a further question about the second, belief-revising route. Does a belief-revising transition that brings me into integrity count as rationally good or correct in virtue of its bringing me into integrity?

Of course the transition might be rationally good and correct. It might happen that I may or should change my mind about the reasons. That revision might bring me to believe the truth about the reasons. It might be epistemically permissible or required in virtue of stronger reasons for the new belief. It might be that I should infer to the new belief as the conclusion of a valid argument from premises that I’ve already accepted with permission. It might be that I may or should accept as true some newly arrived testimony or some nascent intuition presenting the new belief’s content as true. These epistemic virtues of a change of mind would make it to be a good rational passage between old and new attitudinal states.

It strikes me that the epistemic or alethic, inferential, evidential, intellectual, or cognitive virtues of the transition probably exhaust the qualities that make it to be a good-because-rational personally attributed transition. As a sort of side benefit the belief-revising transition also brings me into integrity. But this boon is not what makes the transition to be rationally correct or rationally good. In noticing this benefit I am noticing a windfall. Taken as a cause of integrity my change of mind about the reasons is of a kind with a sip of integrity-causing tea.

If I go beyond this purely causal praise when I endorse the judgment-based intention formation as a good rational transition, that endorsement is not exclusively on grounds of its bringing me to conform to the integrity standard. The intention formation must boast some special feature that it does not share with the strictly intellectual development and that makes it to be a good personally owned development of my attitudes.

Suppose we accept that the intention formation is anyway at least partly good because it brings me into integrity. This proposal is troubling for another reason. It threatens to sign away our hard-won Independence.

If a direction of motion is good because it brings you to a good destination, then it’s good because of where you start. The direction owes its value to the fact that you start in a place from which motion in that direction will move you toward the good destination. If the downtown direction of a Brooklyn-bound train is good because it sends me to Times Square, that’s because I’m uptown, on 96th Street or 125th or 181st. If an instance of my forming an intention on the basis of a belief is good because it brings me to a state of intention-and-belief integrity, then this change is good because, before I made it, I was believing that I had reason to do a thing but not intending to do it.

It seems to follow that my judgment that I have good reason to eat margarine or to tease my brother can make it to be in-one-way good that I form a margarine-eating

or brother-teasing intention on the basis of this belief. Because I have the belief, it's in one way good for me to achieve integrity by forming the intention. If this does not contravene the letter of Independence it goes against the spirit. Like the action itself my intention to perform the action seems not to depend for its value on the fact of my approval of the action. This extension of Independence to intention may admit a wide-scope integrity standard. But it won't accept that episodes of belief-based intention formation are rationally good because they bring me to satisfy that standard. That would imply that my believing that I have reason for an action can help it to make in one good way that I come to intend the action.

I have an even bigger problem, however. I'm not sure that integrity is good.

4

Threatening to break up a family will cause the members to work more intensely as they cultivate his crop. He thinks that that gives him good reason to make the threat, so he goes on to intend to do it. Talking down to the only woman in the seminar room will remind her that she lacks power there, that it's a boys' club. He thinks that that gives him good reason to talk down to her, so he goes on to intend to do it. Ordering the soldiers in his command to "kill anything that moves" as they come into the village will speed his promotion by causing a larger number of deaths to be reported in the next day's briefing. He thinks that that gives him good reason to issue that order, so he goes on to intend to issue it.

These episodes of putatively judgment-based intention formation have no value. They are far worse than worthless. There is no dimension or respect on or in which it's worthwhile or correct to pass, from taking oneself to have reason to coerce several slaves or to condescend to a supposed inferior or to pacify a village by ordering the deaths of its inhabitants, to intending to do one of these things. Many of the claims that I'll make in this book are unconfident conjectures. Not this one. This change in my attitudes may deliver me to integrity, but it is in no way good or correct. This is some evidence that it's not for its own sake in any way good or correct that you come to intend the actions of which you approve insofar as you take yourself to have good reason for them.

If I were gifted with greater subtlety of mind I might see the very stance of intending to threaten the dissolution of a family as lacking integrity in its own right. On the one hand the master is intending, acting, making plans, accepting reasons, fitting his means to his ends, caring about what becomes of his activity. He is valuing instances of purposive activity. On the other hand he is intending to threaten to tear a family apart if the members don't bring his crops in fast enough. That intention commits him in favor of a subversion of rational purpose pursuing. The master's stance, though in one way it lives up to his standard by conducting to the profit and comfort he values, also betrays his ideal by subverting the purposive activity he also values. To form the oppressive intention does not save him from incoherence. It sinks him deeper into his contradictions.

But I'm not so sophisticated. I don't see that every possible master is bound to value rational purposive activity insofar as he's acting and thinking what to do, insofar as he's an agent. I can picture, if I have to, an *ideal* master. An ideal master values his profit, his comfort, his control over other people, and the pleasure of witnessing their humiliation, subservience, and fear. He values his own actions as causes of these states that he values. He does not value the purposiveness, the rationality, or the activeness of rational purposive activity, not even of his own. He values such instances of that activity as would cause his profit and pleasure. What he likes about them is that they'll profit him, that they'll pleasure him. If a master were to regard his coercion of the slave as something that he has reason to do, and if he were to think that he's given reason to coerce the slave by the fact that he has reason to augment his profits, then he might value his action not just for its profitability but also for its helping him to do what he has reason to do. I am denying that every possible master values in this way his doing what he has reason to do. Not every master accepts the theory of reason-given reasons. There is a possible master who regards his own activity as a pure causal instrument of other things he values. This master is purer, all the more a master, for relating to his own activity as he does to the life of his slave.

Acting for reasons, getting them right, holds no interest for him. That is slave morality, best left for the slaves.

5

I want to look into the possibility that a personally attributable passage from taking reasons for an action to intending it can be good, not because it delivers the person into judgment-and-intention integrity, but because of an intrinsic value that it enjoys as a personally attributable transition between states of these kinds of these contents. To come to intend certain actions on the basis of certain beliefs about reasons for them is good exactly and finally because your attitudes then develop in a good direction. The direction of their development is good, the change itself is good, and not only if and because it brings you to a better final state.

The hard part is to say which directions of change are the good ones. The discussion so far urges that two possibilities be set aside. We should not suppose that for a transition to be good the basing belief must be *true*. It's good to come to intend to inject what's in the syringe on the basis of a belief that you have reason to help the patient by injecting her with it. That's in one way good even if you're holding a placebo. But then too the correctness of a transition in this direction is not in virtue of the fact that your basing belief approves of the action that you come to intend. It's not for its own sake good to come, from endorsing an action, to intend to do it.

The goodness or correctness of an intention formation based on a belief about reasons is sensitive to but not exhausted by the truth about those reasons. It somehow matters for this correctness what the true reasons are. But the correctness does not require that the motivating belief be true.

6

You can find other examples of this kind of correctness in certain correct personal transitions from belief to belief. In good deductive inferences, for example. A person who begins by believing that p and that If p then q while holding no belief as to whether q , and who infers from her beliefs that p and that If p then q to a belief that q , undergoes a personally attributable change in her beliefs. The change of mind she makes is in-one-way correct because of its direction—because of some relation between the contents of those belief states in virtue of which it is correct to pass from the one to the other.

Inferential transition fits the negative profile that I've just sketched for intention formation. A valid inference is in-one-way good even when the old, premise beliefs are false. But the transition's correctness is not in virtue of the fact that it brings you to states of belief that, as a matter of your basing belief, you already *endorse*.

Maybe your passage to a conclusion belief requires, for its status as a good inference, that you understand that your premise entails your conclusion. Maybe it requires that you understand, for this particular p and q or for any p and q , that if p and if p then q were true, the corresponding facts would indicate q as true. *Maybe* it requires an occurrent representation of that entailment or truth indication as a stage of the inferential transition. (Though probably not.) But to grasp an entailment of q or to represent an indication of q as true is not to *approve* of your own possible *state of believing that* q . To think that q 's truth is indicated by other things you take to be true is not to judge that you should be believing that q . And for this to be a good inference you need not approve of your own belief that q by holding some judgment that takes the correctness of your possible q belief as part of its propositional content. You could spend your whole life inferring well by *modus ponens* and never endorse, as being something that you should believe, any one belief that you thereby form. A good inference need not be good for its bringing a person into a state of belief that conforms to her own judgments as to which beliefs she should have.

A would-be reasoner might believe that p and that [If p then q] indicate the truth of Not q . She might believe that, if p and [If p then q] are true, she should believe that Not q . From beliefs that p and that if p then q she might come to believe that Not q and so to believe what she believes she should believe. But that transition would not be in any way good. It would not constitute, on any dimension, a correct transition, for all that it brings her to live up to her own standard. I take this as some strong evidence that it's not for its own sake in any way good to come to believe what you believe you should believe.

If it were true that p and that [if p then q], then the fact that p and the fact that [if p then q] would indicate that q is true. Let's call this fact about these propositions the indication relation. It's not special to entailments. That there's smoke, if it's true, indicates the truth of the proposition that there's fire by qualifying the fire proposition's truth as the best accessible explanation of the smoke fact or otherwise by providing evidence of fire. An inference from a belief that p and that

if p then q to a belief that q owes its value as a correctly directed intellectual change to the indication relation that relates the contents of the old and new belief states. An inference from a smoke belief to a fire belief can count as a correctly directed transition in virtue of an indication relation relating the contents of the smoke and the fire beliefs. As with deductive inference there's the question of how if at all the person must also be representing the truth indication in order that she count as correctly passing from the conclusion belief to the premise belief. However that issue is resolved, I think it's plain that the transition depends for its correctness at least in part on the believer-independent fact that the premise indicates the truth of the conclusion.

7

The rational value of carrying out the inference is not in virtue of the person's conclusion belief's conforming to her own judgment that she should believe it. And of course no one thinks that's why a correct inference is correct or why it's good. But a somewhat similar idea is more plausible and probably more popular.

You might think it can happen that a person may believe that q, not because she approves of her own possible belief that q, but because that belief's content makes a good fit with the contents of her own actual beliefs as to whether p and whether If p then q. She believes that p. She believes that if p then q. Her possible belief that q is one whose content is indicated as true, in fact entailed, by other things she believes. The content of that belief makes a good fit with the contents of others of her beliefs. That's why she may believe that q or why she may come to believe that q. It's for its own sake good or correct or okay that you believe or come to believe what's entailed or otherwise indicated as true by the contents of other beliefs you actually hold.

It can seem that we are bound to accept this mild subjectivism if only to avoid the alternative of an incredible hyper-objectivism. There is no plausibility in an account of the permission according to which I may believe whatever is indicated as true by other facts and independently of any personal epistemic relation to those indicating facts or to the corresponding propositions. It's incredible that I may believe that q simply and wholly because p is true and because If p then q is true. If I may not believe these premises, if they are fiercely opposed by all my evidence or if they are simply out of reach on the dark side of the moon, their truth's indication of the conclusion's truth does not secure a permission for me to believe the conclusion.

But these two are not the only alternatives. I would guess that a third account of the inferential permission to believe a conclusion is closer to the truth.

8

A person may in an epistemic situation S believe that q. She may in S believe that q because she may in S come from S to believe that q. She may in S come from S to believe that q because she may in S believe that p and that if p then q and because she may [come to believe that q from believing that p and that if p then q]. And she may [come to believe that q from believing that p and that if p then q] because those premise beliefs' truth, if they were true, would indicate the conclusion as true. I would guess that these facts make it true of the person that she may in S believe that q.

The person may believe the conclusion proposition. That is because she may come to believe it. That she may come to believe it is in turn because she may believe the premises and because she may step from the premises to the conclusion.

This account of an inferential permission to believe that q does not require that the premises be true. It does not take their truth as sufficient for the permission. But neither does it rest any weight on the person's actual acceptance of the premises. Permission of the conclusion belief rests on a permission of believing the premises and a permission of passing from the premise belief to the conclusion belief. This conception of the normative significance of a person's own reasoning about what's the case saves it from any appearance of egocentric bias or of bootstrapping.

Suppose to the contrary that my permission is to believe about the conclusion topic whatever "goes with" my own actual beliefs about the premise matters. Because I believe the premises, I may believe that q; because I believe the premises I may believe the conclusion. I am liable to wonder why it matters that those premise beliefs are mine. Or why it matters that I accept their contents. Why not peg my beliefs to yours or to hers or to his? Is it plausible that my beliefs' being mine helps to generate a permission for me to believe what's indicated as true by their contents?

By turning to an ethics of transitions among belief states I escape these embarrassing questions. The directional permission mentions only one personally attributed event/state/process/sequence. It mentions a passing from premise beliefs of a certain content to conclusion beliefs of a certain content. It says that I may perform my token of *that*. That I may perform the transition is independent of what already believe about the topic. In exercising this permission I don't take some belief state that's already attributed to me and then match a further belief state of mine to that first thing that's mine. There is no recommendation that I match one thing that's mine to another thing that's mine. It's recommended only that I perform my token of this type of transition, only that I make that transition mine by making it. I may make a transition among states of these contents. That my token of the transition is permissible for me is just in virtue of the indication relation that holds between its contents.

9

It may bother you that, if the subject comes to believe the conclusion without performing the inferential transition, I'm bound to say that she then comes to believe what she may come to believe. But this is not so expensive, I think. The person comes to believe that q , it's true. And a belief of that content is one that she may come to form. But when she forms the belief spontaneously or on the basis of irrelevant considerations she doesn't exercise the reason-based permission to hold the belief or to form it.

My having reason to drink, I will argue in the next chapter, is not the mere fact that a drinking should take place in some circumstance. That's why it can happen that I have reason to drink before I have acquired a drink and independently of whether I'm going to poison the drink. That I have reason to drink requires only that I would come to drink a nontoxic beverage as the outcome of my doing what's called for the reason.

Likewise I am guessing that my being permitted to believe that q is not simply a standard that's satisfied or a permission that's exercised by my believing that q . I exercise the permission in virtue of my developing my beliefs in the way that's made appropriate by the grounds of this permission. The grounds of this permission are a permission to believe that p and that if p then q and a permission to pass from those premise beliefs to a conclusion belief. To do what's made okay by those grounds I must come to believe the premises, and I must pass from them to a belief that q . But I claim that I now, already, have a permission to believe the conclusion that obtains independently of my actually believing the premises.

May I believe that the theorem is true? Often the answer will be yes: I may. The answer is well stated in the present tense. If I were now to believe the theorem right away, before spending the several hours that it will take me to prove it, I would be making a mistake. The belief that I now may hold is not one that I may [be holding now]. But I'm already under the force of the inferential permissions whose exercise would carry me to the belief. You would do well to try to prove it to me in aid of my exercise of the permission to believe it that I already enjoy because an accessible proof exists.

10

Often I can make a personally attributed transition between two attitudes each one a personal relation to a content. Some normatively significant relation between those contents can make it good, correct, for me to form the second attitude through a transition that starts with my holding the first. The original attitude takes as its content a proposition whose truth, if it were true, matters normatively and positively for the second attitude or for its content. I would guess that it's often for its own sake good that I undergo a change that takes me toward the second attitude from my acceptance of a content whose truth would in some such way bear on the object of the second attitude. The goodness of the good direction is in virtue of the

fact that the originating state takes as its content a proposition whose truth would make the destination attitude to be correct or that would bear some other normative importance for the object of the attitude. It is good to change your mind so that, from accepting a proposition without taking the attitude on whose object its truth would bear, you come also to take that attitude. Validly inferring from premises you believe is good because those premises, if they were true, would bear on your conclusion belief by indicating its truth.

Some episodes of intention formation have a partly similar character. I believe that it's raining and that this gives me reason to carry an umbrella. From this belief I come to intend to carry the umbrella. If it were true that it's raining and that this gives me reason to carry an umbrella, then these facts would make it the case that I should perform the action that forms the content of the intention. They would make it true that I should carry the umbrella. The transition is good in virtue of this would-be should-making relation between the possible truth of the content of the original judgment and the action that forms the object of the succeeding intention. The old attitude is such that, if it were true, its truth would justify the new attitude or its object. That makes a transition between these attitudes to be in-one-way good, in-one-way correct. The transition has this value even if it's not raining. Even if I lack good reason to carry the umbrella I do well to pass from thinking that I have such a rain-given reason to my intending to carry the umbrella.

If this directional correctness in the transition does not require that the basing belief be true, it requires that its truth be possible. It could be true, someday, that rain falls and that the falling rain gives reason for carrying an umbrella. Because that is possibly true, there's a fact of the matter as to whether its truth, if it were true, would make the action correct.

Some false normative propositions could not be true. It is not just false but necessarily false that you are given reason to threaten to break up a family by the fact that this will drive its members to work harder. There is no way the contingent nonmoral facts might break so as to make this a fact. The reasons belief that approves of carrying an umbrella is false in virtue of the weather. Different weather would have made it true. A reasons belief that approves of your coercing your slaves is false in virtue of the necessary truth that you may not take other persons to be your slaves and that you may not coerce them into growing your crop. Because that could not fail to be true, the reasons belief cannot fail to be false. There is no fact of the matter as to which actions it would make correct if it were true. There is no fact of the matter as to whether its being true would make an intention correct. So there is no value in forming an intention on its basis.

11

Suppose that I may believe that I have good reason to do what opposes injustice. Suppose that I may believe that I can oppose injustice by joining the other people in the square. Then I may come to believe that this action's property of opposition to injustice gives me good reason to join the demonstration. And I may pass from

this belief to an intention to join the demonstration. And so I may come to form that intention. And this is something that I may intend. Whatever I now believe, whatever I now intend, it's already true of me that I may intend to join the demonstration.

That I may intend to join the demonstration is in virtue of these permissions for belief, for transitions among beliefs, and for a transition, from judging that the value of opposition to injustice gives me good reason to join the demonstration, to my intending to join it. My permission for the intention is in virtue of the grounds of these permissions. And so it's in virtue of the fact that makes it okay for me to pass from the judgment to the intention. The possible judgment-based intention formation owes its correctness to the fact that, if the judgment were true, its truth would make it the case that I should do what the intention is an intention for me to do.

It's true in general that if a person has good reason to x, then this makes it the case that she should x. So long as it's not impossible that R be true and that R if true would give her good reason to do x, then her belief has a content whose truth would make the action to be one that she should do. But this fact about the transition is independent of R's giving her good reason to x in particular. So we've not yet found a respect in which the formation of an intention to join the demonstration owes its correctness to the fact that I have reason to join the demonstration.

And strictly speaking I doubt that we can find one. But there is a second general truth that makes it correct to pass from this belief to this intention. Let R be the fact that this person's joining the demonstration will help her to oppose injustice. She's walking toward the site of a demonstration whose success will weaken an unjust regime and so oppose injustice. A person has good reason to perform otherwise eligible actions that oppose injustice. This general principle about reasons to oppose injustice makes it the case that, if a belief that this action will oppose injustice were true, then the corresponding fact would make the action to be one that the person should do. Because the person has reason to do what opposes injustice, the fact that this action opposes injustice, if it were a fact, would make the action to be something that she should do. The transition depends for its correctness on the fact that opposition to injustice is generally a reason-giving property of the actions that have it.

12

So there are two possible upcoming developments of my activity that depend for their correctness on this general fact about reasons. Because I have reason to do what opposes injustice I may form an intention to demonstrate on the basis of a judgment that my demonstrating will oppose injustice. The intention formation draws its permission from the fact that opposition to injustice is reason-giving. But the action of demonstrating is also made to be something that I should do by the fact that I have reason to do what opposes injustice.

If I do, in this situation, what's called for by the fact I have reason to oppose injustice, I will first form, on the basis of my acceptance of that reason, an intention to demonstrate, and then I will demonstrate. I propose that I will then count as doing what's called for by the fact that in general I have reason to oppose injustice. I perform this principled action in virtue of my forming this intention and then joining the crowd in the square. This is something that I can start to do now. It's always later than you think.

Each incident, the intention formation and the walking, is made correct by the reasons fact independently of the other. To form the intention on the basis of the judgment is good even if I never walk. To walk is made good by my having the reason whether or not I have formed the intention on the basis of the reason.

But this independence is a feature of success. There is after all an important interaction between motive and overt deed that arises in failure.

If I walk without having intended the action on the basis of the reason, then my walking preempts a formation of that intention on the basis of that reason. Once I walk I can't come to intend to walk. So I can't come intend to walk on the basis of the reason. A walking that arises from a desire or a motive not based on the reason has the demerit of keeping me from making a valuable transition from reasons judgment to intention. That transition is valuable because I have reason to walk. My having reason to walk makes it bad that my walking keeps me from forming the intention on the basis of an acceptance of the reason. (The objection holds even where I don't now accept the reason. I could yet form the judgment and then go on to form the intention. But if I walk, it's too late.) If preemptive walking is in one way opposed by my having the reason, preemptive walking is not an event that's made good by my having the reason. It's not a good candidate for an event in virtue of whose occurrence I simply do what's made good or correct by having this reason to walk.

It seems to follow that I can't, in walking, act for the reason I have unless I've first formed the intention on the basis of the reason. Does this give up on independence? My intention might seem to make the overt action valuable by making it the case that the action doesn't objectionably preempt my forming the intention.

This assumes that a thing can be made good by virtues that consist wholly in the absence of possible defects. The fact that there's no banana peel on this spot of pavement makes my stepping there to be good by making it to be case that my stepping is not opposed by the fact that if I step there I will slip on the peel. It seems strained. Better to say that the pavement's being a good, sufficiently stable surface for stepping on is what makes the action good.

When I have not come to intend the action through a transition from a judgment accepting the reason, my walking has the vice of preempting a possible judgment-based formation of that intention. I'm saying that it doesn't follow that, where I have the intention, my having the intention makes the action good by making it the case it does not have this vice.

So here is my tentative conclusion about motives, deeds, and the constitution of principled action. A person will act for the reason she has in virtue of her forming an intention based on an acceptance of that reason and in virtue of her performing the overt deed. Each incident counts as an incident of the action because it depends directly and independently for its correctness or value on my having reason for the action. But because a preemptive overt action is opposed by the reason, I won't perform the principled action other than in virtue of the motive and the overt deed.

13

These thoughts suggest a different understanding of the slogan that reasons are for persons. A person is capable of believing that she has reasons and capable of being motivated by those thoughts to act. This sets her apart from slugs and stones and helps to explain why unlike a slug or a stone a person can have reasons.

You might think that persons are the subjects of reasons just because they are capable of representing reasons in a way that will tend to generate their compliance with those reasons. Through her thinking about reasons a person is capable of controlling her performance or omission of the actions that reasons support or oppose. Rocks sometimes roll. Sometimes it's good that a rock roll, as when it rolls away from the entrance to the cave. But rocks don't get themselves rolling by representing their rollings as good.

If a capacity for representing reasons matters only as a capacity for ensuring compliance, then we can't explain why even systematically akratic or instrumentally ignorant persons have reasons to do things that their acceptance of reasons will never bring them to do. A reason had better not depend for its force on the fact that its representation suffices for compliance since that condition is not met where the person lacks crucial means-end information or where she tends to fail to do what she thinks she should.

Before we come to control, it matters for its own sake, I think, that the person can represent reasons and can pass from her representations of them into intention. It's good for its own sake to move, from your representations of actions as having properties would give reason for them, to intending those actions. This value can be realized only by a roughly rational mind, only by the subject of an adequately conceptualized outlook on the world who is capable of passing from the outlook to an adequately conceptualized intention of the action.

The person's capacity to represent reasons does not only or always make her to be a reliable conduit of valuable events. Its significance does not end or begin with the fact that she's liable to use that capacity to detect reasons and to do what reasons support. Instead a being who is capable of understanding that she has reasons and of forming intentions on the basis of that understanding is on that account capable of immediately available activity that depends for its value on the truth about reasons. A person is someone who can start to do what's called for by the fact that she has a reason from the moment she starts to think.

1

Principled walking is doing what's called for by the fact that some fact R gives you good reason to walk. It may be that you are still scratching your head over the very idea of an action of this nature. You may be thinking that if there is an action of my doing what's called for by the fact that I have reason to walk, that action is simply my walking, ordinarily understood. It's a walking action that, for all I can say, consists in a body's motion appropriately caused by the body's brain's representation of a walking. A walking that, for all I can say, will only ever accidentally satisfy the standard given by the reason.

This impatient response draws on a pretty natural conception of normative standards and their satisfaction that needs to be rethought.

When some fact R gives me good reason to walk R does not just make a walking action to be good. It does not just call for some walking to occur. The fact gives reason for the action to *me*. The reason is for me, and I'm the one who has it. The subject of a reason is a person.

This seems important. But it's hard to be sure. Maybe once I've understood this puffed-up claim better, that will let the air out. Consider a deflated understanding of the claim on which it turns out not to matter very much. That R gives me good reason to stand in the square might be identified with the conjunction of two facts.

First, for some kind of action *walking* that is individuated independently of R's support for my walking, R gives this action a positive evaluative or normative status such that the action's having this status does not constitute and is not in virtue of any normative standard of which I'm the subject. For example it might be that R counts in favor of certain possible occurrences of an action of this kind, or it

makes it the case that there should occur an action of this kind, or it's some way in which such an occurrence would be good or very good or good enough. That the action is good or to be done, or that it ought to happen—that it gets a “thumbs up” from value or from personally unowned reasons or standards—is not itself a standard of which I'm the subject. It's not a standard that by its nature only I can satisfy in virtue of the occurrence of the action it requires.

The second constituent of my having the reason secures the reason's ascription to me by attributing the reason-supported action to me. The second constituent of my having the reason is the fact that the action approved as a matter of the first constituent is my action. In particular, for some way of attributing actions to persons that is independent of my having reason to stand in the square or of my being the subject of any other personally owned normative standard, this standing that should happen or that would be good would be my standing if it were to happen. I'm the one who would be doing the good standing that should be done.

That I'm the subject of a standard is the fact that I'm the one who satisfies the standard if it is satisfied. This two-part reduction of the fact that I have the reason allows for a correspondingly two-part account of my satisfying the standard set by the reason. That R gives me good reason to walk is a standard whose satisfaction consists in the occurrence of an event of R-supported walking. The standard is primarily satisfied by some walking. But the walking that would satisfy the standard would be mine. And so you might add, as a sort of courtesy, that I derivatively satisfy the standard when my walking satisfies it. That I satisfy the standard is the fact that it's satisfied by an event of action and the fact that, for some standard-independent way of attributing actions to persons, that action is mine.

The proposal reduces a person's ownership of reasons to her nonnormatively constituted ownership of reason-supported actions. And it reduces a person's satisfaction of the standard set by the reason to her independently constituted ownership of actions whose occurrence primarily satisfies the standard.

Principled action as I'm hoping to understand it will not take root here. If this reduction is right there is no event of my doing-what's-called-for-by-my-having-reason-to-walk—no event of my satisfying the standard set by that reason—that is distinct from the occurrence of an ordinarily individuated walking action. My doing what's called for by the reason I have to walk equals my ordinarily individuated walking.

2

I doubt that I can refute this deflation. Even to criticize it without begging the question will not be easy. Let me start by telling you what I think is true instead.

The truth, I would guess, is that the fact of a person's having reason for some action, or for that matter the obtaining of any other normative standard of which

this person is the subject, is never to be identified with, and is never to be otherwise wholly explained by, a set of facts that omits the obtaining of some normative standard of which this person is the subject. There's no true identity of the form

that R gives A good reason to x = that f and g ... and z

except where one or more of the facts on the righthand side is, or includes as a constituent, the obtaining of a normative standard of which A is the subject: a standard such that, by its nature, its satisfaction constitutes the person A's satisfying it. And likewise for identities that feature on their lefthand sides such personally owned standards as that A should x or that A may x or that A should not x. No standard that A satisfies in virtue of the events that this standard requires is identical with a set of facts none of which is the obtaining of such a standard personally owned by A. And no standard of this personally owned lefthand kind is wholly in virtue of f's and g's that omit the obtaining of some standard of which A is the subject.

Often enough you can explain my subjection to a particular reason or standard. But a good explanation of my having the reason will explain it by deriving it from some other normative demand that arrives already addressed to the person I am.

3

Reasons are for persons; I claim that they're personal all the way down. Consider, to start, just one example of the class of reductions that I oppose.

There's a fact of the matter as to which body is the body of the person I am. This attribution of the body to the person is not in virtue of reasons or principles or standards of which I'm the subject. That some event constitutes my walking is the fact that it's a certain motion of this body psychologically caused in a certain kind of way by mental states realized by states of that body's brain, motion of a type whose tokens are in a normal environment normally causally sensitive to tokens of those types of mental states realized by this body's brain states. That R gives this person reason to walk toward the square is the fact that R makes it the case that there should occur an event of this kind.

When things are going normally, an event of my walking will happen or not according as I do or do not desire it or intend it or think that I should do it. And that's part of what makes this event of walking to be mine.

Why does it matter that the event is mine? Why does the event's being mine help to make, from the fact of the event's value or personally unowned to-be-doneness, the further fact that I have the reason? You might offer that, because an action that's mine is causally prone to arise from any of a range of *pro* attitudes that I might take toward it, this action is *my responsibility*. You might propose that I have the reason because the action is my responsibility.

The suggestion looks fairly promising. But it has promise only insofar as we're thinking that the action's being my responsibility is itself the fact of my subjection to normative standards addressed to the person I am. My responsibility for the action, if it's not yet the fact that I have reason to do the action, is some such fact as that, if anyone has reason to perform or to omit it, I do. Or more abstractly the action's being my responsibility is the fact that, if any person satisfies or violates normative permissions or prohibitions or recommendations or requirements just in virtue of the occurrence of this action, then I do.

If this is why it matters that the action's mine—it falls into my causal-psychological wheelhouse *and so* I'm the one who satisfies standards in virtue of its occurrence—then we don't yet have a reduction of the personally owned reason to the conjunction of (i) a personally unowned normative or evaluative thumbs-up for the action with (ii) a personal attribution of the action that's independent of the person's subjection to personally owned standards.

To save the reduction, you might offer next that the action's being my responsibility is not simply in virtue of its participation in causal relations with other events or processes attributable to me. You would urge instead that my responsibility just is the fact that events of its type are normally sensitive to tokens of certain other types of events or processes or mechanism that are themselves attributable to me. I have the reason because the action is my responsibility. But my responsibility for the action is identical with the action's sensitivity under normal conditions to desires, projects, purposes, intentions, plans, judgments, beliefs, urges, whims, or drives attributed to my person on some psychological-physiological basis that's independent of my personal subjection to normative standards.

This further step restores the reduction's reductiveness at the cost of its credibility. I'll now argue that my having reason for the action can't consist without remainder in the action's possession of some personally unowned value or to-be-doneness together with its normal sensitivity to a class of states, processes, attitudes all independently attributable to the person I am.

4

It seems to follow from the proposal that, if the tokens of some type of action were absolutely insensitive to occurrences of my attitudes toward it, the action would not be my responsibility. Maybe I'm *not* disposed to perform actions of this type as the outcome of my forming tokens of some types of personal attitudes pro this action. This would seem to make it the case that I lack reason for the action. But I don't escape the force of some reason just because I stop paying attention to it. That I won't be moved fails to make it false that I should.

You might hope to complicate the condition requiring that action be sensitive to my attitudes. Your sensitivity condition is not the brutally causal fact that I'm disposed to perform the action as the upshot of certain attitudes of mine. Instead

it's the fact that I would perform the action in the causal wake of those attitudes *if I were also satisfying other normative standards that have force over my action and attitudes*. It's plausible, maybe, that I am subject to other normative standards requiring of me that I not intend to do something or judge that I should do it or want to do it and fail to do it. My subjection to some such further standard of effectivity, because it would secure a "moralized" sensitivity of my actions to my attitudes in favor of them, would also secure the action's subjection to reasons.

But to moralize the sensitivity fact that's taken as a ground of my having the reason—to construe it as a sensitivity that holds if I am also meeting some further standard requiring that I act as I want or intend or think that I should—is to stand down, again, from any hope of reducing my ownership of the reason to my ownership of the actions it supports. This abandons the reduction unless the standard that's invoked in characterizing that sensitivity can itself be reduced to facts that omit my subjection to personal standards. That would require that there exist some final standard such that my being the subject of *that* one partly consists in my ownership of the actions and attitudes to which it applies and such that my ownership of those actions or attitudes is in virtue of a brutally causal, not-at-all-normative sensitivity that events of their type show to other events, states, processes, mechanisms attributable to me. If that sensitivity were instead also moralized—if it came to the fact that when I also satisfy some further standard the attitudes or actions will satisfy this "final" standard—then the final standard would not be final. Reduction would be deferred again.

Reduction presupposes a final standard, then, a standard possessing only brutally causal/natural conditions of application. But that standard is a hook off which, incredibly enough, I wriggle merely by lacking any disposition to conform to it. When the attitudes or actions it purports to regulate cease to show any responsiveness to the standards that apply to them, they are not my responsibility, and so on the current telling I am not its subject. Because that is very hard to believe, I doubt that the reduction is true.

5

A valuable movement of your hand bearing water or ice toward your mouth is normally sensitive to your desires, judgments, plans, or whims in favor of or against drinking water or eating ice. The body moves that way if and only if and psychologically because you are intending or wanting to hydrate yourself or thinking of this hydration as having some nice feature or as something that's good or that's to be done. This event falls into your wheelhouse, the zone of your relevant attitudes' psychological influence. This action would be good; it's your responsibility because it falls into your wheelhouse; and these facts together constitute the fact that you have reason to do it.

An event of your hand's moving the water into your throat, even as that event falls into your sphere, might also belong to mine. I hold the weapon with which I've threatened to take your life if you don't drink at my command. Or I control the

device that stimulates your desires, intentions, and judgments in favor of or against drinking; I will press the button that makes you drink by installing such an attitude in you if and only if and causally because I desire or intend that you drink or because I represent your hydration as something that's good or that should happen. Otherwise I press the button that keeps you from wanting or intending to drink and so stops you from drinking.

This is science fiction but realist science fiction. For the time being my government must settle for pumping water and glucose into the noses of the people whom it force-feeds at Guantanamo. There is little reason to doubt that the camp will still be there when the chip is ready for implantation.

You will take a drink, then, if and only if you want to do it. But then, too, you will want to do it if and only if I want you to want to do it. It seems to follow, on the current telling, that this motion of your body, although it is not my action, is my responsibility. Because it's also impersonally to-be-done, it's something for which I have reason. If an action's being mine makes me an owner of the reason just because it includes the action's being my responsibility, then even your actions will form the objects of reasons that I own if those actions are my responsibility, too.

In concession to English I won't say that I have reason to do your drinking. But I have reason to make it happen that you drink by pressing the button or by pronouncing the threat. There's an action for which I have reason just in virtue of the goodness of some bodily motion of yours and the fact that I can produce it or scuttle it by initiating a sequence of events for which my intention or desire or judgment is causally necessary and sufficient.

I should not bring you to drink in this way. You can explain the fact that I should not force you to drink by invoking the reason I have not to manipulate your thinking and action by coercion or neurocontrol. But if that anti-manipulation principle makes it the case that I lack good reason for making you drink even as your drinking is good and is my responsibility, this shows that the conditions that were said to suffice for *your* having the reason to drink are not after all sufficient. That A has reason to drink can't just consist in the fact that this action is impersonally reason-supported and the fact that, because it's sensitive to A's pro-attitudes, it's A's causally constituted responsibility. If we add, as a third constitutive condition of A's having the reason, the fact that A is permitted to exercise the potential influence she enjoys over the event, then reduction is deferred yet again. A is after all the subject of that permission. A's having reason in respect of this action is not yet identified with or explained by facts that omit A's personal subjection to normative standards.

Maybe the missing condition isn't a personally owned standard. Maybe it's a purely nonnormatively psychological matter, some requirement of intrapersonal psychological immediacy in the action's psychological dependence on the states that cause it. Your being the owner of a reason in connection with an x'ing event requires that x'ing events respond to your attitudes in favor of x'ing events along

causal paths that don't pass through actions or mental states that are attributed to other persons.

I believe that some such condition of intrapersonal immediacy is crucial to the ownership of reasons. It's hard to see how the present view can allow it any nonderivative importance. The going idea is that, of all the things that are good or to be done, I have reasons in respect of the ones that normally fall under the sway of my attitudes. Why would it matter, on this account, whether that sway is intrapersonally immediate or mediated by the thinking and actions of other persons?

In any case the restriction is probably too strong. Where you have reason not to drink the water—it will make you sick—I have reason to bring it about that you not drink by persuading you that you should not drink. I should bring about a nondrinking event by bringing reasons against drinking to your attention. If we were to try to explain my having this reason in terms of the value or impersonal to-be-doneness of your drinking, the fact that my influence over your drinking must pass through your judgments and intention would on the current telling rule out this basis for ascribing the reason to me. So maybe instead it's my [bringing it about that you drink by persuading you to drink] that's the valuable event whose responsiveness to my intentions, attitudes, judgments about *it* qualifies me as having reason to do it. But if my approval of or my desire for an action of my [bringing it about that you don't drink by persuading you not to drink] produces that event, it produces it by a causal channel that passes through your own attitudes. My intending to bring it about that you don't drink causes a bringing about of your not drinking by causing me to say things to you that cause you to accept that you should not drink. A strictly causal-psychological requirement of intrapersonal immediacy is not upheld.

I have reason to get you not to drink by persuading you not to drink. In doing this I exercise a permission to influence your action through persuasion or the presentation of reasons. That's *my* permission, a normative standard addressed to me. It's partly because *I* may get you to do things by presenting you with reasons for doing them that I have reason to persuade you not to drink. But then my having this reason is not reduced to facts that omit personally owned standards owned by me.

6

The view I'm now considering depicts me as the executor or factotum of such values or personally unowned requirements or recommendations as show a certain profile of normal sensitivity to possible mental states independently attributed to me through which I represent their value or value them. There are many things that might happen whose occurrence would be good in some way. There are many things that should happen. It's my biological, physiological, psychological good (or bad) luck that some of these value-bearing or impersonally recommended events can be summoned by value-representing mental states of mine. Because

they fall into my sphere or bailiwick or wheelhouse, they are the ones in respect of which I have reasons.

My problem, on top of all my other problems, is that I just don't see myself that way. I am not a place where something occurs. I'm not value's agent. I work for myself. I am trying, some of the time, to do the right thing, and I can't understand this effort in terms that push past the fact that I should make it.

I've so far criticized one way of explaining my having reason to perform the actions that are mine. This explanation is not content to say simply that the reason is mine because the action's mine. It's trying to say *how* the action's being mine gives rise to a personally owned standard. The action's being mine amounts to or includes the action's falling under the normal influence of mental states or processes that are also and independently attributed to me. The fact of sensitivity or possible control makes the associated reason to be mine.

You may be thinking that there's after all no need to say why I'm the one who has reason in connection with my action. If not me, who? Who else could have reason to do my actions? My having reason for an action just is the fact that the action is mine and that it's valuable or impersonally recommended. The action's attribution to the person I am doesn't introduce or include some other relation that I bear to it and that sponsors an interesting explanation of the fact that I'm the one who has the reason. The action should be done, I'm the one would be doing it if it were done at all, and so I'm the one who should.

So maybe my ownership of the action entails that only I can own the reason for doing the action. But my having reason to perform an action makes demands beyond its recommendation of the action. In chapters 3 and 4 I've argued that my having good reason to perform an action can give me good reason to facilitate the action, to refrain from hindering it, and to refrain from doing what would make it not to be valuable. Let's focus for the moment on facilitation.

If my having reason for an action consists in its being impersonally reason-supported and in the fact that the action's mine, and if my having that reason explains my having reason to facilitate the action, it should be possible to explain my having reason to facilitate the action by appealing only to that action's impersonal reason-supportedness and to the fact that it's mine. A quick look will put this in doubt.

7

I have good reason to sign a check with my right hand. This gives me good reason to take over with my left hand the package that I'm now holding in my right. That I have good reason to take the package with my left hand is because I have good reason to sign with the right. That fact in its turn is the fact that the signing action is reason-supported and the fact that the signing action is mine. That I have reason

to take the package is because my taking the package will facilitate a reason-supported action that's mine.

Is that really why I should take over the package?

One somewhat plausible idea is that I should take over the package simply because it facilitates a reason-supported check-signing. Or simply because it facilitates a check-signing that has whatever feature gives reason for that check-signing: that it raises my liquidity, say. But then it's a mistake to ascribe my having reason for the package taking to *my having reason* for the check signing. Properly speaking my having reason to sign the check is no part of the case for my taking over the package.

I've argued in chapter 3 that we're not just speaking loosely when we invoke my having reason to sign as part of the case for taking over the package. That I have good reason to take over the package is because I have reason to sign the check. That I have good reason to take over the package, then, is not just in virtue of its facilitating an action that has the reason-giving property that gives reason for the check-signing. To account for the package-taking reason we must add the further fact that the check-signing is mine. For on the current proposal the check-signing's being mine is what makes the reason to be mine. It's partly because the check-signing's mine that I have reason to facilitate it.

8

The deflationary proposal was never meant to give reason-giving force to the fact that an action's mine. The idea was instead to decompose my having reason for an action into a personally unassigned normative recommendation of the action, on the one hand, and a nonnormative personal attribution of the action on the other. The action's attribution to the person was supposed to have a purely locational significance. That the action's mine doesn't make it to be reason-supported. It just says where in the population of persons this reason-supported event would take place if it were to happen.

But if reasons for means are given by a person's having reason for an end, this separation breaks down. If my reason for taking the package is given by the fact that I have reason to sign the check, then the fact that the check-signing would be mine must help to give me reason to facilitate the check-signing.

The check-signing action's being mine, understood in the way that upholds the current reduction, can't bear this weight. In other argumentative contexts the fact that some action is mine might stand some chance of being allowed to matter. For example when we were thinking that the action's being mine consists in or includes its sensitivity to my decision, intention, desire, judgment, we might have gone on to guess that this causal responsibility helps to make me the owner of a reason to free up my right hand. But I've already rejected the proposal that the

action's being mine establishes the reason's ownership because of causal facts that make the action sensitive to my attitudes toward the action.

Or then again we might have it in mind that the action's being mine partly consists in my unreduced normative responsibility for it—in the fact that I have reason for the check-signing action if anyone does. But this is also ruled out, now, for the sake of a successful reduction. If the reason's being mine consists in an impersonally reason-supported action's being mine, the action's being mine can't even partly consist in its being something for which I have reason if anyone has reason.

Finally we might have in mind that the action's reason-supportedness and its being mine interact to ground the further fact that I have reason for the check-signing action. That the check-signing is mine might explain my having reason to take the package by interacting with the reason that supports the check-signing to generate the fact that I have reason to sign the check, a fact that in turn explains my having reason to take over the package. But again the deflationary proposal isn't having this. Deflation denies that the reason-supportedness and the personal attribution interact to ground a further fact of my having the reason. It says that my having the reason just is the conjunction of those two facts. If the reason-supportedness of the check-signing is not enough to give me reason to take over the package, then the check-signing action's being mine must close the gap and *complete* the case for my taking over the package.

At the moment we are trying to regard the sheer fact of the action's being mine—not its inclusion in a causal network rendering its tokens sensitive to tokens of my attitudes, not the normative fact of my responsibility for it—as a sufficient explanation of the fact that I own the reason to sign the check. And so the sheer fact of the action's being mine must suffice, together with the impersonal reason-supportedness of the check signing, to explain my having reason to facilitate that action. But sheer attribution, unlike those interesting consequences or constituents of attribution that have already been set aside, seems not to matter in this way.

9

No fact as to a person's having reason for an action consists in or holds wholly in virtue of a collection of facts that omits a standard of which that person is the subject. If this is true, it's an important truth not only about reasons but also about persons. It shows that there are some person-involving facts—facts that include persons as entities to which they assign properties or which they relate to other entities—and that are not identical with or wholly grounded by facts that aren't person-involving facts. These are irreducibly personal facts.

Maybe *some* facts in which I appear to figure as a constituent can be reduced to impersonal facts. That the salt shaker is just to the left of my right hand might be taken to consist in or to hold wholly in virtue of the obtaining of some spatial relation between that artifact and a certain body. That I moved the salt across the

table, for that matter, might be taken to consist in the occurrence of a certain motion of that body caused by the right representations of it realized by the body's brain. Unless I am identical with the body, these facts need not attribute properties to the person I am or relate the person I am to other entities. If you could cut me out of all such facts, that might be a good reason to deny that I exist as an entity or that I exist as an entity numerically distinct from my body.

But facts like these are not the only facts of my life. It's a fact that I have reason to pass the salt. Any battery of facts by which you might hope to explain my having reason to pass the salt will still feature the person I am as a constituent. They will still feature me as the subject of some justificatorily basic normative requirement that grounds my having reason to pass the salt. There is no telling *this* salt-passing story without a personal protagonist for it, without speaking of some person who has the salt-passing reason.

If reasons merely recommend actions attributed to persons, then the fact that I have reason to learn Italian so that I can speak it in Rome might be understood as holding only that the recommendedness of the later action grounds a recommendation of the earlier one and that this grounding requires that both actions belong to the same person. You could get by with a belonging-to-the-same-person relation that holds between recommended action events and that secures the justification of the earlier action by what gives reason for the latter. You would not be committed to a temporally extended or persistent entity that's a person.

But if the fact that I have reason to speak Italian is irreducibly a relation between the reason, the action, and the person I am, and if my having reason to learn Italian is because I have reason to speak Italian, then these principles probably require that I exist as the subject of both.

10

Primitive personal ownership of reasons also makes a home for principled action. That I'm the subject of the reason is not the fact that the reason-given standard is satisfied, if at all, then by an action of mine. An event of my satisfying the standard need not consist in the occurrence of an action of mine that primarily satisfies the standard. The standard's satisfaction might be something that I do primarily and that my walking does only derivatively. I satisfy the standard in virtue of the occurrence of some walking of mine. And the walking satisfies the standard by courtesy, in virtue of the fact that [I satisfy the standard in virtue of the walking.]

The possibility is opened that my satisfying the standard might be something that I do that's distinct from the nonnormative walking action in virtue of whose performance I satisfy the standard. It might form an action that is not identical with an ordinary walking. It's open that I will sometimes perform this action in virtue of further events and states that go beyond an ordinary walking action. If my having reason to perform an action makes other normative demands on me, then it's open that I count as doing-what-that-reason-calls-for-to-me in virtue of the further

events that satisfy those further demands. I might do this in virtue of actions that facilitate my walking and in virtue of my coming to intend to walk on the basis of my recognition of the reason I have to walk. If these further incidents are ones in virtue of which I satisfy requirements grounded on my having reason to walk, then I count as doing what that reason calls for in virtue of these incidents.

11

The contrast between two conceptions of the satisfaction of the standards set by reasons allows for a more definite take on the problem I discussed in chapter 4: what it comes to that a person, at one point of her action, accommodates her own practical failure elsewhere within her own action that's governed by the same reasons.

I've argued that when I don't leave for my good destination because I am going to stop short—when my first step is opposed by the fact that I won't take a second step—I do not thereby act for the reasons I have. What happens instead, I now propose, is simply that I do something—omit to take a first step—that's an action attributed to me independently of the reasons I own and that's recommended by the facts about its valuable features that hold in virtue of the facts of its circumstance, including the facts of my own dispositions for action. I perform a naturally constituted action that just is the thing to be done in a circumstance that includes the other things I'm liable to do. In the face of my own practical failure I do what the deflating view of the ownership of reasons takes to be true whenever a person does what she has reason to do. My independently attributed action succeeds in respect of its being the thing that's to be done within its circumstance. But *I* don't succeed in any further way.

A similar understanding is available in the case of a materially helpful action that I perform from a blank desire that it take place and not from a psychological acceptance of the reason I have to do it. I reach for the knob, and I turn on the radio. But I turn it on without having formed an intention to turn it on by transition from an acceptance of the reason I have to give another listen to the summer's hit. My turning the radio on preempts the formation of an intention based on an acceptance of the reason, an event that is itself called for by the reason, and so this instance of my turning the radio on is not made to be correct by the fact that I have reason to turn it on. I do not act for the reason I have to turn it on. All that I do is to perform the readymade action, already attributed to me, of turning on the radio, an event that has certain valuable features that call for it to occur. I do a good thing equivalent in its value to the blast of beats that reaches me through the open window of a car passing in the street below.

Certain actions of persons, I was taught, have a value that nothing can have that's not a person's action. Suppose that the whole value of your walking were that it brings you closer to a good destination. This teaching would not be true of that worthy action of yours. A sufficiently powerful sneeze in the same direction will be good in the same way.

Your own action of walking can seem to resemble impersonal bearers of that destination value in possessing it only accidentally. The sneeze doesn't send you because of the reason. It got lucky. And likewise you carry yourself off only because you're lucky enough to have formed a motivationally efficacious belief taking the reason proposition as its content.

I am claiming that there's another way in which to understand action and its value so that certain personal actions are capable of a nonaccidental and proprietary worth. Some actions partly consist, not in attitudes of endorsement of themselves, but in the fact of their objective endorsement by world-given reasons of which the person is the subject. Some of the things that I do count as events as of my doing them because of the personally owned reasons that make them to be normative successes of mine. Some of a person's actions are made of the reasons she has. Nothing else that might happen is good in the same way. Nothing succeeds like success of a person.

SEVEN PUBLICITY

1

In *The possibility of altruism* Nagel argues that the whole truth about reasons for action can be put into a form like

For any event E, person A, and neutral predicate f, if f is true of E, then f's being true of E gives A reason to promote E.

where a neutral predicate contains no occurrence of "A" or other agent variable that's not bound within the predicate. This feature of reasons he calls their objectivity. Nagel's objectivity has two interesting interpersonal aspects or consequences.

If all reasons can be expressed in this form, it follows that

For any event E, person A, and person C, if A has reason to promote E, then there's a predicate f such that f's being true of E gives A reason to promote E and also gives C reason to promote E.

Any fact that gives reason for some action of mine also gives reason for a counterpart action of yours. Nagel assumes that reasons for action are features of events that give reason for their promotion. The relevant counterpart relation holds between two actions just in case each is a promotion of the same event. It seems pretty clearly false that all actions are promotions of events or that reasons for action are features of events that give reason for their promotion. A more abstract formulation dispenses with this event-promoting theory of action-as-production. It would treat two actions as counterparts just in case they coincide in a reason-giving property:

For any person A, and action x, if A has reason to x, then there's a predicate f such that f's being true of A's x'ing's gives A reason to do x and such that, for any C and y, if f is true of C's y'ing, then f's being true of C's y'ing gives C reason to y.

Following Derek Parfit let's call this the neutrality of reasons.

The events quantified over in the original statement of objectivity include events of a person's performing some action. Nagel assumes that a person who does some action thereby counts as promoting the event of its performance. It then follows that

For any predicate f, person A, person C, and action x, if f's being true of A's x'ing gives A reason to do x, then for any person C f's being true of A's x'ing gives C reason to promote A's x'ing.

Once again it may strike you that event promotion is too special. And again a more abstract formulation will dispense with the production theory of action. For now let's use the unanalyzed idea of a person's acting for the sake of another person's action. Then we might write

For any fact R, person A, person B, and action x, if R gives A reason to do x, then R's giving A reason to do x gives B reason to act for the sake of A's x'ing.

The facts about your actions that give reasons for your actions also give me reason to act for the sake of your performing those actions. For example they might give me reason not to prevent or otherwise to interfere with your doing what they give reason to do. Adapting a usage of Christine Korsgaard and of R. Jay Wallace, we can call this aspect of reasons their publicity.

2

Are reasons neutral? I don't know.

Neutrality can acknowledge the appearance that I'm the only one who has reason to finish this book, to spend family time with the other members of my family, or to lie awake at night trying to understand what I've been up to during the day. I am the one who has reason to do these things because I'm the only one who can (finish this text, spend time with those people, attempt to understand these failures) in a way that would constitute (the valuable personal authorship of a book, valuable loving activity, a valuable attempt at self-understanding.) But the value in these actions that gives me reason to do them is nothing beyond the fact that they constitute instances of authorship, family happiness, attempted self-understanding. Family happiness takes different forms in different families, but every family's happiness is valuable for everyone in the same way. I should joke around with A, A, A, and A (the other members of my family) because that would be someone's joking around with that same someone's family, and not in any further way because it's joking around with A, A, A, and A. I should finish the book because it would constitute someone's seeing a possibly worthwhile project to its end and not in any further way because it's my book, the one I've been standing on my head trying to write. I should examine myself because that would be an instance of self-examination and not in any further way because the object of the inquiry would be me, this particular stranger-to-himself.

Do these neutral formulas capture all of what's at stake in these pursuits that gives me reason to go on with them? I would guess that the answer depends on the specific natures of the values of love, creativity, self-examination, forms of attached or committed activity that appear to present their individual protagonists with idiosyncratic reasons of particular value to go on doing them. I don't understand these values very well. They are almost certainly too deep to be reached by the structure-mongering procedures underway in this book I'm trying to finish. (I won't finish if I try to reach them.) They are probably beyond the understanding of a person of my limited self-understanding—a person of my age.

Although I'm not that young. I believe that the arguments of this book take no stand on the issue and do not presuppose a particular resolution of it.

I will now argue that whether or not reasons are neutral they are public. I will first argue that if reasons are neutral then reasons are public. I'll argue next that if reasons are not neutral they'd better be public.

3

It could be that reasons are neutral but not public. I have reason to perform such actions as coincide in their neutrally described reason-giving features with the actions you have reason to perform. But objectivity ends there. I do not also have reason to act for the sake of your doing your versions of these actions that are the reason-equivalents of mine.

For Nagel, in some of his early moods, publicity seems to travel with neutrality. The link is made by the production theory of action. Nagel assumes that reasons for action are reasons for the promotion of events. The events to be promoted include events of persons' doing things. If you have reason to do something, this constitutes your having reason to promote the event of your doing it. Whatever gives you reason to promote the event of your doing it by doing it gives me reason to promote the event of your doing it from across the agential gap, and the reason is in each case at bottom a reason to promote the event. But it can seem that we are not bound to hold the two theses together if we are not thinking, with the young Nagel, that reasons for action are reasons to promote events and that the reason I have to perform an action just is the reason I have to promote the event of my doing it.

However neutrality requires publicity if intrapersonal problems have the character that I've ascribed to them in the earlier chapters. In chapter 3 I distinguished flattening and folding conceptions of instrumental structure. The flattening view is an event-promoting theory. On the flattening view my reason for an action that facilitates an action is a counterpart or parallel of my reason for the action it facilitates. Each is one for which I have reason because, given its causal background, it causes or constitutes or helps to cause or to constitute the realization of some valuable event. This denies what the folding view asserts: that I am given reason to facilitate a valuable final action and to abstain from hindering it by the very fact that I have reason to perform the final action. I've argued for folding, that my reasons give me reasons. I've argued that I should facilitate and not hinder the actions for which I have reason because my doing so is necessary for my acting for the reasons I have.

Suppose that's so. Then neutrality entails publicity after all. I am given reason to facilitate or not to hinder some action by the fact that this is necessary for my acting for the reason I have. But reasons are neutral. And so the fact that some action of yours is necessary for my acting for the reasons I have also gives you reason to do it.

Now suppose that reasons are not neutral. I have reason to spend time with A. A's the one I love. I will not accept, as an adequate characterization of the fact that gives me reason to spend time with A, the fact that this action constitutes a person's spending time with a second person whom the first person loves. Maybe *you* have reason to promote this event—by trading shifts with me or arranging for my conjugal visits to A—and that's because it's someone's spending time with the one that someone loves. But for me the reason to do it is that it's my spending time with A. The A-explained aspect of its value is for me alone, and it gives me a reason to do it that I share with no one else.

I've claimed that, when I act for the reasons I have, my action is good, and something that I should do, partly because it's principled: done for the reason I have to do it. Suppose that's so. Then it also matters for me that, by spending time with A, I can succeed in doing what I have reason to do for the reason I have to do it. The fact that the action is my acting for the reasons I have compounds and reconstructs the value that it has for me as my spending time with A.

To recognize this further value in the action is a further thought. Here I exceed the thought quota allowed me by some theorists of intimate relationships. In their eyes I should consider only the fact that my action is my spending time with A.

Be that as it may. When I claim that I should spend time with A because (i) it's my spending time with A and therefore (ii) it's my acting for the reasons I have, I can't be charged with *forgetting* the idiosyncratic, attachment-born reason that I am given to spend the time by the fact that it's my spending time with A. I can't be charged with identifying my reason for spending the time with the fact that it's a lover's spending time with the beloved or that it satisfies some similar neutral description. The action's principled value does not displace or replace but rather depends on and incorporates my subjection to the idiosyncratic reason that issues from my particular attachment.

Suppose that reasons are public. Then this second good feature of my action—it's being a principled action—also matters for others. You have reason not to come between me and A. That's partly because I have reason to spend time with A and so because your intervention would keep me from acting for the reason I have. My fellow Californians and I have reason to release the 120,000 persons who are now imprisoned in the state for nonviolent offenses. That's partly because, in holding them apart from the people they love, we stop them from doing what they have reason to do.

Publicity affords an objectifying description of a reason-giving value in a person's loving action. Like the neutralist claim that my action is to be done because it's someone's spending time with someone that someone loves, this public description takes *one* value in the action as being completely characterized by the fact that it's someone's doing something worthwhile: in this case, a principled action. When you let me pay a visit to A, and when I go to see A, each person is doing

something that she should do partly in virtue of the value of a person's acting for the reasons she has.

But unlike the neutral description of this action—as a lover's spending time with a beloved—the hypothesis of a second, public value—the value of a person's doing what she has reason to do—conserves the underlying, idiosyncratic, personal, particular value as the source of the reason. The very fact that this action is principled—that it's someone's doing what that person has reason to do—is in virtue of the fact that I have this nonneutral, particular reason to spend time with A. The love-born, agent-relative value, for me, of my spending time with A, and the fact that it supplies me and me alone with a particular normative challenge that only I can meet and only by spending time with that particular other person, are incorporated into, and responsible for, the action's public value as a principled action. My idiosyncratic reason for spending time with that particular person makes of this action something that's to be done, helped, and not hindered as a person's principled action.

The public description takes up one aspect of what's at stake for me in the action—that it constitutes my acting for the reason I have—and holds it out as potentially practically consequential for others. Publicity is the idiosyncratically attached person's practical objectivity. This is objectivity for people who have their own lives to lead, lives that bloom with novel, particular value when their subjects succumb to specific creative obsessions or when they fall for someone new.

5

I've just argued that the publicity of reasons allows for a respect in which what matters for one person in her action—that she has reason to do it—matters for everyone. It takes the fact of an idiosyncratic personal reason and publicizes it, gives it a common importance that's to be honored by everyone.

I think that, if reasons are not neutral, they'd better be public lest there be no respect in which everything that practically matters for me in my action also matters for everyone. It seems to me when you try to keep me apart from the one I love, I am able to explain why you shouldn't do this by appealing to some value in my action that's also what moves me to do it. In arguing against your interference I am not simply concerned with the badness of your doing what interferes; I am concerned with the goodness of the action with you which you interfere. I'm trying to get it across that you should not interfere with this action of mine because it's a way in we can both take it to be good. If reasons are not public, I am forced, in offering a basis for my complaint, to choose between the fact that my action is someone's spending time with the person that one loves and the fact that it's spending my time with A. The first is not the reason for me to do it. The second can't be the reason for you to leave me alone. But if reasons are public, I can point out that the action is one that I should do, and one that should you let me do, in each case partly because, in being what my love for A gives me reason to do, it's also an action that a person can perform for good reasons.

6

I have reason to act for the sake of your acting for the reasons you have, but how?
How am I to act for the sake of your doing what you have reason to do?

I might tell you the truth about the reasons you have, or the truth as I see it. By doing this I could help you to recognize those reasons and to perform the actions they call for. If drinking the water will make you sick I can tell you this or advise you not to drink it. I can also refrain from lying about your reasons or about the facts on which they depend. I can omit to interfere with your thinking in ways that would frustrate your recognition of or motivation by those reasons.

It might be supposed that advice, truth-telling, and the omission of brainwashing and mental manipulation, major though they are, are the only consequences or manifestations of publicity. I should act for the sake of your doing what you have reason to do by telling you the truth or what I permissibly regard as the truth about your reasons and otherwise by leaving you free to think for yourself about those reasons. And that's just about it. Publicity by itself carries no further requirement of action. For example it does not require that I refrain from physically preventing bodily actions of yours for which you'll have reason if I don't thwart them.

There is something to be said for this minimalist take on publicity. My actions and my tendencies of action can themselves help to determine what you have reason to do. They help to make up the practical situation for which you have reasons. For any thing I might do, it seems to follow, there's a corresponding action for which you have good or sufficient reason given what I'm doing or what I'm going to do. That reason-supported action is constrained to be one that's available for you given my tendencies of action. So nothing I might do your performing an action for which you have good reason. So long as I leave you free to recognize and act from the reasons that are partly determined by my action, that action is itself neutral with respect to your achieving the value of your acting for the reasons you have.

Maybe you would find it fun to fly paper airplanes. In certain circumstances this gives you reason to fly them. And in certain circumstances your having reason to fly them gives you reason to make them. But it's a contingent matter. If there's no paper anywhere nearby, and if it's fun for you to fly paper airplanes and slightly less fun to drum your fingers on the table, these might make it the case that you have good reason over the next few minutes to drum. And then it's false that you have good reason over the next few minutes to fly paper airplanes. To act for the sake of your doing what you have reason to do will call for you to clear the table or stretch your fingers and to drum. It won't call for you to make planes or fly them.

On the current telling we should say a similar thing about a day on which I'm going to tear up any paper airplanes that you make before you can fly them. This fact, where it's a fact, makes it the case that you have good reason over the next few minutes to drum. It's not the case that you have good reason over the next few minutes to fly paper airplanes. And so my tearing up the airplanes does not prevent your doing what you have good reason to do.

I am like the rock that you step around, the wind that threatens to blow your paper airplane off course, the ox team that will overturn your cart if you try to drive them home by an unaccustomed route. My possible interference with your flying of airplanes is assimilated among the other reason-giving facts of your situation. It installs you in a situation of lacking good reason to fly paper airplanes. It puts you on the no-fly list. In tearing up your airplanes or in causing you not to make them by causing you to believe that I would tear up any planes you'll make I stop you from flying paper airplanes. But I don't thereby stop you from doing what you have reason to do. You don't have reason to fly them.

I hope you share my sense that this apology for tearing up the planes is ridiculous. But let's mark what it gets right. It's correct to say that where I'll destroy your handiwork this can help to determine which reasons you have. The fact that I'll tear up the planes can make it the case that you lack good reason for making a plane or for laying paper in store. And so there will be no immediately physically available action of flying a plane, nor any action of preparing for such an action, whose omission by you constitutes your acting against reason. You will sometimes find that another person is bent on acting in ways that would interfere with otherwise valuable courses of action. For better or for worse the person then makes herself a determinant of your reasons.

6

To stop there would be a mistake, I think. I am a person, too. We should ask not only what you have reason to do around me but also what I have reason to do around you. Beyond the question of whether my destruction of your planes can give you reason to give up on making them, there's the question of whether I should destroy them.

And, well, I should *not* destroy your paper airplanes. And I should not be disposed to destroy them. I think that's because my destroying the airplane is opposed by the reason I have to act for the sake of your acting for the reasons you have.

I assume that, if it's true of my action and practical disposition that they uphold this public value of your acting for the reasons you have, there is some fact about what I'm doing or what I would do that explains why that's so. On the current telling such an account can run as follows. The fact that I'll destroy your planes makes it the case that you have good reason to drum and not to fly. Since tearing up your airplanes would not stop you from drumming on the table, it does not prevent your doing what you have reason to do. It's consistent with my acting for the sake of your acting for the reasons you have.

In this way the fact that I will tear up any airplanes you might make helps to make it the case that I may tear them up. But I can't believe this. It takes the fact that I'll do a thing as helping to make it okay for me to do it. But nothing is made to be okay by the fact that I'll do it.

It may be that *you* are condemned to regard my oncoming actions and practical dispositions as rock- or breeze-like causal boundaries or forces that determine what you have reason to do. But if I take my own tendency as making itself okay, I am going wrong. This is like deciding that because I'll tear up my own airplanes I lack good reason to fly paper airplanes.

7

An objection. Maybe I don't need to take as given that I will tear up the airplanes. Maybe it's enough to say that, whether or not I tear up them up, there will be something for you to do that will constitute your doing what you have good reason to do. And so, whatever I end up doing, my action will not prevent your doing what you have reason to do. To reach this conclusion I need not reason from a given fact as to what I'm going to do.

But this goes too fast. The claim that, whatever I do, my doing it is compatible with your doing something that you have good reason to do compresses an important justificatory structure. It compresses but does not avoid the illicit reasoning I've described. If it's true that, whatever I do, I don't prevent your doing what you have reason to do, that's partly in virtue of the supposed fact that, if I will tear up the airplanes you make, the fact that I'll tear them up makes it the case that you lack good reason to fly them and so that my preventing you from flying them does not stop you from doing what you have reason to do.

If I decide to tear up the airplanes because of a "whatever I do" fact that rests on this basis, I am grounding the consistency of my action with your principled action on the fact that my action of tearing up the airplane, by making it the case that you lack good reason for flying airplanes, would make it the case that my doing it is consistent with your acting for the reasons you have. This is an unacceptable bootstrapping, I think.

Another objection. Suppose I try to show that this action is not okay exactly because it stops you from doing what you have reason to do. Then I'll need to establish that what you have reason to do is to fly airplanes, the very thing that my action prevents. But the demonstration that tearing up the airplanes keeps you from doing what you have reason to do must apparently presuppose that I'm not going to tear the airplanes up. But then I must be taking the fact that I won't tear them up as making it the case that I shouldn't. And this way of condemning the destruction is also unacceptable. Just as permission can't be grounded on the actuality of the performance, impermissibility is not grounded on the actuality of the omission.

I agree. The question is what to make of this. You might conclude that, because there is no non-bootstrapping account, positive or negative, of my action's consistency with the public value of your doing what you have reason to do, we should take my action to be innocent until proven guilty and conclude that this value has nothing to say about my action.

But this is pretty hard to believe. Maybe reasons are not public in the way that I've claimed. There's no such reason as the reason I have to act for the sake of your doing what you have reason to do. In that case the objection to my tearing up your airplane will have to lie elsewhere: I will be destroying your property or causally interfering in your going project or subtracting from the quality of your life by closing off one valuable option. However I believe that, *if* there's a genuine requirement to act consistently with your acting for the reasons you have, that principle must condemn my tearing up your airplane. We should take a second look at the assumptions that led to this impasse.

8

The lesson I draw instead is that your reasons for action are not wholly determined, in the simple way that I've been entertaining, by the physical affordances given by the present state or determined or probable development of a "rest of the world" that includes my own activity and practical motivation. That I am going to stop you from flying airplanes does not simply remove this action from a menu of your options so as to make it not to be the case that you have reason to do it. There is a fact of the matter as to what you have reason to do that's independent of some of the actions through which I might impinge on or causally limit your action. One such fact is that, independently of whether I'm going to destroy your airplanes, you have good reason to fly them.

Is this intelligible? How can the fact as to what you have reason to do be independent of what I'm going to do? Whether you have reason to fly depends on whether you can fly. Whether you can fly depends on what I am going to do.

It may help to think again about the intrapersonal analogue. I've argued that the postulation of such independent reasons facts is necessary for making sense of intrapersonal problems.

The fact that hydration gives you reason to drink, or to eat an icicle, is not just the fact that hydration's value makes it the case that an action of eating an icicle should take place within a practical situation in which that action is immediately available. That you have reason to eat the icicle gives you reason against doing what will stop you from eating it. It gives you reason not to destroy it before you can eat it. This reason-given reason does not just add to the list of actions that are recommended for you. It lends robustness to the fact that you have reason to eat the icicle. The fact that you are going to destroy the icicle before you can eat it can't make it false that you have reason to eat it even though it causally necessitates your not eating it and so strikes this action from the list of your live options.

This robustness depends on the fact that your action of destroying the icicle is itself opposed by the reason you have to eat it. To mark the destroying action as answerable to the reason you have to eat it is to make it out that your having reason to eat the icicle does not depend on whether you will destroy the icicle.

The controlling constraint is that you can have reason to perform an action only if it could occur as the culmination of your doing what's called for by the fact that you have the reason. Since your having reason to eat the icicle calls for you not to destroy it, you could eat the icicle as the outcome of your doing what's called for by the fact that you have reason to eat it. Your having reason to eat the icicle is independent of whether you will destroy it.

I think that your having reason to eat the icicle is in the same respect independent of whether I'm going to grab it out of your hands and destroy it before you can eat it. Because your need for water gives you reason to eat the icicle, I have reason not to dash it against the pavement.

The test for the existence of this reason follows the intrapersonal precedent. That you have reason to eat the icicle requires that, if all persons do what's called for by your having this reason, then eating it is immediately available to you and fully valuable. If each person acts as she should in respect of your having this reason, I won't tear it out of your hands after you've harvested it, and you will have the concrete causal opportunity of raising it to your lips. And this is true even if in fact I'm going to wrest it away from you. That I'll wrest the icicle from you makes this to be, for you, a shadow reason. It's not one for which you can act so long as I'm going to stop you from eating the icicle. But the shadow reason is still there. Its immediate practical upshot is that I should stop resigning it to shadow status by preventing you from doing what it gives you reason to do.

9

I see no reason to act for the sake of others' acting for the reasons that others have. I suffer from a particular strain of practical solipsism. I take the diagnostic category from Nagel, and with his help I'm trying to understand what's so strange about it.

There are other people, people at the mall for example. Children run off from their parents clutching balloons. Teenagers in uniforms hand out free samples. I ride the escalator up to the mezzanine, you pass me on your way down. Like me the others are thinking thoughts and having experiences. They are also wondering about the options at the food court. Things could be going better for them, or worse. Their pain is real, and it's bad. Their pleasures are good when they're real. I seem to be able to predict some of their next moves. She will find a bathroom, he is close to retirement, these two will break up just after Valentine's Day.

As the practical solipsist at large in the mall I can and should take account of other people, their needs and interests, and their tendencies of action. I will not bar your way or step on your gouty toes, and that's because it would be bad for you as well as for me that we collide. I will predict your trajectory conditional on my possible directions of movement, and I will try to pick a direction that spares your toes, saves us from butting heads or knocking the shopping bags out of each other's

arms. Along with your needs and interests I will have to take into account your present and future actions. They make up the causal field within which I must work out how if at all I'm to act for the reason I have to keep from running into you.

This seems to exhaust the forms of attention that I'll pay to you. I won't consider whether you have reason to avoid a crash or to continue toward your destination. That doesn't matter, for me. And I won't take the fact that I have reason to make my way through the crowd as giving you reason to let me pass.

The world that I see as I'm thinking what to do is in two parts. There is on one side the roster of my causally given opportunities for action and the causally given mapping of my possible actions into causations or constitutions of further events or states. On the other side there is what I have reason to do, the facts as to which such options I should choose. I conceive of my own action and tendencies, not as a given element of the received field, but as something that I should conform to the reasons. But your actions and dispositions, and his, and hers belong with the given world. On a good day what I should do is independent of what I will. But there's no day on which I won't be ready to take the given tendencies of your action and the given possibilities of manipulating them or responding to them to good effect as helping to settling my question of what to do. There's no day on which I won't take the your obstruction of my valuable action as cancelling the reason I would otherwise have reason to do it.

If you are going to keep me from taking a drink by knocking the drink out of my hand, I have no good reason to drink. My reason for drinking goes in or out of existence according as the causal environment that includes your activity affords me this action or withholds it. When I find that I lack good reason for drinking because you won't let me drink, I'll remember that it's because this reason is for-my-deliberation-only that its force or existence is contingent on your activity. If only you had a reason-given reason to let me drink I would have reason to drink no what matter you do.

I have to make the most of the solitary situation to which the rest of you confine me with your determined activity. This is a nightmare because I'm surrounded by other people but utterly on my own.

Of course you face your own version of a divided field, and it's different from mine. My activity and disposition sit among the things you take as given. Your activity and dispositions must not be taken for given but rather are what you must conform to the reasons you have. Your reasons for actions are partly determined by what I will do. But (on a good day) they are independent of what you will do.

This has the consequence that there is no single description of a single practically consequential reality that all persons might take as settling their respective questions of what to do. Any description that includes the given tendencies of my action is not one that I may take as settling what I should do. But any description that omits my given activity will fail to settle all of what you should do. I find this strange. This is not a further argument for publicity. I can't assume, without

begging the question, that some single set of facts can be taken all at once as settling my question and as settling yours. I can only report that I have trouble relinquishing the picture on which some single account of how things are with us settles our several questions at once. If I am going up and you are going down, it should be possible to answer, all at once, the question “What makes those actions to be the things those persons have reason to do?”

With publicity that picture is saved. If reasons are both interpersonally consequential and intrapersonally independent—if each person has reason to act consistently with the others’ acting for the reasons they have, and if no person may take the actual tendency of her own action as making it the case that she’s acting consistently with the others’ principled action—then the reasons for each person’s action are in virtue of single set of facts.

EIGHT **COERCION**

1

You step into my path, blocking my way. I can turn around, now, or stay where I am. I cannot keep going as I've been going. Your action makes me unfree to stay my course. It causally narrows my options for action. Considered as a causal constraint on my action it resembles a new fallen rock or suddenly salient natural barrier. When a rock falls into the same spot it causally constrains my action so that I may only turn around or stay put. In one respectable usage of "unfree" the rock makes me unfree to keep going. Each obstruction, inanimate or human, makes me unfree by causally constraining my action so that I can't keep going.

I believe that what happens to me when you bar my way is different from and worse than what happens when the rock befalls me. When you stop me my action's frustration is different, and worse, because a person has brought me to a stop. My unfreedom differs in kind from what I suffer from a rock.

If all that matters for me—for my action and its freedom—are the physical affordances thrown up by my external environment, it's silly to care whether I'm obstructed by a person or by a rock. What matters for me is that, thanks to my new causal situation, I can't keep going. It's all the same whether a rock or a person is responsible.

Because you are a person you can decide whether to block my way. There's a fact of the matter as to whether you should do it. You may have good reason not to come between me and my destination. Because you are a person you have reason not to put up this obstacle that, from the point of view of what matters for me, is indistinguishable in kind from what I would suffer from the rock. The rock, if only rocks had reasons, would have the same reason to roll away. Its being a rock disqualifies it from having a reason against its putting up an obstruction. But that obstruction is otherwise of a kind with the obstruction you make.

In this chapter I'll take a different line. I'll argue that, because you're a person and so capable of owning reasons against obstructing my path, you make me unfree, by blocking my path, in a way that nothing that's not a person can do.

2

When a fallen rock turns me around or brings me to a halt I may simply take the fact that it's now there as giving me good reason to turn around or stay put. The reason-giving facts of my situation now include the unlucky interposition, between me and my possible destination, of a rock. The rock fact comes together with the other facts of my situation to make it simply the case that I have good reason to turn around. I may act for that reason in turning around. In beating my retreat I may act for the reasons I have.

A person's obstruction of my passage has a different kind of consequence for my reasons and so for my action. That you're blocking my way gives me reason to turn around. But in giving me this reason it does not simply cancel the reason I have to keep going. The destination reason is relegated to the shadows but it persists. I think that it's partly because I have reason to keep going that you should not stand in my way. If to the contrary the fact that you're standing there could make it the case that I lack good reason to keep going, your obstruction of my progress could establish its own permissibility by extinguishing any objection to itself based in my having reason to keep going. It would put you in a position to take the fact that you will be standing there as making your standing there permissible. You could plead that because you'll be standing there I lack good reason to keep going. And that because I lack good reason to keep going your standing there is not opposed by my having good reason to keep going. I've argued that self-vindications of this structure are not to be accepted. I conclude that your blocking the way does not make it the case that I lack good reason to keep going.

Then your blocking my way puts me in the bad situation of subjection to two standards that can't both be satisfied. Unless I turn around or stay where I am I won't do what your obstruction of my path calls for me to do: avoid a nasty collision. But unless I keep going I won't do what my reason to keep going gives me good reason to do. Neither my turning around nor my attempted continuation would constitute my doing what's called for by the reasons I have. No such action exists within a practical situation that includes the fact that you are standing in my way. Your standing in the way annihilates, for me, the possibility of principled action.

3

This draws an objection that's the interpersonal counterpart of one that I considered in my discussion of self-defeating individual action. You might insist that all my reasons together—my reason for reaching the destination and my reasons for avoiding a painful and fruitless collision with you—give me good reason to turn around or stay put. If that were so I might in turning around act for the reasons I have.

As before, however, I doubt that the reason I have to reach my destination comes together with my other reasons so as to make it the case that I simply have all-

things-considered good reason to turn around. As before my charge against this proposal is that it makes the reason-giving weight of the destination reason to depend on the facts as to what persons are doing in respect of the reason. Because you are standing in my way, even as my having reason to reach the destination gives you reason not to bar my way, the destination-approaching reason lacks the weight with which it could settle my question in favor of my proceeding through the space you now occupy.

This seems backward, but again we may wonder whether there's an alternative. Turning around is plainly the thing to do in the circumstance. What could it come to that my reason for reaching the destination retains its independent force and simply dissents from an approval of my turning around? My own intuition is against compromise, of course, but it's not clear what could justify the uncompromisingness given that I recognize other compromises between reasons.

The key to uncompromisingness, I think, is the thesis of reason-given reasons to do what's necessary for principled action. If there were no obstacle, the fact that I have good reason to reach my destination would give me reason to proceed through this space. That would be because my proceeding through the space, in being necessary for my reaching the destination, is necessary for my acting for the reasons I have. If it were the case, with you in the way, that my reasons for reaching the destination and for avoiding a collision give me good reason to turn around, then these would also be reason-given reasons to do what's necessary for my acting for the reason I have.

I claim that no such action is well-defined for me. You are going to block my way, against the reason that my destination reason gives you to let me go. I have to reckon with this fact in deciding what to do lest I dismiss from consideration the crucial facts that I can't keep going through the space and that if I'll try I'll have nothing but bruises or broken bones to show for it. But if I can neither consider nor overlook the obstruction, there is no well-defined action of my acting for the reasons I have.

This can seem just to beg the question. If it were granted that there is a well-defined action of my acting for the reasons I have, and that this called for me to turn around, then maybe I would have a reason-given reason to turn around, and it could be confirmed after all that in turning around I act for the reasons I have. Each assumption—that my principled action is well-defined given your obstruction and includes my turning around as an incident; or that no such action is well-defined—confirms itself. It might seem that there is no way to choose between these two assumptions. But I think that the stalemate is broken, after all, by publicity and independence.

Reasons are public; you have reason to act consistently with my acting for the reasons I have. If the fact that you're blocking my way could help to constitute for me a well-defined action of my acting for the reasons I have, one that included my turning around as an incident, then you'd be in a position to take the very fact that you're blocking my way as helping to make itself okay by making itself consistent with my acting for the reasons I have. You could take your given disposition of

obstruction as helping to make it the case that my acting for the reasons I have includes my turning around as an incident, and so that in blocking my forward progress you don't also frustrate my principled action. But this thumbs its nose at independence. Your obstruction of me can't make itself to be okay in that way. Of the two self-confirming assumptions that I mentioned, only the second upholds independence with publicity.

4

I'm disposed to tease your sister if you don't eat your vegetables. The vegetables are good for you. Nutrition suffices to make a case for your eating them. But you may also see that my disposition gives you reason to eat them as a way of sparing your sister some unhappiness.

Suppose that I've set out to form the disposition and made it known to you that I have it. I am making it the case that if you don't eat your vegetables I will tease your sister. I can do this, for example, simply by threatening to tease your sister and making the threat known widely. The threat will cause me to tease your sister if you don't eat your vegetables if I desire generally to carry out my threats in order to maintain other persons' beliefs that I tend to carry out my threats.

Now I am doing something—bringing it about that I'm disposed to tease the sister if you don't eat your vegetables—about which I must ask whether my doing this is consistent with your acting for the reasons you have.

The trouble is that my disposition to tease your sister if you don't eat the vegetables really does call for your attention. You should not fail to be motivated by it along with nutrition. One of the good features of your nutritious meal is that it spares your sister's feelings. One of the bad features of abstaining from the vegetables is that it passes up a chance to prevent a teasing of your sister. Imagine that you go ahead and skip the vegetables because the taste disagrees with you. That's a mistake partly because you fail thereby to spare your sister some unhappiness.

I may take it that my action of making the threat will cause you to eat your vegetables partly from this motivation. But I should not conclude that in eating your vegetables you may act for reasons that you are given by nutrition and by your sister's happiness. To reach this conclusion I must take my own formation of a disposition to tease the sister if you don't eat the vegetables as giving you reason to eat them as a way of sparing your sister. I must take it that my setting out to bring it about that you eat your vegetables makes itself to be consistent with your acting for the reasons you have. But I can't regard my formation of the disposition as giving you this reason and so as making itself consistent with your principled action. I can't do this on pain of a violation of independence.

This argument multiplies the ways in which one person can make another person unfree to act for the reasons she has. In my earlier examples the fact that I would

foil some bodily motion of yours prevents your performing an action for which you have good reason independently of my obstruction of you. Here I don't prevent you from performing an action for which you have good reason. But my disposition to tease your sister if you don't eat the vegetables makes you unfree to perform a principled action.

5

Here is another example of a coercive production of an action for the person has good reason that nonetheless makes her unfree to act for the reasons she has.

I'm about to smoke a cigarette. I have good reason not to smoke it. You grab the package away from me and toss it into the river. It's plain that you should not intervene in this way. You should me leave alone. To scuttle a possible action of smoking does not prevent my performing an action for which I have good reason. I don't have good reason to smoke. You stop me from doing the thing that I have good reason not to do. But again we should not suppose that the only way in which to stop a person from acting for the reasons she has is by taking actions that thwart otherwise-reason-supported actions.

The reason I have not to smoke calls for me not to smoke. But it also calls for me, having judged that it gives me good reason not to smoke cigarettes, to pass from that belief into an intention not to smoke these cigarettes. Your throwing them away or your disposition to throw them away will preempt my formation of this intention. I will see that I can't smoke the cigarettes, and that will keep from considering whether to smoke them. By discarding the temptation you keep me from making a transition that's called for by my having the reason.

Of course I might change my mind, just before you intervene, and decide against smoking on grounds of health. Then your intervention does not preempt the intention formation for which I have reason. But on this branch of possibility your intervention also does not stop me from smoking. It wrenches my arm, wastes my time, prevents me from donating the cigarettes for medical research or as an art object, contributes to pollution of the river. The only branch of possibility on which smoking prevention might be thought to give you reason for discarding the cigarettes, despite these counts against it, is one on which your action preempts my formation of an intention that the reason calls for me to make. And so it's unlikely that you have good reason to throw the cigarette in virtue of facts that you can take as giving you reason for the intervention without thereby taking your disposition to intervene as making the intervention permissible.

6

A person who's the subject of a reason is the one who satisfies the standard it sets in virtue of the actions it calls for. I've argued that this is not because the actions in

virtue of which the standard is satisfied are independently attributed to the person. It's just in the nature of the person's owning the reason.

This has an important further consequence in light of the publicity of reasons. When you don't stand in my way, I walk toward my destination and so do what I have reason to do. I act for the reason I have. The success is mine. That I've done this principled walking is partly because you let me pass. You also succeed in your own right. You act for the reason you have to stay of my way. I'm the one who satisfies the primary standard set my having reason to walk on, but I do it partly in virtue of your not hindering me.

I don't think we should be in a hurry to accept the symmetrical claim about failure. I am the subject of the reason to walk. But it doesn't follow that, when I don't walk, I violate that standard in virtue of the fact that no walking takes place.

This asymmetry is suspect if we hold to a reductionist view of my ownership of the reason. If my owning the reason is just the fact that the performance or omission of the walking supported by reason is independently attributed to me, then I violate the standard in virtue of the fact that no walking of mine takes place: I am the one who has not walked on. But it's incredible that I am violating normative standards in virtue of my not walking ahead when you bar my way. Better to say that you violate those standards. Your stance explains the fact that it's not the case that I act for the reasons I have. It does this by making it impossible for me to act for the reasons I have.

I propose that a person A violates the standard set by B's having good reason to x just in case (i) A's action or omission or disposition is opposed by B's having good reason to walk; and (ii) A's action or omission or disposition explains the fact that it's not the case that B acts for the reasons she has. Often enough the A who qualifies as the violator is the B who is the primary subject of the reason. When I freeze in my tracks or wander off course, my immobility or digression is opposed by the reason I have to walk on. And the fact that I don't act for the reasons I have is in virtue of my freezing up or wandering off. But sometimes A the violator is distinct from B the subject. When you stop me in my tracks, your obstruction is opposed by the reason I have to reach the destination, and your obstruction explains why it's not the case that I act for the reasons I have. Your obstruction does this not just by preventing a walking action for which I have good reason but by saddling me with a practical situation in which I can't—whether by walking, turning around, or staying put—act for the reasons I have.

What's the motivation for this structure of violation? The structure has a point if we're thinking that what's at stake in B's satisfying the standard is not simply her performance of an action that has the reason-giving feature but her performance of the principled action that consists in her doing what's called for by the reason. If that's the good thing at stake, then we'll want to know who's responsible for its not happening when it doesn't happen. The responsibility attaches to a person whose own failure to do what the reason calls for explains the fact that this principled action never takes place.

7

The fact that my action originates in your coercion of me can seem to release me from the higher reaches of responsibility in respect of certain reasons. My action of throwing important papers into the river depends for its responsibility status on whether you got me to do it by threatening to push me in instead. Because I acted under threat I am not responsible, or I am less responsible than I would be if I were to have thrown the papers in for fun.

I don't know what responsibility is if it's not some fact as to my subjection to or my satisfaction or violation of normative standards. I would like to identify my diminished responsibility with some difference in the pattern of my subjection to or satisfactions or violations of normative standards. Maybe very roughly it's the following.

When I throw the papers in for fun I simply do what I have good reason not to do. When I throw them in to save my life I still do what is sufficiently opposed, from the shadows, by the reason I have to keep the papers dry. But because you are going to throw me into the river if I don't sacrifice the papers, this shadow reason is not one for which I can act while also acting for the reason I have to save my life. It's because a villain has told me "It's you or the papers" and is disposed to make this true that I can't act for both reasons I have.

I would guess that my diminished responsibility consists in the following fact about my predicament. On the one hand I still have reason not to destroy the papers. I do not do what this reason I have calls for me to do. And so I don't act for the reasons I have. On the other hand that's because I can't act for the reasons I have. Because of what the villain plans for me, I can't act for the reasons I have. That I can't act for the reasons I have is in virtue of an action of hers that's opposed by the reasons I have.

If this is what it comes to that my responsibility is different when I'm coerced, it's a mistake to think that coercion, considered as a pattern of causal influence on my action thanks to which some other person's decision causes my action, makes it the case that I'm not responsible just because it amounts to my action's being caused by the decision of another person. The decision's causation of my action counts as coercion—it counts as making me unfree—in virtue of the fact that it's keeping me from acting for the reasons I have. That she coerces me just is the fact that she makes me less responsible in that respect.

8

When I turn around because you've stepped into my path I don't act for the reasons I have. No such action is possible for me given that you are in the way. I fall back, at this point, to doing the thing that's to be done in its circumstance. My turning around is the action independently attributed to me that has, on balance, the best features of those available in a circumstance that includes your obstruction of

me. There is no further principled action that's constituted by what I have reason to do in respect of the reason I have for reaching my destination and of the fact that you are going to stop me from going there. I do what I can do.

A rock's obstruction of my possible forward motion can be incorporated into the reason-giving facts so as to make available and well-defined an action of my doing what those facts call for me to do. If I were to judge that I have reason to turn around, if I were to turn around, I might then perform, in virtue of these events, a principled action of acting for the reason the obstacle gives me to turn around.

This is why I've claimed that your being a person does not just make you eligible to have a reason against blocking my path—a reason of a kind that rocks would have if only rocks had reasons. It also helps to give that reason its nature as a reason to avoid making me unfree. You are a person, you have reasons, and you have reasons to do what's consistent with my acting for the reasons I have. On pain of independence you must not take your own obstruction as making itself consistent with my principled action by helping to define it. Unlike a rock's obstruction of my passage, your obstruction makes me unfree to act for the reasons I have. To make me unfree in that way is something that only a person can do.

NINE **CROWDS**

1

The demonstrations that drove Hosni Mubarak from power were the work of several million Egyptians. No one sent the people into the streets or told them what to do when they got there, and no one who turned out could hope to decide what would happen next. A typical member of the crowd remained a stranger to nearly all the others. Even the few who spoke through microphones went unheard outside a small circle of people standing close enough to distinguish their amplified voices from the massed noise of the crowd.

I think that the millions who deposed Mubarak deposed him together. This was the joint or collective action of many mutually communicatively isolated persons each powerless to bring this action about by leading the others to perform their parts of it.

The Cairo crowd and the Alexandria crowd have had a lot of company in recent months and years. After Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation on the steps of a Tunisian police headquarters, hundreds of thousands of his fellow Tunisians overthrew the government that had driven him to that end. The demonstrations that scrambled Europe's plans for Greece or Spain were the action of hundreds of thousands of Greeks or Spaniards. The demonstrations that knocked Putin off his stride were the action of tens of thousands of Muscovites. The demonstrations that called into question Erdogan's idea of turning Gezi Park along with the rest of Turkey into an Ottoman-themed shopping mall were the action of great numbers of Turks. By filling the streets of Sao Paulo and other Brazilian cities millions of Brazilians together reminded the Workers' Party that it's their party. They can ride the bus if they want to. I could also mention the Bulgarian upheaval, the Ukrainian events, the student movements in Chile, the people camping in a concrete park in lower Manhattan, the Bosnian uprising, the crowd in Taipei. It's been quite a time. It's been an unusual period when central bankers, terrorists, surveillance experts, sports champions—heavy lifters, accustomed to making things happen on their own—were forced to share the headlines with people who can only ever get where they're going by walking there together.

2

You and I are walking together. A third person who is not walking with us walks beside us, moving at the same pace and in the same direction and taking care not to bump into us. Margaret Gilbert's question is What makes it the case that you and I walk together and that you and the other do not? But curiosity about the constitutive conditions of joint action is much older. It goes back at least to the Judaic prophet Amos, who asked "Can two walk together, but they are agreed?"

Michael Bratman thinks that you and I can walk together partly in virtue of our sharing an intention that we walk. And he thinks that you and I can share an intention that we walk partly in virtue of each person's intending that we walk.

For all that I will say here, joint action may often take this Bratman form. But Bratman's proposal is bound to put at the center of collective action a feature that some important collective actions can't share. Bratman does not claim to have isolated the unique form of shared action, and so my remarks are no objection to anything he's claimed. They are for bringing out a helpful contrast.

If I intend that p I can and may take my intention that p to be settling whether p. Unless every shared intention that we walk rests on a mistake, it must happen, sometimes, that each of several persons can settle whether they all walk. David Velleman once wondered how that could be.

In answer Bratman has asked us to imagine that: I intend that we walk; you intend that we walk; I know that you intend that we walk; you know that I intend that we walk; if I were not to know that you intend that we walk, I would not intend that we walk; if you were not to know that I intend that we walk, I would not intend that we walk; you and I walk if and only if each intends that we walk; and these facts are common knowledge between us. Then because you'll walk only if you maintain your intention, and you'll maintain your intention only if I have mine, my maintaining mine settles that you walk even as it also settles my walking. So I may take my intention as settling that we'll walk. And the same goes for you.

3

On Friday, January 28, 2011, several thousand citizens of Cairo walked across the Qasr al-Nir bridge toward Tahrir Square, breaking the line of State Security officers who were trying to hold them to the far side of the Nile. I think that the several thousand people crossed the bridge together.

There are technological reasons for doubting that the members of that crowd shared an intention that they walk. So many people, it all happened so fast. A policy of walking just in case every other person on the bridge manifested a similar policy was impracticable. Some possible shared intentions are too computationally costly to be found in nature.

With the right technology this might change. With the right “app” each of a million citizens might by pressing a button on her phone announce her intention to head for the square if the same button is pressed by one million minus one.

There’s no app for the problem I want to talk about. My problem is that even if we can share an intention we won’t share one if each person is known to act and to intend as reasons recommend.

4

Suppose that the bridge action will be a bloody failure unless $n + 1$ persons take part in it. The people must outnumber the police by a large factor if any of them is to make it across the bridge. You might conclude that if some one person has good reason to cross the bridge that’s partly because n others will cross it. I will argue in the next several chapters that that’s not so. If things are going well with us—if today is a good day; and this Friday I am talking about was indeed a good Friday—then I am given good reason to cross, not by any fact as to what the others will do, but by the fact that each has reason to reach the square and demonstrate against Mubarak.

If that’s right my having good reason to walk is independent of whether others intend that we walk. It’s a mistake in me to condition my own walking on others’ intentions by maintaining a walking intention conditionally on theirs. When the others don’t intend that we walk this will keep me from walking despite its being what I have good reason to do.

It will probably take you a while to warm up to this strange view about reasons for walking. In the meantime I’d like to point out that even if reasons for walking depend on others’ walking, we won’t share an intention that we walk if every person is known to walk and to intend as she should and if each person should indeed walk if the others are crossing.

This is easy to see in a special case. Imagine that, for some positive m , $n + m + 1$ Cairenes are crossing the bridge. More are in motion than is needed to break the police line, reach the other side, avoid a rout. I would guess that every member of this supercritical crowd still has reason to cross. The purpose of crossing the bridge is not just to get to the other side. It’s to join the other people in Tahrir for a demonstration whose own political value is probably increasing in the number of persons who manage to get there. Even above the threshold of n bridge crossers more is merrier. But though every member of this supercritical crowd has reason to cross, there are no two persons A and C such that the fact that A has good reason to walk across the bridge holds only if and because C will walk.

It would be a mistake, here, to walk only if I intend that we $n + m + 1$ walk and to maintain that intention only if every one of the $n + m$ others maintain it. Should some one person stand down from her version of the intention, I would not walk despite its being the thing for me to do. But if I don’t make this mistake—if my

walking does not turn, for every other person, on whether she intends that we walk—then no person's intention settles that we walk, and we are not sharing an intention that we walk.

5

A crowd, for my purposes, is a population of persons none of whose members can bring it about that all the others act in some pattern. In some crowds this incapacity is technological. You have no way to let the others know what you're going to do. But some crowds are crowds just because no one would care what any other single person intends even if the other could broadcast her intention. In the examples I have in mind no one cares because no person's intention matters. No person's intention makes a difference in what the others should do.

I will now argue that this pattern of mutual rational irrelevance holds even in the strictly critical crowd of exactly $n + 1$ persons. I assume, against my own eventual thesis, that the fact that I should walk is partly in virtue of the fact that each of the n others will walk. I assume a background of other facts that suffice to make it true of any one person that if the others will walk she should walk. I assume that if my intention that we walk settles that we'll walk through each person's own judgment and intention and so not objectionably against anyone's will, I should intend that we walk. I assume that each person walks as she should, intends as she should, believes as she should, and should believe these things about the others.

My question is whether these assumptions allow a person to follow the Bratman policy of walking only if she intends that we cross and of maintaining her intention only if the others now intend that we cross.

I think that this Bratman policy must be revised in at least one seemingly minor way if it's to be consistent with my acting as I should. It might happen, for all that we now know, that all the other persons are going to cross the bridge even as some person among us is not intending that we cross. That's a circumstance in which, by the current assumption that I should cross if the others will, I should cross. Since my policy should allow me to do in a circumstance what I should do in the circumstance, my policy should be to cross if and only if it's the case either that (a) I intend that we cross or (b) all the others will cross.

Having gone this far it strikes me that I should also revise this policy in a second way. It's good that we cross. It doesn't yet follow that I should intend that we cross. Maybe I can't intend this because my intention doesn't settle whether we cross. But if my intending that we cross settles our crossing, and if it does this by helping to bring about crossing actions by other persons that are also controlled by their own intentions to cross or their own judgments about whether to cross, then presumably I should intend that we cross. It might happen that this condition is met—that my intending that we cross settles our crossing and not against any one person's will—even as some person omits specifically to intend that we cross. To allow for this circumstance, I should maintain my intention that we cross only if

it's the case either that (c) all the others intend that we cross or (d) my intending that we cross settles that we cross and not against anyone's will.

I should follow, if any version of the Bratman policy, this revised one. And so I will. And so will the others. And so I should believe that the others that will follow it, too.

Suppose that I know that everyone apart from me intends and will intend that we cross. Since clause (a) is met in their cases, they will cross. So clause (b) is met in my case. So I should cross. And so I will intend, myself, to cross. That is, I am intending that I cross. I leave open, for now, the question whether I also intend that we cross.

My intention that I cross, and the intentions that we cross maintained by all the other persons apart from you, ensure that clause (d) is true of you. Your intention that we cross settles the crossings of all the others apart from me by maintaining all of the others in their intentions that we cross. And it settles my own crossing by making it true of all the others apart from me that they will cross and so by giving me reason to cross. And your influence on our crossings passes through our judgments whether to cross. So (d) holds for you. As far as this policy's concerned, you may maintain your intention that we cross. Since the same is true of all the others apart from you and me, each of the others may maintain her intention that we cross. My own intention to cross is consistent, for all that we can now say, with the facts that all the others will intend that we cross and so will cross even as they intend and act they should. So the fact that I took as justifying that intention—that the others will cross—seems consistent with my forming and maintaining it.

Now let's briefly add to this picture the fact that I intend that we cross. Suppose that while intending this I wonder what would happen if I were to stop intending it. There are of course many counterfactuals that could in principle figure in an answer to this question. But my assumption offers a basis for choosing among them. It's assumed that I do what I should and that I intend as I should. So the counterfactual should describe how things develop if I'm not intending that we cross, and if I'm nonetheless or otherwise doing what I should. As I've just argued, I should in my circumstance cross the bridge and intend that I cross the bridge on grounds that the others will cross it. So it seems that if I were not to intend that we cross, I would nonetheless intend to cross. If I intend to cross, I cross. And as I've just argued, my own intention that I cross forms, with all others' persons intentions that we cross, a sufficient condition for all the others to cross. So if I were not to intend that we cross, we all would cross. Whether we cross does not depend on whether I intend that we cross. But this observation "baffles" my intention that we cross. Though the policy permits me to intend that we cross, I will not. But since the same reasoning could be repeated for any other person, and since each believes and intends as she should, each will quit her intention that we cross. This contradicts the assumption that all the others will intend that we cross. I conclude that it can't be that we follow the policy, that we all intend that we cross, and that each is known to act and intend as she should.

6

In reply it might be pointed out that if we all follow the unrevised Bratman policy, each person will never in fact intend or act against reason in her actual circumstance, and we'll succeed in coordinating our actions and intentions into worthwhile patterns. This is good; it's better, let's assume, than what happens when we don't follow the policy. It might be submitted that this gives me reason to follow the unrevised rather than the revised policy.

If this is a good case for my following the unrevised policy, that's presumably because the following form of reasoning is valid.

Our acting and intending in the pattern J is better than alternative patterns.

If all the others were to do their parts, it would be okay for me to do my part of J.

so I should do my part of J.

In the current case let J be the pattern in which each follows the Bratman policy. This is better than its alternatives because it brings it about that we cross bridges and do other worthwhile things. And each person's participation is okay because the others are following the policy, ensuring that no one ever acts or intends against reason in her actual circumstances as those are shaped by the others' subscription to the policy.

Whatever you make of this inference, it might strike you that its invocation in defense of the Bratman policy is self-defeating. Our walking across the bridge is itself a good pattern, better than its alternatives. If the others are doing their parts of it, if the others are crossing, it would be okay for me to do my part, to cross. So the two premises of the argument are satisfied where for J we substitute a pattern of all persons' crossing the bridge. If the inference by which we'd hoped to establish the Bratman policy is good, then I should also infer about the bridge crossing itself that I should walk across the bridge. And so should every other person. And since everyone does what she should, all the others are going to walk even if I'm not following the Bratman policy. This in turn makes it false that our following the Bratman policy is better than its alternatives.

7

If it's good this argument covers a bridge crossed by two persons. Two persons each known to walk and to intend as she should will not share an intention that they walk. Neither person can bring the other to walk by intending that they walk. If two are rational, two's a crowd.

Where each should do her part of what we're doing, and where each should believe that every other person will do what she should, commonly acknowledged practical correctness unravels the web of mutual dependence among our intentions that's necessary if any one intention is to qualify as an intention that we walk.

Here I may conceive of your action as falling under the influence of my attitude toward it, or I may understand it as living up to the normative standards that govern it, but I can't see you both ways at once.

Niceties of shared intention aside, a larger point is in sight. It's pretty natural to suppose that people only ever walk together in virtue of some shared motivational causal origin for their individual actions. Their several individual actions are unified into one big action by the fact that each person's action arises from the same decision or decisions, the same intention or intentions, the same plan or plans, or from single process of decision-making, intention formation, planning. This common source might be the command of some individual human sovereign, the coercion of some taskmaster, or the vote of some electorate constituted as a group decision by some standing electoral procedure. The common source might be more decentralized, distributed. As in Bratman's arresting image it could be that each action originates from the same collection of many individual practical stances, each capable of settling all the individual actions.

But the intention or decision of another person or persons can't make you do what you are already doing. It can't bring you to do a thing that you are set on doing because you see reasons for it that you take yourself to have independently of the attitudes that persons take toward your action. I can't make you walk if you're walking for reasons that you accept independently of other persons' intentions, decisions, desires, commands, coercion, or persuasion.

If collective action only ever counts as collective in virtue of the psychological production of each person's action by the massively distributed or centrally pooled decisions, intentions, commands, coercion, persuasion of the others, then we can't together perform an action that each person takes herself to have good reason to perform independently of what the others desire or intend.

But when the people went over the bridge together, no one intended that they cross it, and no one was thinking that she could make the crowd walk. The crowd was made of persons who, because they were already walking, could not be made to walk.

TEN COOPERATION

1

Another Beckett-type example, this time from Beckett himself.

So I saw A and C going slowly toward each other, unconscious of what they were doing. It was on a road remarkably bare, I mean without hedges or ditches or any kind of edge, in the country, for cows were chewing in enormous fields, lying and standing, in the evening silence. . . . They looked alike, but no more than others do. At first a wide space lay between them. They couldn't have seen each other, even had they raised their heads and looked about, because of this wide space, and then because of the undulating land, which caused the road to be in waves, not high, but high enough, high enough. But the moment came when together they went down into the same trough and in this trough finally met. To say they knew each other, no, nothing warrants it. But perhaps at the sound of their steps, or warned by some obscure instinct, they raised their heads and observed each other, for a good fifteen paces, before they stopped, breast to breast. Yes, they did not pass each other by, but halted, face to face, as in the country, of an evening, on a deserted road, two wayfaring strangers will, without there being anything extraordinary about it.

What should C do, down in the trough? What should A do, faced with C?

You may think that what C should do depends on what A will do. If A will step to his left, then this gives C good reason to step to *his* left. If A will step to his right, then this gives C good reason to step to his right. And likewise for A. And that's the entire practically relevant truth about what's to be done in the trough in the road.

It makes for a familiar contretemps. I choose left but you go right. I switch to right even as you switch to left. Should I switch again? Stay the course? Call the whole thing off? There's no algorithm for seeing to it that each person right away takes a step for which she has good reason. But by itself this difficulty should not cause us to give up on the proposal that each person's reasons are exhausted by these reasons that they're given by the facts as to what the other will do. Life is difficult, and life among other people is often hellish. We should not suppose that, for every thing you have reason to do in the presence of other persons, your operation of some canon of practical inference guarantees your practical success.

2

My question is instead how to characterize success where it happens. When we manage to settle on either good pattern, how should we understand what we've done?

Here is one form that success can take. It will happen that I decide to go left, get it across to you that I'm going left, and thereby bring you to go left. When I decide to go left my decision brings you to go left. My formation of the leftward intention causes me to signal that intention in a way that causes you to go left. But your going left gives me reason to go left. I may be counting on the fact that if I decide to go left my decision will send you to the left through this causal channel of communication and so make it the case that I have good reason to go left.

This bothers me, for reasons that are probably familiar by now. It bothers me that my decision to go left is now taken as helping to make it the case that I may go left. The proposal trespasses against independence.

The publicity of reasons compounds the violation. My stepping left is something I may do only if it's consistent with your acting for the reasons you have. We're now supposing that my stepping left gives you reason to step left even as it also brings it about that you step left. Bringing it about that you step left is okay only if you thereby do what you have good reason to do. But my stepping left is said to give you reason to step left. So the fact that I'll step left is apparently making it permissible for me to step left by giving you good reason to go left and so by securing my action's consistency with your acting for the reason you have.

3

We might instead work this out together. We might decide together that I will go left and that you will go left. I might propose, out loud or with a gesture, that I go left and that you go left. You might accept the proposal with a word or a nod. These events and the corresponding formations of individual intentions to go left might constitute your and my deciding that I'll go left and that you'll go left.

When I go left in partial execution of this decision, my going left is something that I have reason to do in virtue of the fact that you'll go left. That you will go left is because you and I are deciding that each will go left. The fact of this decision helps to make it the case that I have good reason to go left. And likewise for you: the decision makes it the case that you have good reason to go left. The fact of the decision that each will go left is making it the case that each of the two individual actions thereby decided is one for which its author has good reason.

That also seems suspect to me. I am thinking that the decision cannot make each of the actions that it decides on to be OK. However I can think of two ways of escaping this conclusion.

The conclusion turns on the claim that when you and I decide that each will go left this decision is making the component decided actions to be okay. Maybe you think that's not right. My action is not made to be okay by the whole decision. It's made to be okay by the part of the decision that consists in its being decided that you will go left. And for all that I've argued that part of the decision can make my own action to be okay without violating independence.

But I doubt after all that the okay-making relations decompose in this fashion. If there's a part of our decision that consists in its being decided that you'll go left, we can ask what makes this part to be okay. Suppose that this part's being decided suffices for my going left whether or not you go left. A decision that gets you going left whether or not I am going left might bring you to perform a left going action for which you lack good reason. That seems rash. It had better be instead that this part of the decision needs its complement—a decision that I'll go left—to be in place if it's to bring it about that you go left. This is after all why we've resorted to a joint decision: each left-going action needs the other to be decided if it's to be correct. If the decision has parts, then it had better that each part depends for its effective motivation or causation of the relevant stepping action on the fact that the other decision is made. The decision that you'll step left only succeeds in bringing you to step left on the condition that it's decided that I'll step left. The part that decides your action might take the form of a decision to go left if and because the other part—a decision of the same kind that I go left—is in place. Each intends to do her part if the other has an intention of the same kind.

In this case the decision that I'll step left helps the decision that you'll step left to bring it about that you'll step left. And so the decision that I'll step left helps to bring it about that I have good reason to step left. This tramples independence after all.

A second reply. You might after all insist that our decision is not a decision in favor of the individual actions but rather in favor of the pair of those actions. It is indivisibly a decision that you and I will each go to the left of the other. Then it seems alright to suppose that this decision makes each individual left-going action to be okay. From the decision's making each individual action to be okay it need not follow that the decision makes the pair okay. On the contrary the pair seems to be okay independently of the decision. It's unconditionally okay that both step left. But then the decision is not making its own object to be okay. And so independence is upheld.

But recall what's at stake in this example. I am arguing against the proposal that the practical truth is exhausted by the the conditional reasons principles taking each stepping action to be okay on the condition that the other will happen. The current reply explicitly outruns that proposal. It says that, beyond the okayness of the individual stepping actions, there's a fact of the matter as to whether the pair is okay. In that case the conditional individual principles are not the whole practical truth, just as I've claimed.

4

There is another, probably more pressing and more familiar problem in the neighborhood. This one is independent of independence and publicity.

Suppose that each person stands still and that each will go on standing still. Then by the current telling each person has good reason to stand still. When each stands still, each does what she has good reason to do.

I find that very hard to believe. It's hard to shake the sense that *someone* is doing other than what should be done when no one goes. Who is making the mistake, if it's not me or you?

The culprit might be *us*. It could be that certain reasons for action are *joint reasons*, reasons that call for several persons to act in some pattern. Out on the road it could be that you and I have good joint reason for a pattern of action in which each person steps around the other. If that's right, then when no one moves you and I fail to do what you and I have good reason to do.

The idea promises help with more serious problems of coordination. A person can get across the bridge only if enough of us set out to cross it. Suppose that the whole truth is that each person has good reason to go if and only if and because the others are going. Then when no one else is going, this fact seems to make it the case that I make no mistake in not going. But then the same is true of each of the others. When no one goes, no one makes a mistake. But suppose that there's a further practical normative truth: we have good reason all of us to across. When no one goes, we fail to do what we have good reason to do.

This joint reason might explain the innocence of certain seemingly unilateral resolutions of the predicament. When I head to the left while making it clear that that is what I'm doing, and when you follow my lead by heading left yourself, I am not simply giving you reason to go left. By bringing it about that you go left I am not simply giving myself reason to go left. Instead I am noticing that, independently of my own decision, you and I have good reason to perform either one of two patterns—left, left; right, right—and that we'll need to pick just one. I am helping us to pick, taking the initiative and silently proposing that we pass to left. You can accept my proposal by heading to the left yourself. Then I have helped us to act for the joint reason we already had to walk around one another.

5

What might it come to that two persons have good reason for a pair of their individual actions? Here is one idea.

It will sometimes happen that several persons together perform a single *collective action*. For example we might all belong to some party, or club, whose members

follow some decision-making procedure such that by following that procedure we count as deciding together to perform certain actions and such that by executing that decision we count as performing those actions together. It could be that joint reasons have the job of guiding collective agents toward the right collective actions. Joint reasons guide the performance of actions that are constituted as collective independently of the fact that we have joint reason to do them. They recommend that the members of the club perform good club actions if they act together at all. If your action and mine don't together compose some collective action of the two of us, they are not contrary to joint reasons.

If joint reasons are confined in their practical role to the guidance of antecedently unified collective actions, we can't explain generic coordination failures and generic coordination successes as instances of living up to or disappointing those joint standards. Beckett's A and C are *strangers* to one another. They are not antecedently related by some decision-making practice or routine so as to compose a club-like collective agent. Their individual actions of standing still forever will not compose a collective action of standing still forever together. If joint reasons take antecedently unified collective actions as their objects, it can't be that these two strangers have good joint reason against standing face to face forever.

If you and I have reason to pass one another by, this can seem in any case to require that you and I make up a single entity. If not as the collective agent to whom this action is attributed independently of the reason, then as the normative subject who owns the reason. When you and I meet as strangers on the well path, there must be three subjects each of whom has something that it should do: you, me, and you-and-me.

I have trouble believing in the existence of a Third Man. Call me conservative but I would guess that there are, after all, just two subjects of practical reasons here. There's you, and there's me. This conjecture reflects my hunch that the reasons underlying a joint recommendation that you and I step around each other are themselves owned severally by the individual persons. I have reason to reach the well. You have reason to reach the woodshed. Mutual obstruction makes for two normative failures. When I step left and you step right, your blocking me keeps me from proceeding toward my destination as I have reason to do. And my blocking you prevents some progress of yours for which you have reason.

6

It's possible to acknowledge the individual ownership of those underlying reasons while denying that each person's reasons for action are determined by the facts as to what the other person's going to do. This is possible with publicity—if each person has interpersonally reason-given reasons against hindering the other person's acting for the reasons she has.

You have reason to proceed toward your destination. And so I have reason not to hinder you. That you have reason to walk on gives me reason not to stand in your way. I can act for this reason by passing to my left as you step to yours. But in doing this I also act for the reason I have to reach my destination. My normative success is in virtue of both underlying reasons. And the same is true of you. Your stepping around me is something for which you have reason not only because you have reason to head toward your destination but also because I have reason to head toward mine.

I suspect that this is what's signalled by saying that two underlying reasons give each person reason for a pair of their individual actions. That A and C have good reason for the pair of A's action x and C's action y might be the following fact. There is some reason R owned by A. There is some reason Q owned by C. A's x'ing is necessary for A's doing what R calls for A to do, and it's necessary for C's doing what Q calls for C to do. C's y'ing is necessary for C's doing what Q calls for C to do, and it's necessary for A's doing what R calls for A to do.

Our situation shows a double, cross-cutting normative interdependence. Each underlying reason is complied with in virtue of both individual actions. And each person's normative success is in virtue of both underlying reasons. The first interdependence means that you can't characterize success in respect of either reason without mentioning both individual actions. The second interdependence means that you can't characterize any one person's normative success without mentioning both underlying reasons. The two persons are the subjects of a single standard calling for both actions and grounded on both reasons because each person depends for her normative success on both actions and both reasons.

In chapter 6 I claimed that a person's being the subject of the standard set by a reason for the performance of an action is the fact that she's the one who satisfies or violates the standard in virtue of the performance of that action. If this were true, it might bear out the suggestion that a standard has two subjects. Who is the person who succeeds in doing what R and Q call for when and because A does x and C does y? In fact there are two such persons. A does it, but so does C. That's my basis for claiming that each person is the subject of a standard set by R and Q that calls for A to x and for C to y.

7

The observations of the last three sections make an autonomous argument for the publicity of reasons that I began to defend in chapter 7. Let me pull that argument together.

I've claimed, first, that generic instances of coordination failure involve their protagonists in practical mistakes. When A and C hold their ground it's not the case that each person does what she has good reason to do. Next I've offered a provisional explanation of the judgment that mistakes are made in coordination impasses; I've claimed that several persons can share a *joint reason* for a pattern of

their several individual actions. When A and C stand still, they are failing to do what they have good joint reason to do. This raises the question “What does it come to that several persons share a joint reason for some pattern of their individual actions?” A good answer should not restrict joint reasons to the guidance of collective actions that are constituted as collective actions independently of their subjection to joint reasons; even two strangers, who do not execute a joint decision or follow a shared practice when each blocks the other, are nonetheless acting against a joint reason that they share. Nor will it do to assume several persons can compose an irreducible single subject of reasons. Reasons are ultimately owned by individual persons, and, if several persons share a reason for a pattern of their several actions, this joint standard holds in virtue of underlying, individually owned reasons.

Publicity offers to account for the jointness of joint reasons. Its account upholds the individual ownership of reasons, and it permits joint reasons to bear on the actions of strangers. Each person has good reason to act consistently with others’ acting for the reasons they have. If you have good reason to proceed to your destination, I have good reason not to stand in your way. You have good reason not to impede the progress for which I have good reason. When you and I step around each other, the two persons’ stepping actions compose a successful response to the reason I have for proceeding to my destination. And they make up a successful response to the reason you have for proceeding to your destination. When you and I share good reason for a pair of our individual action, this is the fact that both actions would compose a successful response to each of two underlying reasons respectively owned by the individual persons.

Publicity promises to explain the jointness of reasons. And reasons’ jointness promises in turn to explain the appearance that mistakes are made when strangers succumb to coordination failure.

8

Several individual actions can make up a further single collective action in virtue of the indecomposable way in which each individual action is motivated, caused, or controlled by each of a collection of individual attitudes toward that collection of individual actions. You can’t explain why any one protagonist of such a joint action does her part without mentioning the attitudes that all the persons are taking toward the collection of all the individual actions. And the production of each action by all those attitudes, each being an attitude toward all of these actions, makes of them a collective action.

It’s a credible suggestion. I’m ready to believe that some actions are joint in virtue of a causal indecomposability of this kind. But as I’ve argued in the last chapter, it can’t be the only form that joint action takes. It will sometimes happen that people act together even as no one is caused to act by the attitudes of the others. This must be true if there are to be joint actions each of whose individual protagonists is

doing a thing that she correctly takes herself to have reason for doing even if the others are not displaying the relevant attitudes.

To pursue this possibility we should turn our attention away from causal indecomposability as the source of unity. We might consider the possibility that people also act together when their individual normative successes cannot be characterized in a decomposing fashion. That we cooperate in virtue of some collection of our individual actions is the fact that each person's success is in virtue of all those individual actions.

Think again of you and me stepping around each other. When each goes to her left, each does what's called for by the fact that she has reason to keep going and by the fact that the other's reason to keep going gives this one reason not to stop the other. Each person succeeds in respect of these reasons in virtue of both persons' stepping actions.

Or think of the people walking across the bridge. Each person has reason herself to cross the bridge and to help every person to cross, as that person has reason to do, by adding her body to a crowd that's big enough to overpower the police. Together these individual reasons call for every person to walk across the bridge. You can't explain the fact that each person acts for the reasons she has without mentioning all of the reasons that the persons severally have for reaching the square. And you can't explain the fact that each person does what she has reason to do in respect of those reasons without mentioning the walking actions of all these persons together.

ELEVEN **STRUCTURE**

1

Is it possible to live as a free person among others? Is it possible to understand this problem so that living freely among others is neither too easy nor too hard?

Too easy: You make your best guess about what the other people are going to do, you consider what it is possible for you to do given the incipient actions of the others, and you choose from among the options this leaves you. If the range of your choice is wide enough—if it spans several worthwhile alternatives—and if your choice reflects your coolly considered judgment or conforms to a sufficiently high order of your desire, then in choosing from the set of your social affordances you are deciding freely what to do, and you are free to do the things you do.

Too hard: My daughter was born into a specific location in the basic structure of a given society. She will grow up here regarded and approached as a girl and then a woman. Even the goals and the values that she'll pursue or honor from this point of her departure are the ones that I'm now drumming into her or demonstrating for her with the help of her friends and teachers, as we learned them from our parents and neighbors. Her life is already unfolding as the perfect causal product of a social world that she came too late to choose.

The first task is to develop an understanding of the question on which the answer is not too obvious.

Think of a representative person living among other persons. Think of a paid domestic worker. She owns no land, workshop, or store, claims no scarce credential, is not licensed for any specialized trade. She can provide for herself only if she goes to work in the household of some family who will pay her to keep house for them. On a typical day she makes their beds, collects their dry cleaning, runs interference with their children. From time to time she will smoke a cigarette, listen to the radio, or watch the clouds forming and reforming in the sky outside the kitchen window.

It may cross her mind that other things she might do that same day would be worthwhile. She could fight fires, take photographs, cook food to her own taste, enjoy the conversation of a friend over lunches he cooks for the two of them. These are physical possibilities. Given the extant materials, the state of technical know-how, the state of the weather, there is some configuration of the actions of all persons that includes her doing these different things.

If she doesn't do them, that's because she can only provide for her needs by purchasing articles of consumption in the market for produced goods, because she depends for her purchasing power in those markets on the sale of her labor power in a labor market, and because the domestic posting is the best of the jobs for which wealthier people are prepared to hire a woman of her background. If she keeps house for her employer, that's because she finds herself in a causal situation made up of the actions and dispositions of all other persons in which her acceptance of that employment is the thing to do.

The interpersonal problems I've been discussing so far are two-person problems. I-thou problems. If we were try to apply my arguments about those situations directly to the servant's predicament, we might think to find some one person who makes it to be the case that employment in service is her best option. Suppose there were such a person. Call him Mister. We'd be in a position to complain that Mister makes the servant unfree to act for the reasons she has. Mister puts her in the situation in which she can't both act for the reasons she has to provide for herself given that situation and act for the independent reason she has to spend her day otherwise. Mister should act so that the worker can act for the reasons she has. And Mister must not take his putting her in the situation as making it the case that she has good reason, all things considered, to take the service job and so as leaving her free to act for the reason she has.

But of course there is no one person who brings it about that the domestic worker's best option is to take this job and hold it. Her situation is the obscure resultant of a large-scale complex system comprising the untraceably interdependent actions, decisions, and dispositions of millions of other people. People who claim or enforce private property in consumption goods and production resources. People who are willing to part with their goods only for money. People who are willing to part with their money only for labor that returns them a larger sum. People who would not hire a woman to be a firefighter. People who would not hire into positions of expertise or authority a person who is not white or documented.

People who would not open the doors of the better schools to a child whose parents can't afford them housing in the district. There is no one protagonist of this mechanism about whom we could say that, if only Mister were to act in some other rationally eligible way, then the servant could act for Mister-independent reasons. There's no Mister. There's only structure.

3

While we're at it, we can notice another inadequacy of my discussion of two-person encounters. This is the problem of a benchmark for the determination of independent reasons. If a person's reasons are not given simply by the facts of what the others are going to do, they must be determined in some way that's independent of those facts. And that determination must ensure consistency with the reasons others have. The postulate that a person has good reason to do x carries in its train a system of further reason-given reasons. It means that other persons have good reason to act in the ways that allow her to do x. We might feel shy of asserting a reason to do x if the resulting reason-given reasons pose too radical a conflict with those other persons' acting for the other reasons they have.

My airplane example sidestepped this issue. The judgment that tearing up your paper airplanes keeps you from acting for the reasons you have drew on the plausible implicit assumption that I lack good independent reason for tearing up the planes. The only thing to be said for or against my tearing them up goes against it: it stops me from flying the airplanes. This made it easy to conclude that I should let you fly.

Many of the decisions and dispositions that combine and interact to put the servant in her problem are not so easily condemned. The servant's neighbors won't deliver the goods she needs to her door. If only they would provide for her, she wouldn't have to work. But they have pretty good reasons for reserving their goods for use in their own households. It may be that if others are to act for the reasons they have, they must consign the worker to the dilemma that I've described.

4

The argument of chapter 10 might offer some help with this problem of a benchmark. We might think to describe a pattern in the actions of all persons that shows the cross-cutting normative interdependence that I attributed to two persons' actions of stepping around one another. We might think to describe for each person a life-long course of action that she has good reason to follow in her own right, that is facilitated and not hindered by the actions of all the others, and that she has reason to follow also because it facilitates and does not hinder the actions of all the others.

So, keeping it simple, I fish, you hunt, she criticizes, he swims. Or in fact I fish/study/pick up trash, you hunt/administer/babysit, she criticizes/welds/excavates, he swims/teaches/tells jokes. And I do not hinder the fishing, the hunting, the criticism, the babysitting of the others. When we all do all of this, each person does something that she has good reason to do. And each person, in doing her part, abstains from hindering these actions of the others and from time to time facilitates them by producing some of their materials, furnishing instruction or advice, arranging for down time and injecting humor so that no one burns out.

It's a scheme of cooperation. It does not show the familiar cooperative structure of universal individual gain over a noncooperative baseline. The point is not that in cooperation we'll each be better off than if we don't cooperate. This cooperation consists in the mutual facilitation of persons' acting for the reasons they have. It's a pattern through which each person acts in a way for which she has good primary reason in her own right and also in a way for which she's given reason by the underlying reasons the others have to do what they end up doing.

Who should do these things? I would guess that we should do them: you and I and he and she have good reason for this pattern of everyone's action. Each person is the subject of a joint standard of the kind I described in chapter 10, a recommendation grounded on the reasons that each person has (i) for playing her parts and (ii) for allowing or helping the others to play their parts.

Even after this vague formula is made more definite, the detailed nature of these patterns is a matter of extensive indeterminacy and uncertainty. Presumably if there is any pattern meeting the description, there are many. You criticize, she tells the jokes, I weld, he fishes. And we can't know what any of these patterns looks like in detail. The interactions and feedbacks are just too complicated.

But certain qualitative judgments can be attempted. No one would specialize in drudgery as others thrived in solving problems. No one would spend her days scavenging through other people's trash. There would be no specialization of women in housework or in the assistance of men taking care of business. No stopping people in the street for being black. No specialization of people living on one side of the world in dodging drones dispatched from the other. ... You have the idea, I hope. I would guess that patterns like these are not a good return to the question, "What would each person be doing if each person were doing something that she has good reason to do while facilitating other persons' doing what they have good reason to do?"

5

Suppose that a few main qualitative features of the benchmark of mutual facilitation of principled action could be established. For example we might guess that, in every eligible benchmark, no person spends her entire day tending to the inessential comforts of some other person. The domestic worker has good independent reason to do otherwise than spend her waking hours keeping house for

others. This would underwrite a finding of unfreedom in the actual society. Our property institutions and market dispositions make keeping house for a wage the thing for her to do. Through them we make it the case that no action available to the worker constitutes her acting for the reasons she has. We make her unfree to act for the reasons she has.

We need a name for the principles that formulate the central qualitative features of patterns of action through which each person acts consistently with others' acting for the reasons they have. Maybe "principles of justice"? Even before we know what the principles are, the current argument serves to clarify their practical role.

These principles are indeed practical. They do not just evaluate or grade our current form of association or show it to be worse than an ideal that satisfies them. They hold out the reasons that persons already have for leading their lives along different lines. Those reasons have force even if a person is not to now free to act for them. They make a shadow government of the existing society. Every morning on which the worker returns to her job is the beginning of a day that she should already be spending somewhere else. Here and now we make the mistake of stopping her from setting off in a new direction. We should stop stopping her.

TWELVE SOURCES

1

Some of the water that was flowing with the river is now rippling over my hand where I've stuck it in. That's because I stuck my hand in. My action comes from the side to disrupt the flow of things that were happening apart from itself. It makes the causal difference between what would have happened thanks only to gravity's operation on the undisturbed mass of water in this channel and what happened when I put my hand in. The difference between what issues from causes external to me and what happens because I make it happen

This distinction breaks down before the grown-up truth that my action is itself caused by processes that predate my birth, that exist independently of me, that are not attributable to me in any way. My action does not make the difference between what would have happened thanks to these causes apart from itself and what happens thanks to itself. There is no such difference; my action is a part of [that which has occurred thanks to causes apart from itself]. I don't come in from the side to redirect the flow of externally caused events. I am in the flow. My attempt to disrupt the system forms part of a larger system. Through me things go on as they were bound to go on.

My actions have causes. Their causes are caused. My actions are ultimately caused by the causes of the causes ... of their causes. Because my actually occurring, causally efficacious mental states are finite in number—I was born if not yesterday then at some particular time—my actions are ultimately caused by states or processes or entities that are not attributable to me as my mental states and that seem in all other respects external to the person I am.

This makes hard to see my action as genuinely mine—an action that has me as its source, that's original to me, authored by me, autonomous.

2

The question presupposes, plausibly enough, that there are at least two grades of attribution of actions to persons or of the ownership of actions by persons.

When the peasant walks away from her house because the soldiers are going to burn it down, *she* walks. The person who walks is the peasant. This walking needs to be attributed to that person, I think, in order to explain why the soldiers shouldn't make her walk by setting fire to the house.

The action's coercive provenance appears to deprive it of a further status of its being original to the person—a status that is possibly enjoyed by other things she does. Some of the walks this person takes are fully and profoundly hers. She walks toward her vegetable plot where she can pick some spring garlic. She walks toward the place where people are meeting to make costumes for the show. She walks for fresh air or for getting her thoughts together. Not every walk attributable to this person is hers in the full way that these walks are hers. Walking out of the village as the soldiers burn it down is not the autonomous or original action of this person. She's not the source.

In this chapter I will use "attributable to me" to mean the first, weaker kind of attributability. And I'll call this second kind of attribution originality; I'll speak equivalently of my original actions as ones for which I'm a source.

3

The idea of originality from which I seem to start is that, when I decide to take the drink, the action is original to me because it's caused, controlled or produced or sustained, by my own decision. I am the source of what's mine because it causally issues from or is causally sustained by what's mine.

There is an ambiguity in the slogan, corresponding to the two grades of personal attribution. Is the action original because it issues from what's original to me? Or just because it issues from what's attributable to me?

It's clear that my own decision's generating the action does not suffice for the action's being original if the decision is itself merely attributable to me. I might be making the decision because of your threat or your deception or your charismatic manipulation of me. The decision is still well attributed to me—I am the one who decides—but not in a way that secures originality for what I then do in carrying the decision out.

A second possibility, then, is that some action is original to me in virtue of its production or other suitable relation to some other *original* action or attitude or activity or process that's also original to me. Because it's coerced my decision to toss the papers is not original. And so the action it generates is not original.

You might guess that an event or state or process's being original just is its production by something that's original to me. But the temptation is short-lived. Unless I have already passed through an infinity of original actions or stances, nothing I now do could be original. There had better be an original original action or stance. It had better be that I can do something original and not in virtue of its arising from what's original to me.

For some action to be original, I would guess, it is neither sufficient that it arise from what's attributable to me nor necessary that it arise from what's original with me. These elementary observations throw cold water on the hope for a literal-minded construal of the originality of an action as a matter of its production by me or by what's mine. That I'm the source of an x'ing can't just be that the x'ing is produced by what's mine in either sense.

4

It's easy enough to believe that it's good for its own sake that certain actions originate from my own decisions or judgments or purposes, or that they express my own values or desires so that I'm in a position to identify with them or to endorse them. Some such privileged pattern in the psychological relations between my action and my attitudes toward my action is a remarkable and valuable pattern, valuable for its own sake.

It might be that in calling an action "autonomous" or "original", in saying that I'm the "source" or the "author," we are noticing only that the action fits the privileged pattern. At this late hour, these are *names*. We fell into this linguistic practice back when we were naively supposing that there's some literal respect in which the action thereby praised has me or my activity or my attitudes as its psychological *origin*. It seems to a person who decides to do a thing that her decision settles the matter, brings the action about. This seems to the person, often enough, to be a good way for her action to come about. As an opening guess she conjectures that it's good because this qualifies her as the source. The explanation starts with the person. She identifies her sourcehood with the fact that the action is settled, caused, sustained, or explained by this other personal stance of hers, the decision. She thinks it's terrific that this thing is happening that, as it seems, starts with her. But as she gets a little older, she notices that the decision did not start with her, that it's ultimately explained by a chain of causes that reaches back before her birth. She is briefly tempted to save the literal idea of origination by finding some respect in which she's the uncaused cause of her action. But when she gives this up she'll accept that it after all suffices for originality that her action was immediately caused by her decision or judgment or purpose, or attended by her approval or identification, so as to fit the privileged pattern.

5

Take some episode of my action that satisfies the privileged pattern, whatever it is. I do a thing, and I approve of what I do; or I do it because I've wanted to do it, and my desire has survived cool, collected reflection on its object; or I do it while taking myself to have good reason to do it. Using the now established name for this nice pattern, I praise this action as an instance of my acting originally or autonomously, of my serving as the author or source of my action.

It then turns out that soldiers have set the fire that I take as giving me reason to leave my home. This news brings the realization that I am *not* the source.

In this reaction I seem to be reverting to a literal-minded concern with the originality of my action. I seem to be thinking that, exactly because the action originates from some other person's project of bringing it about, I am not its source. This gives up the helpful notion that my being the source of the action just is its satisfaction of the privileged pattern.

It won't do to say that an instance of the privileged pattern counts as my acting autonomously unless the pattern originates from some alien intention to provoke the privileged pattern in me. That "unless" needs some principled basis in an account of the privileged pattern itself. If originality just is the satisfaction of a privileged pattern, the privileged pattern must include or entail the absence of these external influences whose influence makes my action not to be original.

But now the pattern is an intriguingly heterogenous thing, a good pattern made up partly of my action's causal dependence on or approval by certain stances of mine and by the further fact that no other person has willed this pattern into reality by setting out to cause it.

This is mysterious. We can see, maybe, how a decision's causing an action through some lunatic causal chain that passes through another person's action can disqualify it from securing originality for that decision. But the peasant's decision to leave her home just before it's set aflame is not like that. The person judges on the basis of good reasons for belief that she has reason to save her life by walking out of her house. She decides to do it and forms thereby an intention to do it. In execution of that intention she walks. From the moment of her formation of the judgment—or even perhaps from the moment she learns that the house is or will be on fire—the episode can be made to fit the profile of the privileged pattern down to its last detail. And yet to disqualify the action as original you need only add that all this came about when the lieutenant gave the order to set the house on fire so as to drive her out or when the president decided to depopulate this countryside. An episode of the privileged pattern depends for its originality value on its seemingly extrinsic causal relation to the events that brought it about.

6

Even as I'm trying to accept this revaluation—even as I'm on my way to accepting it—I am still troubled by the fact that the privileged pattern is ultimately externally caused. I am still held by the abstract idea of a person's being the source of her own action. I am still in its grip even as I am no longer entertaining any possibility that my action is externally uncaused.

If it can't just be the very idea of my being an uncaused cause of what I do, it might be the idea of my being an unexplained explainer of what I do. It might be the idea of a not-necessarily-causal explanatory basicness.

It turns out that the privileged pattern thanks to which I claim to be the source of my action has some explanation by facts that omit me as a constituent. If you can give an ultimately impersonal, complete explanation of the facts thanks to which I'm allegedly the source of what I do, that makes it hard for me to go on seeing myself as the source. The action is caused *to be mine* by the external causes of the privileged pattern that constitute it as mine. The fact that this action is mine is ultimately explained by facts that are nothing to do with me. The world apart from me decides which events in the world are things that I do.

The hope for personal explanatory basicness might be the hope that I will sometimes do a thing such that it's being something that I do is not in virtue of ultimately external facts that omit me as a constituent. It's the hope that some things I do count as my doing them in virtue of facts that can't themselves be explained in a way that leaves me out.

How might that go?

My plot needs tending. This gives me good reason to walk out of the village. I pass from a belief that I have this reason to an intention to walk. I walk. In virtue of these events I satisfy a standard set by the fact that I have reason to walk. I do some principled walking.

That I'm the one who satisfies the standard does not consist in the fact that I own the walking that primarily satisfies the standard. Or so I've argued in chapter 6. That I'm the one who performs this principled action is not in virtue of an independent attribution of the walking action to me.

What else might make the standard's satisfaction to be something that *I* do? On the anti-deflationary view that I defended in chapter 6, this question has a very quick answer. It's answered by the nature of the fact that I have the reason. A standard of which I'm the subject just is a standard that I satisfy if anyone does. It's in the nature of that standard's being for me that I'm the one who satisfies it if anyone does. Its nature includes the fact that I'm the one who does what's called for by my having reason to act. I have the reason, so the action of living up to its demand is something that I do.

The ground of this action's attribution to me is the fact that I have reason to do what opposes injustice. This fact has no cause, and it has no explanation that leaves me out. As I've argued in chapter 6, this fact cannot be identified with or grounded on any set of facts that omit the obtaining of standards of which I'm the subject. My action of doing what the reason calls for is my action is because I'm the subject of that reason. The action's attribution to me has an irreducibly personal explanation. It's explained by my subjection to the reason that constitutes the action.

You can't explain an *occurrence* of my acting for the reason I have without explaining the occurrence of the events in virtue of which I perform this instance of it: the walking, the intending, the deliberating. For all that I can say, each of those events has an ultimately fully causal explanation that goes back into my prehistory. But there is one further thing that I do. I act for the reason I have. I am caused to do this by what causes its incidents. But the fact that I'm the one who does it, when it happens, is entirely explained by the fact I'm the one who has the reasons. The fact that I do, in addition to the things that are merely attributable to me, a further action that is my acting for the reason I have, is wholly explained by the fact that I have the reason.

The irreducibly personal fact that a person has good reason to walk takes a series of externally caused, merely attributable events and makes from them a further original action. The principle takes this remotely caused material and reorganizes or reconstructs it so as to make an action with a person as the source.

7

I'm not sure that this sketch of original-because-irreducibly-personal-because-principled action is right. *Of course* I'm not sure. It's a guess that deserves certainly to be resisted and possibly to be explored.

The main evidence for it will be interpersonal, I think. It might explain the appearance that, unlike impersonal causations of my action, my action's production or limitation by the activity of another person can sometimes make it not to be my original action. Your stepping into my path gives me good reason to turn around. But I still have, waiting in the shadows, good reason to proceed to my destination. If you were only to get out of the way I could act for the reasons I have. Your obstruction of the path makes it the case that no principled action is defined for me. It forces me to perform a merely attributed action of turning around, the thing to be done in its circumstance. I can't go on, I should go on.

The broad-brushed network of the desires, dispositions, and decisions of all of us together—the basic structure of our society—make a causal environment that I have to reckon with as I'm deciding what to do. Within that environment I may crack jokes, cook dinners, or chase my kids around the house: things worth doing if I do them well. Within a certain boundary I can go for a walk. Other things I might have done I won't do because I can't. I can't collaborate with the other

thinkers who are incarcerated for property crimes or who spend their days keeping the grass green on fenced-in tracts of desert as their alternative to crime against property. I can't relate to women, or to men, except on the premise of evolving but persistent expectations of gender. I can't get along with black Americans or white outside the true fiction of race.

These things that I won't do because we stop me from doing them are things that I should do even though we stop me from doing them. The actions and dispositions by which I'm compelled to resort to their less valuable alternatives are opposed by the reasons I have to do them. I can't, in doing the less valuable things that I do instead, act for the reasons I have. I can't perform in these connections an irreducibly personal principled action. For the others' sake, but also for the sake of coming to see this life as my own, I hope that we will find a different way to get along.

THIRTEEN PROPERTY

1

It is possible to catch sight of similar problems inside a more familiar framework of thinking about freedom. In this chapter I'll turn off my own system for a little while and trace a parallel line inside Kant's theory of right.

Right is concerned with the practical upshot of spatial incompatibilities in the action of separately embodied persons. The bodies of human persons, Arthur Ripstein reminds us, are "impenetrable solids in space." Because their bodies "occupy space, the only way their activity can be rendered consistent under universal law is if they neither occupy nor interfere with the space occupied by others". The fact of spatial incompatibility "is incorporated into the law of freedom that no person may invade the space occupied by another."

Let's take a little more time over this problem of space.

"Any action is *right*" by Kant's universal principle of right "if it can coexist with everyone's freedom in accordance with a universal law." (6: 231) If some action of yours can coexist with everyone's freedom in accordance with a universal law, Kant adds, an action of mine that hinders this one of yours *wrongs* you.

I am going to assume that rightness is primarily a property of kinds of action and derivatively a property of their instances. An action is right if it belongs to a rightful kind. A kind is right if its every instance can coexist with everyone's freedom under a universal law.

Coexistence needs explaining. But we might guess that the clearest-cut coexistence failures occur where an action kind's instances hinder other actions of their own kind.

Think of the kind *occupying a space*. I'll define this so that, for any small space and span of time, a person's filling the space with her body during that span is an instance. By occupying a space I hinder your entering it, or I hinder your staying there. My occupation hinders yours. This kind of action can't be right, then, and the wrongness of your invading a space that I occupy is not to be explained by the fact that your invasion hinders my occupation of it.

But now consider the action whose instances each consist, for some small space S and times t and u, in a person's [filling S throughout (t, u) if no part of another person's body is in S at t.] Call this *occupying an otherwise unoccupied space*. My entering some empty region and remaining there can hinder your own entrance into or tenure of the spot. But your occupation of the space would not constitute your occupying an otherwise unoccupied space. I was there first. If I don't hinder a conditionally described action just by making false the antecedent of the description—if my hindering your [doing x if p] instead requires that I hinder your *x'ing* and that p be *true*—then my occupying an otherwise unoccupied space does not hinder other action of its own kind. It's left open that this kind is right and so that your invasion of a space that was empty when I entered it wrongs me.

2

That an object is mine, says Kant, is that other persons would wrong me by using it without my consent.

It is possible for me to have any external object of my choice as mine, that is a maxim by which, if it were to become a law, an object of choice would *in itself* (objectively) have to *belong to no one* (*res nullius*) is contrary to rights. (6: 251)

This "postulate," although it is "incapable of further proof," is followed in the text by a sort of defense or motivation:

For an object of my choice is something that I have the physical power to use. If it were nonetheless not within my *rightful* power to make use of it, that is, if the use of it could not coexist with the freedom of everyone in accordance with a universal law (would be wrong), then freedom would be depriving itself of the use of its choice with regard to an object of choice, by putting usable objects beyond any possibility of being *used*; in other words, it would annihilate them in a practical respect and make them into *res nullius*, even though in the use of things choice was formally consistent with everyone's freedom in accordance with universal laws. (6: 250)

I wonder about this. Does a rightful use of external objects require that persons hold property in them?

Think of the action kind whose instances each consist, for some object distinct from the bodies of persons, in a person's using that object during some stretch of time. Most such uses of an object by a person hinder some other person's using the same thing at the same time. Instances of the action hinder action of their kind. If this were the only object-using action kind, no such kind would be right.

But here again we could get creative. Let an instance of *using an otherwise unused object* consist, for some object O and times t and u, in a person's [using O throughout (t, u) if no other person is using it at t]. When I do this I make it false that your using the object during that span would constitute your using an otherwise unused object. So my use of the unused does not hinder any other use of the unused, and it is eligible to be right.

This law of freedom stands in obvious analogy to the law of occupying-the-unoccupied. Each forces the externally incompatible actions of embodied persons into a definitionally secured interpersonal consistency. It does that by carving out a kind of action such that by “getting there first” and doing her thing of that kind a person makes it the case that all other actions externally incompatible with hers are *not* of this kind.

Suppose then that the laws of freedom recognize, as a rightful action kind, the using of an otherwise unused object. Then one kind of object-using action—a person’s using a thing that was idle when she took it up—is right. Usufruct, the law of using the unused, seems to deliver that possibility of a rightful use of external things for which Kant’s postulate plumps.

3

Ripstein persuades me that this is not enough. His argument draws on a conception of purposive action that he ascribes to Kant and to Aristotle. He expresses the basic idea when he writes that “you can only *do* something if you set out to do it, and you can only set out to do what you take yourself to have the power to do.” (40)

The following passage might stand for several in which Ripstein develops the consequences for right:

As a matter of fact you may be able to set yourself the end of making a mushroom omelet without having rights to objects that are not in your physical possession, but you could not have an entitlement against others to set yourself the end of making one. If there were no such rights, someone else would be entitled to take the eggs you had gathered while you were sauteeing the mushrooms, and you would not be entitled to do anything to stop her. Your entitlement to set and pursue purposes would thus depend on the particular choices made by another. (91-92)

This argument takes issue with the proposal that my use of external objects is protected only by the bodily right that you violate when you interfere with my physical possession of them. But an easy adaptation will bring out the inadequacy of usufruct. Against usufruct and in parallel with the second quoted sentence Ripstein would presumably observe that my use-grounded right against others’ using any omelette ingredients that I’m already using doesn’t prohibit their using them before I’ve begun to cook. I imagine that he would conclude, in parallel with the first quoted sentence, that under this law I lack an entitlement against others to set for myself the end of cooking the omelette.

Spelled out a bit the inference could be this.

I can now set myself the end of a mushroom omelette only if I can now take it that others will not hinder my cooking some mushrooms.

For any end E and action x, if I have a right against others to set the end E, and if I can now set myself the end E only if I can take it that others will

later not do x, then I now have a right against others that they later not do x.

I now have no right against others that they later not hinder my cooking some mushrooms.

so I now have no right against others to now set myself the end of a mushroom omelette.

The Kant-Aristotle view of purposive action sponsors the first premise, about setting ends. But the argument also relies, at its second premise, on a principle about rights to set ends. Your right to set an end requires a right that others not do what, if you're to set the end, you must take it they won't do. I am happy to take that principle up and indeed to accept the whole argument.

In usufruct it will sometimes happen that I set the end of making an omelette. I can do this when mushrooms abound so that others are sure to leave me some. Once I've set myself the omelette purpose and started in to cook I come into a right against others that they not interfere with my cooking by making off with the particular ingredients I'm using. Now I meet the necessary condition for a right to set the end that is laid down by the argument's second premise.

But this right has come too late. I had set the end before I won the right to set it.

I think there's probably a purposive practical stance, *affirming* and pursuing a purpose, that I can take toward a purpose whether or not I've already set it. By starting in to use the ingredients I incur under usufruct a right against others' hindering my further use of them. Because I now have a right against their doing what would stop me from making an omelette, it seems open that I now have a right to *affirm* and pursue the end of an omelette.

This is not good enough, I think. I can't accept that a person's entitlement to affirm and pursue a purpose emerges only after and thanks to her original adoption and pursuit of it. And I can't accept that I depend for my entitlement to affirm and pursue the purpose on the happenstance that others forbear from impeding the initial stages of my project even as they were authorized to scuttle it. This is the sort of thing that Ripstein has in mind, I would guess, when he objects, at the third quoted sentence, that under the law of physical possession my entitlement to pursue my purposes "depends on the particular choices made by another."

In usufruct a person arrives at her right to hold and pursue an external-means-requiring purpose only after she's adopted it and begun to pursue it by using those means and only if the others chance not to exercise their own entitlements to frustrate her opening moves. That's not right.

4

Whatever its force against usufruct this argument from independence is no reason to settle for property. Property draws the same objection.

Suppose that I can come to own a thing by claiming or receiving a title to it that I enjoy independently of any actual or planned use of the thing. Suppose that I don't in this way own any mushrooms and that I can't grow mushrooms using only what's mine.

It may be that I can now take up the purpose of making a mushroom omelette. I can do that if I see the task as falling in my power. The task is in my power if I have some way of inducing the inputs' current owners to hand them over to me. Or if I can grab the ingredients and cook them up before anyone grabs them back. But of course I lack any right against others that they fall in with this plan. No one wrongs me, under property, by declining to pass me the mushrooms she owns. A mushroom owner is in her rights to hide or lock her stuff away, to drive me off when I try to use it, to recover it by force if I succeed briefly in taking it over. She is entitled to do what hinders my use of the mushrooms. But I can set the omelette as an end only if she won't hinder my use of the mushrooms. So I who own no mushrooms lack an entitlement against others that I set myself the end of a mushroom omelette.

In the supermarket aisles of our actual property society you will presumably encounter persons who have set particular suppers as their ends although they do not yet own the ingredients. "Why you are putting those mushrooms in that cart?" "I'm making a mushroom omelette tonight." A shopper like this has managed to set out after her gastronomic end because she could see it as falling within her power. She was thinking that an offer of cash for the ingredients would move the grocer to give them up.

When a shopper purchases the ingredients, the onetime owners relinquish their rights to interfere with her cooking. She finally enjoys against them a right that they not withhold the means to her purpose. She has the makings not only of an omelette but of the right to set herself the omelette-making end.

But again that right has come too late. If the means were bought for the sake of the end, the end was set before she had a right against others to set it.

Perhaps the new owner of the ingredients enjoys a right to *affirm* the end she's already pursuing and to carry on with it. But if this is true it's true thanks to the accommodating particular choices of farmers and merchants. She owes her achievement of her right to do what she was already doing to the forbearance of persons who, after she'd set the end but before she'd bought the means, were entitled to act in ways that would have shut her project down.

A typical putative end-affirming right in the property society bears a strong resemblance to the would-be end-affirming right that's characteristic of usufruct. The right takes hold only once I've bought the things my purposes demand, and so it typically follows and depends on rather than preceding or protecting my initial pursuit of the purpose. And I only ever achieve the right if and because the others choose to part with their goods despite their entitlements to hold on to them. If like me and perhaps like Ripstein you think that a right to set ends has got to come first and that it's necessarily invulnerable to other persons' particular choices, then like

me you should worry that property puts such independence out of reach. Independence will have you worried about property.

5

And not only about property. The argument also calls into question the law of occupying otherwise unoccupied spaces with which I pretended to solve the space problem.

Suppose that some purpose I might take up requires that I stand *right over there*. Often enough I can form that purpose, as when I'm sure of reaching the spot first because I'm the only person who's interested or close. But my right to affirm the purpose and to act for its sake comes on line only after and because I've taken the position. Before I reach the spot others are entitled to go there before me and so to act in ways that would put the purpose out of my power while constricting my right to pursue it. Under the law of occupying the unoccupied my right to set a typical geographically specific end postdates my decision to make it my own, and I depend for the right's establishment on the fact that persons have stood aside who were also authorized to get in my way.

This criticism overlooks another possibility of redescription. If our actions can be defined into consistency, our ends can be conceived so that everyone has an independent right to set them.

I'll have a nice picnic only if it doesn't rain. I can't stop the rain from falling. It seems to follow on the Kant-Aristotle view that I can't set out to have a nice picnic. To have a nice one is not something that I can *do* in the way that I can do such things as I can set out to do.

This truth does not put nice picnics beyond the reach of purposive action, beyond choice. A closely related purpose is available for adoption: I can set out [to have a nice picnic if it doesn't rain].

A defender of the law of occupying the unoccupied might seize on the phenomenon of settable-because-conditional ends. To vary the tale of a picnic, imagine that it's already raining but that my picnic will be nice enough if I lay my spread under the park's one tree. A nice picnic requires that I occupy that dry place. Because I can claim no right against your settling there first, I don't enjoy a right of adopting a nice picnic as my purpose. But that leaves open my right to set out to [have a nice picnic if no one assumes the dry location before I get there]. *This* right would precede my embrace of the end it protects, and it would not depend for its force on others' choices.

Usufructarians could go on to make a similar point about usufruct. Independently of anyone's choice I enjoy under that law a right to set the purpose of [building a house if no one walks off with the lumber] or the end of [cooking an omelette if no one else puts the mushrooms in her quiche].

It seems cheap, a reply perfectly insensitive to the concerns that move the objection. But why? This end-redescribing proposal purports to show that the law of occupying the unoccupied or the law of using the unused induces for every person a zone of independent purposiveness. Laws of this kind see to it that, for an entire class of space-requiring conditional ends, a person enjoys against everyone else a right to set any of those ends and does not depend for that right on others' accommodating particular choices.

If we're resisting this answer to the demand for independence, that's probably for the following reason.

We have it in mind that, if a picnic-minded person takes [having a nice picnic if no one gets to the dry spot first] as something that's *worth doing*, this is because she takes [having a nice picnic] as worthwhile. And we are thinking that, if someone sets as her end, not this unconditional picnic, but the merely conditional [having a nice picnic if no one gets there first], that's because she can't, under the space law, dismiss the prospect that others will reach the spot first and so hinder her picnic. In the teeth of others' capacity and permission to frustrate her unconditional picnic plans, she settles for the conditional picnic. Of the ends she's able to set, this one brings her action closest to the purpose she sees as worthwhile, the picnic itself.

Against certain lucky backgrounds, as when she's the only picnic person for miles around, she'll manage also to set the unconditional end. But the law of occupying the unoccupied falls short by leaving this to chance. We want it ruled out as a matter of the law's own content that a person would *ever* settle for E-conditional-on-others'-accommodating-choices just because that's the end, closest to E itself, that is settable given the undismissed prospect of hindrance by others' choices.

To put this in what Ripstein rightly regards as the crucial perspective, notice that a *servant* might set herself the end [having a nice picnic if her master doesn't order her to work on Saturday afternoon]. If she goes for that conditional end, in place of an unconditional picnic, it's because her master might force her to do chores then. Because he might hinder a Saturday picnic she can't set out after the unconditional picnic that's the object of her justificatorily basic endorsement.

I believe that, for all its stupidity, this stupid solution to the problem of independent purposiveness is pointing the way toward a more responsive one. To bring this out I'd like to talk about traffic and about its law.

6

The glory of the traffic law is that it allows a traveller to concern herself only with the law and never with *traffic*.

I am headed south, you're going west. If each keeps on as she's going, we'll collide. I decide not to cross the intersection just now. Why not?

Maybe I expect you to barrel ahead. Maybe I can't rule out that you will continue. Then I might take the fact that you will or might keep going as a reason to stand still. If you keep going you will hinder my own progress by knocking me off course or by disabling my body or vehicle. To move forward I've got to stay put. And so I yield.

I hate it when that happens. I hate that your going presents itself as a reason for me to stay. You are not a rolling stone or a runaway trolley. You are a person whose movement into the intersection answers to my own freedom.

The law arranges for me to arrive at this decision from a different source. I could decide to yield at this junction because I'm required under the law to yield there. A two-way stop sign is posted, and you have the protected direction; or it's a four-way, and you got to it first; or the traffic light is giving you green. If I'm stopping because it's the law, I'm not stopping because you're going to go. I yield, not to your body, your momentum, or your car, but to your right of way.

What are the things that a person might set out to do because she regards them as worth doing? She might act for picnics, omelettes, or houses. She might head west or south. But she also might set out after freedom. Something that's worth doing for its own sake—and so something that need not be done as a concession to the external constraints thrown up by others' actual or incipient choices—is to act consistently with the freedom of other persons.

If the traffic law permits you to move ahead now, then under this law I have no right to set the end of [going south as soon as is physically possible]. For you are permitted to do what would hinder this. But this law might reserve for me the right to set as my end [going south as soon as that's consistent with your freedom]. Because you have the right of way, only my yielding is consistent with your freedom. So I act on my end by waiting for you to pass, and your going ahead does not hinder my pursuit of it.

This right to a conditional end avoids my earlier misgivings about a right to set the end of doing-E-if-others-don't hinder-my-doing-E. If I set out to [go south if that's consistent with your freedom], the reason won't be that you might hinder me from doing what I take as basically valuable. Instead I'll be doing this because I care your freedom: I value my trip's consistency with your freedom independently of anything you might do to hinder my trip.

This solution has been hiding in plain sight. Returning to Kant's statement of the universal principle of right, we find that it protects as rightful that action which can coexist not with the things that others do but with their freedom. There's a frank circularity to this formula. Kant identifies the freedom he's talking about with persons' enjoying the right to set out to do whatever is consistent with others' enjoyment of that freedom.

I think that *property* owes its appeal to the possibility of understanding the ends it protects in this circular way.

Maybe there's no ordinarily described end of [cooking an omelette] such that a person's right to set the end will precede her typical setting of it and will take hold independently of others' choices to act in the ways that permit it. But in the property society I enjoy the right to set myself the end of [making an omelette if I come to own the means of omelette making] whether or not anyone sells me eggs, mushrooms, pots and pans, or a stove. My various rights, for various ends E, to set myself the end of doing-E-if-I-acquire-the-means-to-E come together in my general entitlement to [use as I see fit any means that I acquire]. That entitlement, which is often invoked by Ripstein as the basic tenet of property, is presumably my right, for any E, to set out to do [E if I come to own the external means to E]. If I have this right at all, I have it independently of your particular choices.

It's easy enough to dismiss this as another trick. What I judge basically worth working toward, you might suspect, is not E-if-I-come-to-own-the-means-to-E but E period. I care about owning the means to E because they're the *means to E*. If I set the merely conditional purpose, that's because it's the one I can set given that others might hinder my pursuit of an unconditional omelette by withholding the ingredients.

This is not the only way to see the matter. To give property its best shot we should suppose for a moment that the law of freedom encompasses a right of property in external objects. On that hypothesis my using only what I own is a using of external objects that's consistent with others' freedom. If I care about freedom—if I set out, among my other purposes, to uphold other persons' freedom—then I might well set out, not to make an omelette period, but [to make an omelette if I come to own the means to omelette making.] I might do this not because the coercive enforcement of property makes of this end a “second best” to an unconditional omelette but because, independently of anyone's coercion of me, it's the version of an omelette that's worth going for.

But this resolution of the independence problem is not proprietary to property. If usufruct were instead put forward as the content of the law of freedom with respect to the use of external objects, we could also understand the end of building-a-house-if-others-don't-grab-the-hammer-first on the pattern just explained. House-building coexists with others' freedom as that's understood by usufruct only if others are not already using the lumber and tools. So a right to set out to [build a house if others don't use the lumber and tools first] is a right to set out to [build a house consistently with others' freedom]. It's a right to set out after what I might well judge to be basically worth doing independently of what others will or might do that impedes it.

If this is the way to independence, it's seeming that we could reach it through a law of any otherwise eligible content. But I believe that the problem of

independence imposes more structure on its solution than has been noticed so far. To explain this I need to return to the streets.

8

Suppose now that our intersection is neither lawless nor governed by a public traffic law. Instead the law of occupying the unoccupied holds sway. If you are going to stop for a moment, in a spot that I'm on course to enter before you'll have left it, then my moving ahead will hinder your occupation of an otherwise unoccupied space. If you are going to do this, I might stop because you're going to stop and so as not to hinder that.

This decision to yield poses as a kind of mixed case. It resembles the lawless decision I described insofar as it amounts to my stopping because of what you are going to do. It resembles the decision to obey a traffic law insofar as it's not my stopping because your action would *hinder* my going. The second resemblance suggests that this decision might sort with obedience of a traffic law, on the side of independent purposiveness; the law of occupying-the-unoccupied ensures that I need never take your projected hindrance of my possible action as a reason to stop since I can, at the relevant intersections, find that reason in *my* possible hindrance of *your* projected action. But I am thinking that this is not good enough—that when I stop so as not to hinder your stopping I am subjected to your choice.

Imagine as before that I had set out [to go south as soon as is consistent with others' freedom]. Because you are going to linger in my path I've got to narrow this purpose, adopting as my specific plan that I [delay my southward progress for a moment so that I won't invade a space that you're going to occupy]. This narrowing of my purpose is compelled by the fact of your own particular action in advance of your road-occupying end. It's your projected tenure of the middle of the road that makes it true of me that I must set that narrower end if I'm to act on the broader one. The fact of your setting out to do what would be hindered by one version of my acting on my broader end compels me to boil my intention down to the version that doesn't hinder what you're going to do.

The traffic law refuses this adaptation of one person's end to the other's choice. It saves for everyone the right to set as her end [moving in a direction, or standing still, if that's consistent with others' freedom.] And for each action that might advance such an end, it determines that action's consistency with the others' freedom independently of any facts as to whether others are taking particular action that's externally inconsistent with it. If my going is contrary to your freedom, that's not because my going will hinder what you're going to do. It's because you have the right of way, a right you owe to the green light and not to your own tendency of forward motion. I can carry out my aim of moving consistently with your freedom even as I don't make it my purpose to act consistently with any particular action of yours.

Your right of way saves me from having to take your westward motion as my reason to yield. But in deciding whether to leave the house I'll often take the fact that thousands of others are moving west, east, south, and north as a reason to stay home. In this way I seem to yield to the choices of other persons and not to just to their rights. My earlier remark that traffic law frees a traveller's deliberation from constraint by traffic probably struck you as wildly mistaken. A typical subject of the traffic law, if she's lucky enough to live in a crowded place, is *obsessed* with traffic. Great stretches of her practical thinking are given over to the question of how to get where she's going given the trips that others are taking.

In a minute I will argue that this appearance is not to be trusted. But if it were correct I would take it to show, not that I've misconstrued the ground of traffic law, but that the existing positive traffic law is not living up to the demand for independence that grounds it. We should make a better law.

I am tempted to say that we should make *trains*. We should build a bunch of trains and run them on a public schedule so that in deciding whether to set out on any particular journey I can ignore the traffic reports in favor of a timetable. This would have the pleasant result that people reach particular worthy destinations after trips of predictable durations. But it would perhaps also serve freedom. It would tend to free our movements from subjection to the travel choices of all the others.

But on second thought it is clear that no technology will suffice for that freedom. Even in the smartest of mass transit systems I can get where I'm going only if I can find a seat on some train. When the 3:13 is full other persons' particular choices will have compelled me to pursue my original end of [going south as soon as is consistent with others' freedom] in some straitened form like [delaying my departure to 3:52].

Maybe an ideal traffic law requires a bigger timetable. It could first find out from all persons which particular destinations they're trying to reach by which times consistently with others' freedom. It would then publish to their smartphones a schedule of legally permitted individual departures and routes computed independently of persons' actual motions or dispositions to leave.

Then again this would be a nightmare. Scheduled in this way we would lose the right to walk or ride around. I hope that the right to move includes the right to wander or to mosey: setting out with no particular place to go, taking a turn down any weird alley that catches my interest. A timetable that licenses only particular scheduled trips from points A to points B denies me the independent right to set ends of motion that depend constitutively on the motion's spontaneous or exploratory character.

We might just forfeit the right to wander if the timetable were securing the independence of our rights to set any of a general class of other ends. But the

timetable cannot do that either. A timetable that governs only my daily travel decisions leaves my pursuit of longer-run purposes subject to others' choices. When I'm deciding whether to sleep and eat at a greater or shorter distance from the site of some ongoing project I'll seem to have predict the commuting plans of others so as to predict the timetable's permissions of my own commutes. I might decide against a long commute, not because the timetable forbids *that decision*, but because the commutes it allows me will be slow and infrequent given that other people are going to jam the intermediate spaces.

This might inspire a still bigger timetable, a schedule of rights of way not just for particular trips but all longer-run pursuits of space-occupying purposes. But that's not too attractive either. Not only would the grand timetable banish all improvisation. It calls for the impossible, a single "planning moment" that precedes all persons' particular pursuits of lifelong plans of action

We can do better, I think. One final clarification of the nature of the traffic law will explain how under that law emancipates even spontaneously decided and directed trips from constraint by others' decisions to make such trips of their own.

10

Let our paths cross one last time. I am going downtown, you are headed across town, and our possible collision lies over a patch of sidewalk that's not governed by any sign or light. One of us will have to yield. An independently purposive decision to yield must not be a decision to [stand still because moving would hinder or be hindered by the given motion of the other person.] But it's not obvious what else it can be. How can one person yield to the other's right of way if neither person comes into the encounter as the ordained bearer of that right?

But suppose that you've set out to [cross town if that's consistent with my freedom]. I've set out to [go downtown if that's consistent with your freedom]. I submit that these two ends together call for you and me to do either one of (you go, I stop) or (I go, you stop). We might each take those purposes as lending equal support to each pattern and then *pick* one of the two. For example I might wave you across, proposing that I yield, and you might accept the proposal with a nod or a glance. I think that you and I can each do her part of (you go first, I go second) while each taking my end of a freedom-consistent motion and your end of a freedom-consistent motion as supporting that pair of actions.

It might seem that when I decide to yield as part of your going ahead and my yielding, I am narrowing my end—from [continuing downtown if that's freedom-consistent] to [waiting a second until you've passed]. It might seem that I am doing that so as not to hinder a thing you're already doing, namely [heading across town consistently with my freedom]. This comes across as another asymmetrical adaptation of one person's purpose-pursuing to the other person's choice.

I think that another understanding is in reach, however. If you had set out to [go west now], then, true enough, your pursuit of that purpose would constitute the fact of your moving in a particular direction at a particular time such that I'm doomed to hinder that motion or to suffer its hindrance if I persist in my own original trajectory. It would give me a reason to turn away from any trajectory that's incompatible with this thing you're doing. In acting for that reason I would be adopting a narrower version of my end so as to fall in with your particular choice.

But your intention to [go west if that's consistent with my freedom] is not one that, in deciding when to move ahead, I may take as your given tendency *to go west now* or at any other particular time. What your end of freedom-consistent westward travel is bringing you to do, in the way of particular dated westward steps, is not determined independently of this deliberation that includes my own thinking about when to move. It is still to be decided within our currently unfolding decisions of how to act for our ends of freedom-consistent motion. Before you and I work that out, your freedom-consistent trip *stands in no determinate incompatibility relation toward my own possible bodily motions*. And so my decision to yield is not my choosing against some motion just because it's incompatible with the accomplished fact of what you're doing.

Another objection. If I'm yielding because a pattern of your continuing and my yielding is made rationally appropriate both by your end of [crossing town if that's freedom-consistent] and by my end of [going downtown if that's freedom consistent], then it might seem that I'm acting *for your end*. The implication that I can't act for my end without acting for yours seems to give the lie to independent purposiveness.

Our encounter suggests to me that there's more than one way in which a person's end can rationalize a particular action. Your end can sponsor your action in virtue of the fact that the action directly serves the end as when it causally contributes to or helps to constitute your end's attainment. But your end can also help to make it true of some action of mine that, by leaving you free to pursue your end of freedom-consistent motion, the action advances my own end of acting consistently with your freedom. Here I can take it that your end rationalizes my action although I don't see my action as something to be done because it contributes to your end's achievement.

11

Even the nod and the glance are probably dispensable. A loose convention to some such effect as that participants in the sparser flow of foot traffic yield to participants in the denser one can serve as your and my cue to opt for (I stop, you go) as a profile that's supported by our ends of freedom-consistent motion. Of course I'd better not be thinking that I should stop because that convention disposes you to go independently of my own decision. But the convention might instead work just to make the one pattern salient so that each can decide to adopt her part, not as a response to what the other's going to do, but as an

unconstrainedly recommended way of travelling consistently with the other's freedom.

Some conventionally orchestrated cooperations for street freedom have an especially misleading surface. The New Yorker who steps in front of an oncoming taxi appears to present its driver with a particular determinate motion—HEY, I'M WALKING HERE—to which the driver must yield if she's not to run him over. Locals know better than to take this literally. Each party's studiously pretended obliviousness to the other person's progress lends an exciting suspense to the age-old ceremony through which they settle, seemingly at the last nonfatal moment, on one particular pattern for acting on their ends of freedom-consistent motion. "I'm walking here" really means "I'm walking here consistently with your freedom, as you are driving consistently with mine, and this is me reminding you that we need to converge, soon, on a particular pair of freedom-consistent motions." It's a characteristically ironic performance, a rather beautiful thing.

A freedom-grounded law of traffic isn't bound to take the form of an antecedent assignment of rights of way to every point of possible external incompatibility between our actions. We can obey the law, when we reach those points, by spontaneously cooperating for freedom there. Faced with an intersection we can decide for a particular interpersonal pattern of externally compatible movements through it. We can take this up as a way in which each will do what she's already set out to do—travel consistently with the other's freedom.

I believe that this street-level cooperation for freedom is not after all an *alternative* to the mode I discussed earlier, the recognition of antecedently legislated rights of way. Even where I yield to you in obedience of a stop sign, we are there and then cooperating for freedom. We are each taking my end of travelling consistently with your freedom and your end of travelling consistently with mine as calling us for to organize our walking and yielding into the particular profile that the stop sign mandates. We're doing this so that each will have decided how to advance her end independently of what the other was going to do.

When I postpone my drive beyond rush the hour this need not be because too many others are leaving now. If we've all set ends of travelling in particular directions consistently with others' freedom, I can regard my later departure as part of a pattern that's supported by those ends. For example it might happen that, as a matter of convention, subjectively urgent trips take precedence over subjectively casual ones. This can sound like another nightmare of heteronomy: puffed up with the importance of your particular purpose you are going to go, and I stay home because you're going to go. But the urgency of trips can function instead as a factor of salience, a cue for picking one pattern from the many others through which we might act on our ends of travelling consistently with freedom. We could work the same focal magic by deferring urgent trips in favor of trivial ones, or by flipping coins. If every other person is deciding to make her particular trip in this way—as one of many trips sponsored by all our ends of freedom-consistent travel and picked out purely by the convention—then I am not deferring to anyone's disposition to make her particular trip let alone to her judgment of its urgency.

I concede that this is hard to recognize as a description of actual traffic. If it's not what we're doing now, we should give it a try.

In the end this ideal of free movement is probably easier to appreciate on foot. As I walk through the city I claim no right against other walkers that they yield to my particular motion. Often I stop short or change direction in a way that's partly explained by my concern to act consistently with their freedom. But the explanation is not that my original trajectory was inconsistent with what the others were already doing. The others had also set out to walk consistently with my freedom and are now yielding or advancing as part of a profile of everyone's motion supported by that purpose. As my own reason to stop or turn aside I may take the fact that my action forms part of a pattern of walking rationalized by our ends of walking consistently with the others' freedom. Walking by myself is something that I do with other people if I do it freely.

12

I see no reason to confine this conception of the law of free motion to any particular subspace of traversable or usable space. Nor can I understand the point of confining it to *space*. I am thinking that independence requires that all the space we might ever occupy as we act for our purposes, and all the external resources we might devote to them, fall under a single law of social traffic. This law is to determine the freedom-consistency of persons' potentially mutually hindering actions independently of the facts as to which of these actions are being or will be done.

A law of this generality can't be a timetable. It can't be an antecedent assignment of rights of way and rights of access to objects, determined before we ever interact. We will have to set its particular terms as we go along. But our improvisation will obey a general law that has force independently of our activity and that was there before we started: the law of freedom requiring us to pursue [our particular space-occupying and means-using ends consistently with others' freedom].

I also doubt that this law incorporates a general right of private property in spaces or objects. If there's a compelling rationale for property, it's that property frees our pursuit of object-requiring ends from constraint by others' choices. I've just claimed that this ideal of independent purposiveness is to be had by our all following laws that share out our access to resources on terms set independently of persons' dispositions to grab or use those goods. When it comes to deciding which particular laws to follow in this spirit, the imperative of independence does not favor private property over any other detailed scheme of access to external means.

Suppose that this last claim of mine is false. *We don't* secure independent end-setting rights by subjecting our potentially incompatible actions to joint decisions guided by everyone's aim of upholding others' freedom. Your pursuit of your purposes is *not* independent of my choice when it's bound by a requirement to resolve the potential incompatibilities of our action through deliberation that

includes my own decision. Independence reserves for each person a right to pursue means-using purposes in a way that owes *no* fealty to any other person's decision.

If there's a trademarked virtue of property, it's that under property my deciding that you won't use an object I own settles the question of that use's consistency with my freedom independently of any decision that you might make about how it's to be used. But to embrace this case for property is to restore a troubling resemblance between property and usufruct.

You own some land. I have none. I set out to [feed myself while doing as little work as is consistent with others' freedom.] You set out to [feed yourself while doing as little work as is consistent with others' freedom]. In advance of your aim you intend to [bring it about that I'll grow a crop for you]. You move to do this by granting me entry to your land if and only if I'll grow a crop there for you.

If property is to secure the right of strictly unilateral disposition over owned resources that is now on offer as its distinctive rationale, then your policy of refusing entry unless I work for you must constitute a determinate intention as to what will happen on this land that I've got to take as given in deciding myself whether to go and what to do there. Because you are bent on keeping me off the land unless I work it for you I can advance my own purpose if and only if I now resolve to grow your crop. Your settled action compels me to take up what had been, before I faced this choice of yours, an alien purpose.

13

Right is concerned with external incompatibilities between the possible actions of embodied persons. What concern is that? Which practical problem do these incompatibilities raise? What is the point of a moral mechanics?

The problem can't be that we're in danger of doing physically, spatially incompatible things. It's not going to happen. Nor does Kant seem worried that we will fumble various worthy projects because each person's pursuit of them collides with the others. The first is not a problem, and the second does not cry out for freedom as its solution.

Ripstein convinces me that there's a genuine problem raised by the potential collision of bodily actions that only rights to freedom are poised to solve. This is the problem of extending to every person a right to set ends that holds independently of others' choices even as every person depends for the power to accomplish her ends on others' omitting to choose what's incompatible with the action through which she pursues them.

I've argued that we can have this independence if every person, whatever her particular ends, sets out to [work for those ends consistently with others' freedom]. We do this by disposing of the space and the objects that our purposes demand through decisions to occupy and use them in profiles that these freedom-minded

ends make rationally appropriate. Where we all follow this law of the street no one is compelled to go along with what what the others were already doing.

Having taken on Ripstein's conception of the point of right I find that it leads me to two sharp disagreements about right's content and status. One is already in the open. I doubt that independent purposiveness offers a good justification for a general right of private property in external objects.

A second disagreement concerns the nature of the practical guidance that right supplies. On my picture it will not suffice for independence that persons forebear from specific externally individuated kinds of action—kinds individuated independently of the motives for which they're done. It's not enough that I omit to bum-rush your space or that I keep my hands off your loot. If in acting for my ends I am bent on occupying a particular empty location or on making off with a particular idle tool, then you are compelled to defer to these actions by doing only what's externally compatible with them. But when I make it my purpose to [pursue my other ends consistently with your freedom], *this* practical stance does not constitute a tendency of action standing in determinate incompatibility relations with the things you might do. Instead of confining your action to what's externally compatible with itself, my freedom-minded intention joins yours in throwing rational support to one or another pattern of your and my compatible action.

Kant says that the domain of right is the domain of coercively enforceable, externally legislated obligations. He is thinking that right is upheld if people do what's consistent with others' freedom, and that they can do that whether or not they are acting for the sake of others' freedom. Against this proposal I've just argued that consistency with your freedom itself requires that I make that consistency my maxim. It would seem to follow, by the letter of Kant's announcement, that others may force me to do that. But no one may force me to act for a particular motive. I deny that right's freedom-grounded obligations are satisfied independently of motive, and I deny that they're all coercively enforceable.

This marks a pretty drastic revision, I know. But I am thinking that we should go ahead and make it. It's true that Kant has set out in his book about right to characterize the universe of external and enforceable obligation. But he's also trying to say when and why it's okay for one person to hinder another person's action. The second project calls for some account of the problem raised by external incompatibility. Ripstein convinces me that, if this is a problem, that's because only certain patterns of mutual hindrance can coexist with every person's enjoyment of a right to set ends independently of others' choices. But I've just argued that no profile of externally compatible, externally individuated action *suffices* for that independence. You are not independent unless I am acting for the sake of your independence. If this is true we'll have to choose between Kant's two descriptions of his topic: between the study of external obligations and the reconciliation of mutual hindrance with independent purposiveness. For now I'm falling in with the project whose point I hope I'm finally coming to see.

FOURTEEN **LAW**

1

The old man, when we stop to pick him up, is going slow and leaning on his cane. To keep his balance will be a struggle if he's still in the aisle when the bus pulls away from the curb. If I were to stand up, he could sit down. It seems to me that I should stand up and that this is because my standing up will make the seat available to this person who needs it more than I do. His need for the seat gives me reason to get up out of the seat.

This reason for standing exemplifies a wider normative pattern. Where I have reason to perform some action, the fact that I have reason to do it is typically explained by its possession of independently valuable features. Features that make the action valuable, I mean to say, independently of any conative, evaluative, or normative attitude that I take toward it or toward them. And independently of any fact as to whether I'm going to perform this action, whether I've decided to do it, whether I'm disposed to do its like.

Standing up makes the seat available to a person who needs it more than I do. That's what's good about standing up, and that's what gives me reason to surrender the seat. Maybe I also approve of standing up, maybe I want to do it, maybe I am tending to do it, maybe I've decided to do it. In that case my motives are correct, and my tendencies of action are good. But if I stand up my action will not owe its value or its support by reasons to any such fact of my actual motivation or tendency toward doing it. Better to say that my motivation is correct and my tendencies good because I have reason to stand.

2

I'm about to get up when the driver points to a sign over my head.

PRIORITY SEATING FOR THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED

I'd never noticed this before. But I see now that in pointing to this sign she is pointing toward an important further element of the situation.

That I should stand is true because this would yield the seat to someone who needs it more than I do. But apparently also because the action is required of me under the law. The prelegal reason for standing that arises from the elderly passenger's need to sit down is apparently doubled or shadowed by a second reason of law.

In some of my moods I will find this annoying or even bizarre. *Do they think I don't know* that this man needs the seat more than I do? Don't they *trust* me to do the right thing? Those are the reactions that surface when I'm lazily thinking of my legal obligation as something that other persons have created by deciding that I will stand or by ordering me to rise with the purpose of getting me to do it. Fearing that my grasp of mass transit ethics is unreliable, the legislature has stepped in with a failsafe. It has fitted me out with a further legal reason for standing that can be expected to bring me to my feet even when I'm having "an off day" and failing to appreciate prelegal reasons.

I can't accept this picture, and not because I don't have off days. (My grasp of mass transit ethics is firm but not infallible.)

Suppose for a moment that a person L's telling a person C to do x can directly ground the fact that C should do x. It's a remarkable power. She who has it should use it carefully. It seems to me that L should not use it for the envisioned purpose of bringing C to do x despite C's failure to pick up on independent reasons for x'ing. I've argued elsewhere that L should *not* try to get C to do a thing unless L is thereby facilitating C's performing the action for reasons that C has independently of the activity through which L is trying to bring C's action about.

But I also doubt that a legislator enjoys any such power. That anyone does. I don't see what could make it true of a person that her order or decision makes it the case that I should stand. Let me say a few words about one attempted explanation.

3

A promising defense of the supposedly direct reason-giving power of legislators exploits an *algorithmic* understanding of the determinants of what I should do.

Suppose it's the case that, if I do everything that the legislature tells me to do and nothing that the legislature tells me not to do, my action is better supported overall, by the reasons I have independently of the legislature's commands, than if I do everything that I take to be sufficiently supported by those reasons and nothing that I take to be sufficiently opposed by them. The account I have in mind urges that in

that case the legislature's telling me to get up makes it true of me that I should get up.

To take this on is to renounce a familiar, perhaps even commonsensical principle holding that I should perform an action only if it's sufficiently supported by the independent reasons. For that trusty formula the algorithmic theorist must substitute some more sophisticated general principle relating the facts as to what I should do and the independent reasons that bear on what I might do. Maybe this one:

Suppose that I have epistemic access to the assignments of actions to me by the algorithm A. Suppose that if I do every action A tells me to do and omit every action A tells me not to do, then my action is better supported overall, by reasons I have independently of A's assignments, than if I do the actions and omissions assigned to me by any other algorithm to which I have epistemic access. Then the fact that A tells me to do (or omit) some action makes it the case that I should do it (or omit it).

This roots a requirement to do what someone's telling me to do in reasons that govern my action independently of her say-so. I am glad that the connection to independent reasons is made. But I doubt that this is the right connection.

4

Imagine that I'm a terrible judge of reasons. As bad luck would have it, so are all the other people with whom I'm in contact. Some others are a bit better but still quite bad. I am the village idiot in a village of nothing but idiots.

Every algorithm at hand in the village is just some fool's assignment of actions to me. Let Terrance be, by a thin margin, the wisest of the fools. Then the algorithm [do what Terrance tells me to do] can satisfy the supposition of the algorithmic proposal—it can outperform my own judgment and the action assignments of all other accessible algorithms—even as all but one of the actions that Terrance orders are violently opposed by the Terrance-independent reasons. Then it's then true of every action recommended by Terrance that I should do it. But that is incredible. It's incredible that all but one of the things I should do over the course of my life are fiercely opposed by the Terrance-independent reasons. I should not do those worthless things; I should do better.

Maybe the authority whose commands I'm to obey must meet some threshold of *absolute* reliability with respect to the independent reasons. Then I need not do what Terrance tells me to do. He's not nearly reliable enough. However this leaves the question of what I should do where no accessible authority is over the threshold. The alternative that comes to mind is that I should do what I have adequate independent reason for doing. Does the determination of what I should do revert, in such abject cases, to this standard of independently correct actions? That would have the absurd consequence that, as the least idiotic accessible algorithm

improves enough so as to pass through that threshold and acquire authority over my action, the action that I should perform suddenly gets much worse.

And this is no joke. If the community were benighted enough, its least unreliable assigner of actions might be the legislator, public official, or bus driver who orders black passengers to yield their seats to whites. I would guess that, if you are black, and if the driver points to a sign that says

PRIORITY SEATING FOR WHITE PEOPLE

you might do well to stay where you are. Not because your tired back or sore arches give you a reason for sitting that somehow outweighs a reason to stand that you have in virtue of the order to stand. But because the command does not speak in favor of standing.

When they arrested Rosa Parks for keeping her seat they charged her with disobeying an order to stand. We're in her debt because she declined to treat as a reason what was not.

5

How does a bill become a law? In a democracy it would happen at least partly through discussion. Someone thinks of something that she thinks we should do. To make a law of it she tries to convince activists, voters, legislators, and judges that it's worth doing. Now she's got to cough up reasons why it's the thing to do. The courses of action that become the objects of legal obligation are ones that many different persons have come to believe are worthwhile. Many have come to believe this as the outcome of a discussion through which they were exposed to others' views about what is to be done and the reasons for doing it.

Through this discussion some people acquire new warrants for believing that the legally obligated courses of action are worthwhile. That is partly because, during the discussion, others have said that the action is worthwhile in a way that directly entitles someone who hears this to take it as true. It is partly because others have mentioned reasons for performing these actions that had never before occurred to the listener but that, after some thought, she accepts in her own right. But perhaps it's also because the very fact that some course of action has emerged with substantial support from this discussion is evidence that it's worth doing.

If you take an algorithmic view you might also regard these epistemic virtues of legislation-as-discussion as evidence that the algorithm [obey the law] outperforms your own judgment. You might conclude that an action's being assigned to you by that algorithm makes it the case that you should do it. I've argued that this last step goes too far.

A bill's becoming a law can be a reason to *believe* that I have a reason do the actions it calls for. It fails to follow that legislation gives me a reason to *do* those actions. And yet it's pretty credible that the discursive and deliberative character of

democratic lawmaking makes a practical and not just an epistemic difference for me. How it does that remains to be explained.

6

After discussion, a second mainstay of algorithmic authority is coordination. Each person should do what some person L tells us all to do. And this is true where and partly because: L tends to tell each person to cooperate in situations that have the structure of prisoners' dilemmas; L tends to tell each person to do her part of the best of several coordination equilibria; or L tends to pick one of several equally decent coordination equilibria and to tell each person to do her part of that one.

Consider prisoners' dilemma. The algorithmic theorist presumably thinks that I have most reason to defect. That's why she expects that, unbound by any authority and consulting only my own judgments about reasons, I'll defect. So what's the respect in which, when I cooperate rather than defect, I better conform to the reasons that apply to me? It may be that I live better, or that I've fulfilled more of my independent obligations, when we all follow the rule than when we each defect. But by hypothesis those considerations, brought to bear only on the question of what I'm to do, call for defection.

Apart from the reasons I have to choose one or another action within this situation, I also have reasons to transform it if I can. Maybe those transformative reasons are served by my submission to the authority. If I could do something that would result in most persons' cooperating rather than our all defecting, then my underlying self-concerned or moral reasons might favor my doing it.

But I don't myself transform the situation in this way just by following the algorithm of obedience to L. The situation changes only if many or most or all of us submit. If the others submit, my adherence to independent judgment can't reverse the transformation. And my adherence to independent judgment, because it would have me defect while the others cooperate, would better serve my nontransformative reasons even as the transformative one looks on indifferently.

Now consider pure coordination, in everyone's favorite example of traffic. The algorithm tells me to drive on the right or the left side according as L tells me and all the others to drive on the right or on the left. If the others follow this rule, then my following it qualifies me as conforming to reasons that apply to my action. But the rule doesn't outperform the presumptive outcome of independent judgment. Where I should believe that the others will follow this rule, where L has decreed the right side, and where I believe as I should, I'll judge that driving on the right is supported by the independent reason I have to do that where most others are going to do it.

Where it's false, on the other hand, that some other person will follow this rule, it's false that my following it qualifies me as better conforming to reasons. On the

contrary it could get us both killed. So I do better, overall, to go on performing the action that seems best to me given what the others are going to do.

If I were disposed to do what the authority orders, that might be good for the others because it would give them a firmer basis for predicting that I'll do my part and so for deciding themselves to do their parts. But this value in the disposition can't make it the case that I should perform the action assigned by the authority. The fact that a disposition to do what has the property *f* is good, in some way apart from my having reason to do what has *f*, can't make it the case that the action's having *f* gives me reason to do it.

It's looking unlikely that my individual obedience of authority makes it the case that my action better conforms to the independent reasons. You may wish to enter a different rationale for obedience. You might offer that all persons' obedience of some authority can make it the case that all persons' action better conforms to reasons. And you might take this fact as giving me good reason myself to obey. This is a new idea. The proposal I've been considering says that I should obey the authority as a way of bringing myself to do more of what *I* have reason to do. Perhaps it's time to change the subject, from my reasons to ours.

7

The elderly passenger is a person, a subject of reasons. I can ask not only what I have reason to do around him but also what he has reason to do around me.

One answer is that he has good reason to take a seat. If he does not sit down, he might fall, hurt himself, upset a second traveller, spread disequilibrium up and down the bus. On his feet he will not enjoy the repose he needs for remembering his younger days or for planning his golden years.

I claim that, if I have good reason to stand up, that is partly because the old man has good reason to sit down. My standing makes available to this other passenger an action for which he has good reason. That he has reason to sit gives me reason to stand.

The thesis is that reasons are *public* in the respect I set out in chapter 7. Your subjection to reasons for your actions is the source of further reasons for me. That you have good reason to perform some action can give me a reason-given reason to facilitate this action of yours, to abstain from hindering it, or to abstain from doing what would make it not to be worthwhile.

I believe that this reason-given reason to facilitate the action for which you have good reason is grounded on the reason that I have to act consistently with your acting for the reasons you have. It is for its own sake good that a person act for the reasons she has. It's up to her, in the end, to achieve this value. But the value also reaches across the practical challenges of different persons, giving each person reason to act for the sake of the other's acting for the reasons she has.

I should stand so that the other passenger can act for the reason he has to sit. The proposal draws many objections, some good and some bad. Ignoring the good ones, let's consider a *terrible* objection.

You might object that, if I will go on sitting in the seat, then the other passenger can't by sitting there ride comfortably or safely. You might conclude that the old man does not have good reason to sit in this seat if I will not give it up. He does not have good reason to do what he can't do or what's not valuable given my own tendencies of action. If I will go on sitting there, this fact helps to give him good reason to look for some other seat or to try his luck swinging in the aisle. When I stay seated and so hinder his taking the seat I afford him an action for which he has good reason after all. My retention of the seat does not stop him from acting for the reasons he has. It upholds the public value of persons' acting for the reasons they have.

I hope you share my sense that this apology for keeping my seat is ridiculous. But it's a little hard to say where it goes wrong. A person who is surrounded by other people can only perform the actions that are causally afforded her by the activity and the practical dispositions of the others. And her available actions depend for many of their good or bad features on the facts as to what the others will do.

The problem is that I'm a person myself. There is still the question of what I have reason to do. I need to work out whether my possible action of keeping the seat is consistent with the other passenger's doing what he has reason to do. On the current telling I am to answer that question by taking as given my own tendency to retain the seat. The fact that I'll be sitting here gives the old man good reason to move on. So it makes it the case that my sitting is consistent with his acting for the reasons he has. I think that I should not take the fact that I'll be sitting here as helping to make itself okay. Actions don't secure their own justifications in this bootstrapping fashion. If an action is one that I may or should do or that I have good reason to do, that's because of facts that hold independently of the fact that I'll be doing it.

If there's anything to the idea of publicity, publicity must insist on a reason-given reason to yield the seat. We should rethink the assumption that the old man's reasons are simply determined by the physical affordances of a causal environment that includes my own activity and practical dispositions. My fellow passenger has good reason to sit even if I am going to make this action unavailable to him. It's because he has reason to sit that I have reason against making it unavailable.

This suggests a different test for a person's having good reason to perform some action. If some valuable feature of A's x'ing gives the person A good reason to do x, then it must be that an x'ing will be available to A, and that it will bear the relevant values, *if persons act in the ways for which they are given reason by the fact that A has good reason to do x*. The old man's reason for sitting passes this test on the hypothesis that his reason for sitting gives me reason to stand. He can

sit down, and his sitting down will be good, provided that I will do what his having reason to sit calls for me to do: give up the seat.

The simpler view with which mine competes holds that my reason for standing up is given by the fact that by emptying the seat my standing up will help to bring it about that the new passenger sits down. Like a shaky and very slow-moving pinball he will either come to rest in my seat, if I'm out of it, or be deflected from it, if I'm still there. The physics is hard to quarrel with, but I doubt that it settles what I should do. The disabled person will sit or stand as he sees fit. If he's not going to sit, standing so that he can sit is not so sensible. Maybe what I need is an extended physics—physics plus psychology and sociology—capable of predicting what he will do according as I sit or stand. I've argued that this is not the right approach to the many-body problem when the bodies belong to persons. Instead of asking what I'm to do given the difference in our physical capacities and given his predicted responses to my possible courses of action, I should ask what he and I are to do given only the difference in our physical capacities. Only that difference is given to us in the sense of being determined independently of his and my deliberation about what to do.

Imagine that I stand up because he has reason to sit down. Imagine that he sits down because he has reason to sit down. I am standing up. He is sitting down. At one level of description we're acting differently in a way that's explained by the difference between our bodies. But he and I are each also making-a-move-because-the-man-needs-to-sit-down. At this second important level of description we are each doing the same thing in a way that's explained by the fact that the same reason applies to each of us. On his way down and on my way up we might trade a look that says "I'm doing what you're doing." It's a nice look, nicer than others to be had on the bus.

9

The old man's having reason to sit is not in virtue of the fact that I will stand. His reason to sit calls for me to stand, and he succeeds in doing what this reason calls for me to do in virtue of his sitting and my standing. His practical success is our joint product.

I think that his action and mine are related by a second interdependence of a similar nature. I have good reason to travel safely and comfortably on my feet. If the bus is crowded enough, then I can't stand up, or stand safely and comfortably, unless the other passenger sits. There's no room in the aisle for the two of us among all others who are struggling there to stay upright. It seems to me that he has reason to sit partly because I have reason to ride comfortably and safely on my feet. The fact that he won't sit down can't deprive me of this reason for standing. When I succeed in acting for the reason I have to ride comfortably and safely on my feet, I succeed in virtue of his sitting as well as of my standing. Each person is in her own right the subject of an underlying reason to travel safely and comfortably on this bus. That one person has the reason gives the other good

reason to facilitate the other person's action by staying out of the other person's way. Each person succeeds in virtue of both reasons, and she does this in virtue of both individual actions. You can't characterize a *person's* normative practical success without mentioning both passengers' reasons to ride safely. And you can't characterize the fact of compliance with any one such *reason* without mentioning both individual sitting or standing actions.

I think that this double, cross-cutting interdependence is well marked by saying that the elderly passenger's reason for travelling comfortably and safely in the seat and my reason for travelling comfortably and safely on my feet give *me and him* good reason for the pattern of his and my actions that has him sitting down and me standing up. Each of the two persons is the subject of a standard set by both underlying reasons that calls for the performance of both individual actions of sitting down or standing up. Each person is the subject because each is accountable to both underlying reasons and because each succeeds in doing what's called for by the two underlying reasons in virtue of the two individual actions.

When I stand up and he sits down, my standing up doesn't give him reason to sit down, and his sitting down doesn't give me reason to stand up. The pair of these actions through which we trade places is already one for which we share good reason independently of whether we're going to do it.

10

If you've travelled on crowded trains or busses where seating for the elderly and disabled is not designated by law, you know that often enough there's a further issue. Many people are now sitting any one of whom could easily ride on her feet. Who will be the one to get up?

There exist several distinct patterns of individuals' sitting and standing through which we might all act for the reasons each has to ride comfortably and safely. I could get up as the disabled passenger and the others sit. Or you could, or she could, or he could. You and I and she and the elderly passenger have sufficient reason to fall into any one such pattern. And we have good reason against the pattern in which all the physically robust riders keep their seats, leaving the disabled passenger to struggle for stability on her own. We'll need to pick.

But interpersonal picking is not always easy. It's not easy even to say what interpersonal picking is. Let me describe one form that it might take.

Each person might bring to this domain of her action what I'll call a *democratic intention*. Let $C(S, A, x)$ be a circumstance in which: some person has proposed to each of many persons a pattern S in all their actions that includes A 's x 'ing; no one has rejected that proposal by pointing out good reasons against it; and A has judged that if we all do our parts of S then each does what's called for by the independent reasons she has and by the reason-given reasons she has to facilitate

the others' doing what they have reason to do. A's democratic intention is then her intention to perform an action of x'ing in C(S, A, x).

I suspect that some of my fellow riders are carrying intentions of this kind. As the disabled newcomer approaches the areas where we're sitting, we exchange mildly embarrassed glances. Finally one of us indicates by a slight shift in her body language that she's on her way up. She's proposing that she stand up so that the others may keep their seats as the disabled passenger takes a seat. No one rejects the proposal by speaking against it or by making as though to stand up herself. We return our attention to our headphones or daydreams. Each then carries out her intention to sit or stand in the pattern that's proposed and on the basis of her judgment that it's a fine pattern.

Maybe you'll regard as an idealized description of actual coordination on the bus. Maybe you think it's a fantasy. Never mind. Whether or not this is how we really get along, I want to argue that it's a good way of getting along.

If we all have these intentions, each end up intends each to perform one part of the same good pattern of our sitting and standing, and we end up sitting or standing in that pattern. This is good partly because we succeed in acting for the reasons we already have to realize the pattern. We sit or stand in a good pattern, and each person sits or stands in execution of an intention that arises from her judgment that we have good reason for sitting or standing in the pattern. We don't make the pattern to be good by proposing or accepting a plan that prescribes it to us or by forming and exercising the democratic intentions that bring us to carry it out.

It can seem that our motivations and dispositions, though they don't make the pattern to be good, make a person's individual action of sitting or standing to be something that a person should do. Our dispositions cause all of the others to play their parts of the picked pattern. So they make it the case that I have reason to play my part. This is what I've denied. When things go well with our action and deliberation, the facts as to what the others are going to do don't settle the question of what I should do. I should do my part because it's part of a good possible pattern. In standing now I join the others in satisfying a standard that, before we began to think about it, has already called for us to perform one or the other of the several good patterns.

11

If I keep my seat when a pattern that calls for me to stand has been proposed and not rejected, I am going wrong. The simplest explanation of my failure is that I have good reason to stand, a reason that went into force when it was decided that I would be the one to stand. My action of keeping my seat would be fine in other circumstances, as when it's proposed that I keep it. This suggests that our decision gives me a reason for standing that I would otherwise lack. I've just argued against this explanation of my failure. But I owe you an alternative account.

Suppose that I keep my seat because I simply want to sit. I want to sit even if some other passenger shows a greater need for the seat. I want to sit even if it's been proposed that I stand as you and the old man sit and even if no good objection to that plan has come to light.

Now you and the old man are faced with my disposition to sit no-matter-what. The elderly passenger fails to sit, or he fails to ride comfortably, if he tries to sit where I'm sitting. You fail to facilitate his riding comfortably if you keep your seat. You are each bound to take my disposition to sit as calling for the old man not to sit where I'm sitting and as calling for you to surrender your seat. In deciding what to do, it would be rash of you to overlook the fact that, whatever you decide, I will not budge from the seat I call mine.

Suppose that these actions of yours constitute your acting for the reasons you have. I give you reasons to perform them by being disposed to keep my seat no-matter-what. Then I may take the fact that I want to sit no-matter-what as making my sitting to be consistent with your acting for the reasons you have. My disposition to sit no-matter-what makes itself to be okay by making it okay me for to stay seated. I've argued that this won't do. My disposition to sit does not bootstrap a permission of my sitting.

I conclude that the actions I compel you to take are not ones that you can perform and thereby act for the reasons you have. My proclivity for sitting leaves you with certain options. You do the best you can given my immobility. It makes you unfree, in doing the best you can, to act for the reasons you have. I go wrong in being disposed to sit in a way that makes unavailable to the rest of you an action of acting for the reasons you have.

You might think it follow that I should give up the seat partly so that it's false that I have this disposition that makes the rest of you unfree. This would take back my earlier insistence that reasons for a person's action aren't grounded on the values or disvalues of the dispositions that she manifests insofar as she's motivated by those reasons.

But this last step is not necessary. It's not needed for practical guidance. I can decide to give up the seat, not so as to avoid the bad disposition that would make you unfree, but simply because it forms part of a pattern for which we have good reason. When I carry out my intention to sit or stand according to a pattern that's been proposed, I can take my action as one for which I have reason because it forms part of a pattern through which no one hinders a comfortable ride by anyone else.

12

Here's a story about how it might have come to pass that a sign reading
PRIORITY SEATING FOR THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED
hangs over the front few seats on the bus.

People who ride buses have a number of problems in common. From time to time we manage to talk our problems through together. At first this happened just between two or three passengers riding the same bus and griping because it was running behind schedule, one of the windows broken, the air conditioner stuck. Eventually someone suggested we get together to talk about fares, routes, and larger systemic matters. We rented a hall and advertised for a Tuesday night meeting open to all riders.

At one point in the discussion someone raises the question of physical disability. She argues that a disabled person has a greater need to sit, and that this counts in favor of able-bodied riders' standing so that disabled riders may sit. Many other people come up to the microphone to agree.

Complications arise. What counts as disability? Which forms of disability make for which degrees of difference in the need to sit down? Which distribution of passengers over the seats and standing areas are favored by these facts?

Someone writes down an explicit definition of physical disability. Objections are raised, and the definition adjusted. Another rider draws a seating chart indicating, as an area of priority for the disabled, the three frontmost side-facing seats to the left of the aisle. It's pointed out that because a disabled passenger who boards the bus from the right would have to cross the aisle in order to reach the designated seats, this designation makes for congestion than if we were to set aside the three frontmost side-facing seats to the right of the aisle. The chart is redrawn. After a few more hours of give and take, a resolution is read out to the effect that no person who fails to meet the explicit definition of disabled will sit in that area if someone who meets the definition has yet to find a seat. The motion carries. A few activists volunteer to hang the familiar signs over the front seats tomorrow. Before going to bed someone posts online the resolved definition of disability.

Tomorrow if I keep my seat under the newly hung sign I am going wrong. My failure is not my failure to perform a standing action for which I'm given reason by the fact of our decision. If I keep my seat, that will be because I'm disposed to keep sitting there no-matter-what. My disposition to sit no-matter-what makes the rest of you unfree, in exercising your own dispositions to do what the sign says, to act for the reasons you have. Someone else will have to stand because I am keeping the rest of you out of the seat I occupy.

As before I doesn't follow that I should vacate it so that I will lack this disposition that makes you unfree. But the badness of my undemocratic disposition is in any case redundant to a good decision. It's open to me to decide to rise for the reason I already have to make way for the other passenger.

13

That my action is required under democratic law, I propose, is the fact that by doing it through the exercise of a democratic intention I could join the others in acting for the reasons we share for patterns of action through which each person facilitates or abstains from hindering the actions of others for which those others have reasons.

That my action is required under the law doesn't give me reason to do it. It bears an important relation to my reasons for action all the same. We could act for the reasons we have by doing what's legally required of us in exercise of our democratic intentions.

I see no reason to confine this conception of the law and its value to bus problems or the competition of bodies for space. Here's another social problem. Each person has good reason to employ material resources in her valuable projects. She has good reason to facilitate other persons' acting for such reasons. She can do this by keeping her hands off certain things that the others might use or even by making things for the others to use. But if I'm disposed to enclose what I need for my projects and to exclude you from the things you need for yours, I compel you to make do with what I leave for you. You will have to reckon with the accomplished fact of my appropriation. It makes you unfree, in carrying out the projects this affords you, to act for the reasons you have.

But we could yet act for these reasons. Each person might intend to play her part in schemes for the general use of external resources that are proposed in an open discussion about reasons for sharing them out through those schemes.

14

I've been talking about coordination. I'd now like to reconsider discussion.

The independent reasons that call for us to interact in one or the other of the good patterns also give each person reason to try to persuade the others that we should act in the patterns they recommend.

Suppose that we were disposed to follow a pattern that's picked for us, not after a discussion, but by a fairly reliable lottery. Then I could not act for the reasons I have to persuade the others to do what's required by the independent reasons. I would know that they'll be doing whatever is put out by the lottery. A similar point tells against dispositions to follow patterns selected through a discussion that excludes some person from proposing or criticizing patterns or that puts certain considerations of value off-limits. Our dispositions to act in the patterns selected on this basis would keep the excluded persons from acting for the reasons they have to argue for worthwhile courses of action. Or they would keep us from acting for the reasons we have to defend or criticize patterns on grounds of the excluded considerations.

These are not incidental flaws. I've argued that the value of our deciding to perform our parts of proposed plans consists in the fact that this allows us all to act for the reasons we have for carrying those plans out. No procedure of coordination can have this value if it prevents persons from acting for those same reasons by arguing for action on grounds of those reasons.

Open discussion is necessary for the democratic legal project to have the value I've claimed for it. So is common knowledge of the plans that are taken up.

Each person needs to know that all persons know which patterns are being picked. This is not because each needs to be assured that the others will do their parts. It's because each needs to know that her own action will not be taken by some other person as directly determining what the other must do. Suppose that I'm the disabled passenger. If I were not to know that you know that the front right-hand seats are reserved for disabled riders, I would have to worry that you will regard my own action of keeping my seat as compelling you to stand in the aisle.

But if we've talked about a plan for reserving seats for the disabled, and if the plan is marked in a place where everyone can see it, then I can know that you know that in keeping my seat I am not just compelling you to go along with what I'm doing but am rather leaving you free to act for reasons you have to stand. I see that you see the sign I see. I know that you know that in yielding your seat you are yielding it not to me but to the law. That is the value of a sign.

15

Democracy is not "the worst form of government except for all the others."
Democracy is wonderful. Can philosophy say what's so wonderful about democracy? Or is that asking too much?

People were excited in 1994 because it seemed that the new government of South Africa would start improving South African social life in "substantive" ways that could be characterized independently of the legal "procedures" by which that government arrived in power or exercised it. Where people were once packed onto the hazardous private minibuses that carried them from townships to workplaces along extremely indirect routes, the new government would build a system of public transportation and run it so that everyone might enjoy the same possibility of mutually unobstructed motion over the territory. But we were also happy because we expected those buses to be built by a government that the people had lined up to vote for, and administered through laws the riders had proposed and criticized.

I think that there's no need to choose between substance and procedure so understood. The destination is important. It also matters how the people get where they are going.

FIFTEEN **EMANCIPATION**

[*abstract*]

Frederick Douglass says that he began to be free at the moment he first fought back against his overseer Covey. A commonplace of emancipatory politics holds that a person can act freely in resisting her oppression. The proposals of earlier chapters are hardpressed to recover this insight. A resistant slave seems to take, as her reason for resisting her master, the fact that her resistance will improve the terrible situation her master puts her in. It can seem that in acting for this master-given reason she does not act for reasons she has independently of the master's enslavement of her. But a person who overcomes some other person's obstruction of her progress toward some reason-giving destination can act for the reason she has by doing what overcomes the obstruction.

It might turn out that each act of slave resistance, by weakening the class of slaveholders, helps to remove slavery as an obstacle to the development of democratic institutions. It might turn out that it contributes to the eventual establishment of a fully democratic society. Every person now has good reason to help establish democracy, and this reason is independent of other persons' current oppression of her. The members of an undemocratic society can act freely within that society by acting for its democratic transformation.