New Books

Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy
By Bernard Williams
Princeton University Press 2002, pp. xi + 328

Bernard Williams's books in recent years have been collections of papers, mainly on topics in moral philosophy. *Truth and Truthfulness*, by contrast, is an extended, leisurely treatment of themes as central to epistemology, philosophy of language, and philosophy of history as to ethics. The context of the book's discussion is a tension that its author accurately discerns in contemporary culture. On the one hand, we find something bordering on an obsession with truth, a sometimes hysterical enthusiasm for 'transparency', 'outing', confession and unmasking. Especially within the Arts and Social Sciences sectors of academia, on the other hand, we encounter—in the shape of postmodernists, pragmatists, constructivists and their many cousins—figures whom Williams dubs 'deniers of truth'. The label is perhaps misleading, for he does not have primarily in mind those 'extremists' who deny the very existence of truth, but less radical thinkers who, while subscribing to 'the everyday concept of truth', in various ways impugn its importance or value. Truth, they may argue, is unavailable in many areas of human enquiry, such as history; and, even where available, it is not in terms of truth that the value of enquiry and other activities is to be judged.

It is important to stress that Williams's main targets are those who impugn 'the value of truth', rather than deny truth *tout court*, for it deflects a criticism levelled by some earlier reviewers of the book. Williams's account of how truthfulness comes to be valued, they charge, would cut no ice with someone who thinks that the concept of truth has no application. This charge misfires since it misidentifies the point of Williams's account. To be sure, he has no time for the extremist truth-denier, but this is because he thinks it silly and self-defeating to reject a concept that anyone who thinks and speaks at all cannot but deploy. That everyday concept is not Williams's concern, and 'not very much' can be said about it anyway—beyond its being what we grasp in recognizing, as we all do, that, for any P, it is true that P if and only if P. It is worth noting that Williams has scarcely any more time for those who attempt to derive substantial conclusions about the value of truth from our possession of this 'minimal' concept. One cannot, for example, conclude that we ought to be striving to make only true assertions from the fact that the very notion of assertion is internally related to the (minimal) concept of truth.

The central theme of the book, then, is the value of truth, or better 'the virtues of truth(fulness)'. Williams's terms for the two broad virtues he identifies are 'Accuracy' and 'Sincerity'. The first is manifested in the

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objectivity, honesty and industry with which people try to establish what is true or false; the latter in their efforts to communicate what they believe to be true and, more generally, to be trustworthy speakers who do not mislead. Williams rightly observes that asserting what one believes is not generally sufficient for Sincerity. When it is I who opened your mail, my telling you 'Someone has been opening your mail' will be true, but highly misleading. The Sincere speaker avoids conveying certain 'implicatures' as much as he eschews the statement of falsehoods. (In an amusing section, Williams takes to task—while also trying to understand—those moral philosophers, like Aquinas and Kant, who condemn all lies, yet condone or even admire more subtle ways of communicating what is false.)

A main inspiration for Williams's theme and his treatment of it is Nietzsche. It was he who first posed the crucial question of the value of truth. How much truth can we or should we stand, asked Nietzsche, given that so many truths seem inimical to 'Life'? It was Nietzsche, moreover, who recognized that, given the conflicts between truth and Life, then in defending the value of truth 'at any price', '*we stand on moral ground*'. And, as his book's subtitle indicates, Williams borrows from Nietzsche in the method he adopts for investigating the virtues of truth. 'Genealogical' enquiry into the emergence of Accuracy and Sincerity helps render intelligible why they are regarded as virtues. In two respects, however, Williams's genealogy differs from Nietzsche's. First, Williams's aim is to vindicate' these virtues, whereas Nietzsche's ambition, typically, was to confound our confidence in 'Judaeo-Christian virtues' by exposing their *pudenda origo*. Second, Nietzsche took himself to be doing history: by contrast, Williams's story of emergence, in its early stages at least, is an 'as if one in the tradition of the 'state of nature' fictions familiar from political theory'. (Here, Williams acknowledges a debt to Edward Craig's *Knowledge and the State of Nature*, where it is shown how people at first lacking an explicit notion of knowledge might intelligibly come to develop and value that notion.)

It is not difficult, Williams argues, to see how, from a state of nature where human beings share an interest in the pooling of information, but among whom there are, as yet, next to no 'ethical ideas', moral value would come to be ascribed to Accuracy and Sincerity. It can be made intelligible why rational people, given their natural interests, should come to welcome and subscribe to these as virtues. Williams is well aware of a danger in such explanations: their air of reductively explaining *away* such virtues by treating them as having merely instrumental value for enlightened egoists. He argues, persuasively, that the dichotomy implied here is illusory. We are not forced to choose between 'an inexplicable and self-subsistent intrinsic good' and 'a good which has to be understood merely in instrumental terms'. That the virtues of truth really are such is shown by the way people come to honour them 'for their own sake', which happens when they appreciate the internal connections between these virtues, 'other things that they value' (like trustworthiness), and 'their ethical emotions'.

It is Williams's own appreciation of the relationship between the virtues

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of truth and larger conceptions of the good life that induces an important shift, halfway through the book, in his genealogical account—one from an 'as if' story to actual history. While, in any workable society, value must be attached to Accuracy and Sincerity, the exact nature of their value 'varies from culture to culture', so that the 'various versions' of these virtues 'cannot be discovered by general reflection'. Fiction is 'replaced by the real history of specific cultural determinations'. The primary reason for this variety of versions is that, in different cultures, the two virtues get differently located in relation to wider ethical conceptions. Among the Greeks, the man who fails in Sincerity shames or dishonours himself, among us moderns—Kant's children—the moral crime of such a man is implicitly to deny the autonomy of others, to treat them as means only. Williams attempts nothing as ambitious as a complete history of Accuracy and Sincerity. Rather, and somewhat eclectically, he identifies and elaborates some striking episodes in that history. These range from the extension, instigated by Thucydides, of the virtue of Accuracy to enquiry into the remoter past, to the modulation, effected by Rousseau, of Sincerity into the soul-baring, introspective imperative of 'authenticity'. (While Williams discusses Diderot's criticism of Rousseauian authenticity, readers may be disappointed that he does not continue the discussion to encompass the importantly different versions of authenticity later offered by Kierkegaard and twentieth-century existentialists.)

The final chapters of *Truth and Truthfulness* extend the reflections of the earlier chapters to the role and prospects of the virtues of truth in contemporary politics and historical understanding. In both cases, Williams urges a commonsense that steers between extreme views. Thus, while 'the demand for truthfulness can be an instrument of liberalism, by serving as the sharp end of a critique of injustice', we should not endorse the hysterical demands for total access to everything made by today's Press in the spurious name of 'the public's right to know'. In the case of historical and humanistic understanding, we should concede the ineliminable role played by interpretation, but resist such conclusions as that history is so much rhetoric and that 'objective' narratives can only be unstructured chronicles of 'the bare facts'.

There is, in my judgment, an important lacuna in Williams's account both in its 'as if' and historical stages—of the emergence of the virtues of truth. While he may be right to insist that we all share an 'everyday' concept of truth (as what 'P' has just when P), this is compatible with there being different conceptions of the status of truths. It is compatible, in particular, with the idea that any truths we can articulate are necessarily 'our' truths in the sense of describing the world, not as it is independently is, but from perspectives that necessarily register human interests and purposes. Arguably that idea has prevailed at some times and in some places—in Indian traditions, for example, where articulatable truths are relegated to a realm of 'relative' or 'mundane' truth. And where this idea prevails, one might not expect that concern for Accuracy—that dogged effort to get the natural world right—which Williams regards as a virtually inevitable

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development among rational beings. Certainly the suggestion is not an implausible one that the absence from the Indian tradition of the scientific quest owes to a perception of the empirical world as *maya*.

Williams's omission of such considerations is doubly ironic. First, they are ones that loom large in the writings of the man from whom he has drawn much of his inspiration—Nietzsche. While Williams rightly reminds us of Nietzsche's calls for truthfulness, he ignores an equally salient aspect of Nietzsche's thought—the relegation, in favour of art and philosophy, of science and other quests for Accuracy on the grounds, precisely, that these can never, despite their self-image, depict reality. Second, the distinction between 'perspectival' and 'absolute' truths is one to which Williams himself in earlier writings—notably his book on Descartes—paid close attention. In the present work, discussion of 'the absolute conception' is confined to a brief footnote. It surely deserves a more extended treatment, without which a crucial piece is missing from any story of how, in our kind of culture, at least one of the virtues of truth has come to be so entrenched.

This lacuna does nothing, one should add, to detract from the charm and wisdom of most of Williams's wide-ranging reflections. 'Britain's premier philosopher', as Melvyn Bragg describes him, is a 'youthful 74', in the words of the THES. That is of course true, taken as a reference to Bernard Williams's continuing intellectual energy. But *Truth and Truthfulness* is not a work that any youth, however talented, might have written. It is a work that could only be the fruit of long scholarship and a matured intelligence.

David E. Cooper

Practical Reality
By Jonathan Dancy
Oxford University Press 2000. pp. xii + 187

1. Introduction

Jonathan Dancy's new book is about reasons for actions and its aim is twofold. First, Dancy tries to demolish a well-engrained view concerning the motivation of action. Contrary to common opinion, when we act for a reason what motivates us are not our psychological states. Secondly, Dancy advocates a thoroughly objective theory of reasons. What we ought to do is determined by the way the world is and not by the way we see the world. Reality itself is normative or, in Dancy's terms, practical.

In Dancy's view these two claims are two sides of the same coin, because from the very start he assumes that there is a unified notion of reason. One and the same thing, a reason, must be able to fulfil two roles, the normative role of guidance and the empirical role of explanation. Accordingly, the psychologist and the moral philosopher talk about the very same thing when they talk about reasons. Who is in charge? For

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empiricists like Schlick, the philosopher was no more than the psychologist's odd assistant. All talk about reasons is constrained by what people actually are motivated by. For Schlick, ethics is only concerned with causal explanations of moral behaviour. For Kantians like Nagel, in contrast, the correct answer to normative questions has consequences for the empirical task of explanation. His rational principles of prudence and altruism don't presuppose but are intended to determine motivational matters.

Jonathan Dancy's project belongs, in this sense (and in this sense only), in the Kantian tradition. Principles of practical reason give us insights into human motivation. Ethics, or practical philosophy in general, is prior to psychology. Unlike Nagel however, Dancy doesn't argue for any substantial principles of practical reason. His claim is simply that practical reasons are states of affairs. Despite its generality, his view is far from empty. Practical reasons are part of the world and not provided by our take on the world. Taking his opponents one at a time, he argues:

(1) Reasons for action are not grounded in the agent's desires.
(2) Reasons for action are not grounded in the agent's beliefs.

Assuming a unified conception of reason and the Kantian view that ethics is prior to psychology, the motivational side of reasons has to fit with whatever carries normative force. If states of affairs are what guide us, it also has to be the world rather than our psychological states that motivates us.

(3) Desires are not what motivate an agent.
(4) Beliefs are not what motivate an agent.
(5) The fact that the agent believes something is not what motivates the agent.

Dancy does not shy away from the implications of his view.

(6) What explains an action need not obtain.
(7) Action explanations in terms of reasons are not causal explanations.

I will discuss these claims in turn. I will not discuss Dancy's two commitments highlighted above, namely his commitments to a unified conception of reason and to the Kantian priority view. It is these commitments that drive him from a view that has its friends within contemporary moral philosophy, namely that normative reasons are facts like that something is brave or generous or, simply good for the agent, to an unusual account of action explanation. This move would be blocked if we separated issues of explanation from issues of normativity by distinguishing between motivating and normative reasons. I share Dancy's opposition to such a strategy. I think that when we act rationally, we are moved exactly by what ought to move us. What guides the rational agent coincides with what moves him or her. Dancy himself seems to rely on his commitments, rather than argue for them, when he rejects the distinction between normative and motivating reasons. Finding these commitments plausible myself, I will simply follow his line.

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2. The Normative Side

Dancy's foremost target is the Humean account of practical reason, according to which appropriately related beliefs and desires are the only practical reasons. Without wanting something, the Humean claims, we would never have a reason to do anything. Dancy attacks this position with what he calls 'the simple argument':

> Premiss: A desire to fi cannot itself give us any reason to fi. For if fi-ing is silly or even just not very sensible, wanting to fi doesn't make it any less silly or a bit more sensible.
> Conclusion: If a desire to fi gives us no reason to fi, it can give us no reason to do other actions either; in particular, it can give us no reason to do those actions that subserve fi-ing (either as means to fi-ing as an end, or in some other way). (32)

If my wanting to run doesn't give me any reason to run, then, it seems plausible to claim, it also won't give me a reason to put on my running shoes. If, having a cold, it would be silly to run, it would also be silly to put on my running shoes.

In order to answer this objection I have to spell out the Humean position a bit more. For the Humean the relation of being-a-reason-for does not only hold between pairs of beliefs and desires on the one side and intentions and actions on the other, the same relation holds in contexts that have nothing to do with action. Furthermore, Humeanism does not only allow so-called instrumental reasons, for which belief in causal connections is characteristic. The crucial feature of relevant beliefs is that one thing is thought to make another more likely. Let me give an example that covers both points. You want there to be nice weather tomorrow. You believe in the reliability of the weather forecast, so, obviously, you want the forecast to predict nice weather. That's all you want. (You don't want to bring it about that the forecast turns out as you wish. Bribing the forecaster, for example, would destroy the evidential relation that supports your desire for a forecast of good weather.) In this example a desire and a belief are related as a reason to another desire. On grounds of consistency, the Humean will claim that the same relation holds in action-related contexts. First, the desire for the end and the belief that something makes the realization of that end more likely, is a reason for wanting that something to occur and, secondly, this is a reason for bringing that something about insofar as it is within one's power. To become truly practical, the Humean will have to make this second step and appeal to a separate principle that generates reasons for actions: Wanting to fi is a reason to fi. I like running and other people like swimming. The runners are out on the track and don't crowd around the pool, as the swimmers do. Have it your way, the Humean says to each of them.

Contrary to the above, Dancy claims that everyone, even a Humean, agrees on the premise of his argument.

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> No prospect is an end in itself, we are told. A prospect is converted into an end by my adopting it as such, which I do by coming to desire it. This does not mean that now we have a reason to pursue that end when we did not have one before. We cannot give ourselves a reason to pursue that end by adopting it as an end. (32)

The Humean agrees that some desires are based on reason, on Humean reasons of course. Your desire that the forecast will predict nice weather, is such a reason-based desire, and so is mine to put on my running shoes. Dancy is right in that reason-based desires don't seem to add to the reasons on which they are based. Wanting to put on my running shoes is usually a reflection of the reasons I have for doing so, not an additional reason. But are all desires based on reasons, and even if so, couldn't all these reasons be Humean reasons? This is where Dancy and the Humean disagree. A straightforward Humean will deny that the normative force of all desires is always borrowed and never genuine. Why do we want to eat when hungry, and to sleep when tired? Why do we want to be respected and loved? Why do we want not to be in pain? Everyone knows Hume's answer from Appendix I of his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*: 'If you push your enquiries farther, and desire a reason why he hates pain, it is impossible he can ever give any'. Probably, this is an overstatement. If in pain, I can't run. But there is, the Humean claims, an aspect to our shying from pain that eludes further explanation by reasons. It's just how we are; we don't want to be in pain. Some desires have genuine normative force.

What has Dancy done to unsettle this well-known picture? First, he insists that we desire things for a reason. What about pain? We dislike pain because of what it is like to be in pain. The Humean can happily agree and will turn Dancy's reason into a Humean one: we dislike being in pain because we simply dislike what it is like to be in pain. This line of thought won't decide the issue in Dancy's favour. Dancy hints at a second way of responding. Normative reasons are based not on desires but on values (29). Why do we dislike pain? Because being in pain is bad. Schlick and his friends, I am sure, would smile and, maybe, offer some aspirin. I know that the philosophical climate has changed a lot from those days. Nevertheless, Dancy's book is not about values, and, all by itself, the claim that it is the badness of pain that is a reason for avoiding it should not count as a straightforward refutation of Humeanism.

Let me come back to Dancy's argument: 'A desire to fi cannot itself give us any reason to fi. For if fi-ing is silly or even just not very sensible, wanting to fi doesn't make it any less silly or a bit more sensible.' Thus far, I have argued that any sensible form of Humeanism will have to reject the first claim. But I haven't yet mentioned the special case put forward in its support. If it is silly to fi, is it really made less silly by the desire to fi?

First, silliness has its own attraction. I read the book holding it upside down to amuse the child sitting opposite me. I agree that wanting to do silly things doesn't make them any less silly, but silliness doesn't entail lack

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of reasons. Secondly, forget about what silliness actually means and think about some situation in which the overall weight of reasons is firmly on one side. Could your wanting to do something shift the balance of reasons to the other side? In many social situations it would be inappropriate or 'silly' to act on some bodily needs. But might try to escape the situation to do what I need to do. The desire to do what would be socially inappropriate doesn't change the verdict of rationality against doing it in the circumstance I find myself. But this doesn't show that this desire lacks normative force. Usually it has already been taken into account in the judgement of rationality. In the case at hand its normative force has been overridden. Thus, Dancy is right that wanting to do something silly doesn't make it less silly, but he is wrong to assume that this would support the claim that wanting to do something is no reason for doing it. Thus, I remain unconvinced by Dancy's attempt to refute Humeanism.

The second part of Dancy's normative story is the following: Reasons for action are not grounded in beliefs. Dancy starts with moral reasons. There are two pressures on our intuitions concerning the ground of moral obligations. First, we certainly would say that the reason why I ought to help is the fact that my help is needed, not my belief that this is so. To accommodate this intuition we are driven to accept duties as objective, i.e. as grounded in features of the situation. Secondly, sometimes uncertainty alone seems to be able to ground obligations, apparently making some obligations subjective. If we don't know, we ought to stop at the intersection, independently of whether there really will be any oncoming traffic.

Dancy offers an original resolution to these apparently conflicting intuitions. He points out that some objective duties are simple, like 'Help those in need'; whilst others are complex, like 'Don't be hypocritical'.

> This duty does seem to me to consist in a ban on a certain combination. We should either believe it wrong for others and not do it ourselves, or do it ourselves and not believe it wrong for other. Neither of these combinations is itself required, of course, but one combination that of doing it ourselves while believing it wrong for others, is ruled out. (54)

Complex objective duties might absorb the pressure created by the example above. A person who doesn't stop at the intersection, whilst believing that there will be traffic, violates the following complex objective duty: Either don't believe that there will be any traffic or stop at the intersection. (Which, if you are not a driving instructor, sounds like good enough advice.) The epistemic side has been absorbed into the content of the duty and, thus, is not its ground. The same move applies equally well to weaker epistemic attitudes than belief. Either don't be in any doubt about there being no traffic on the main road or stop at the intersection.

A defender of subjective duties will see a distinction without a difference. Given a person believes that there will be traffic, she can fulfil the complex objective duty only by not driving onto the main road without stopping. So, if she has the belief, she, consequently, has a duty. Isn't this exactly what subjective duties were supposed to be?

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Here I can only describe Dancy's response in broad lines, and I will omit many of the interesting details. If an ought forbids a certain combination of states of affairs, we cannot infer a simple ought statement on the basis of the presence of one of the elements of the combination. Such a ban on detachment in the context of obligations shows that complex objective duties are not simply subjective duties re-named; they are different because they differ in their normative force. Their distinguishing feature, however, gives rise to a worry. Without detachment there is a significant loss of normative force. If all rational requirements are conditional in form, no action is ever rationally required. This problem aside, Dancy's idea of complex duties offers an interesting defence of a thoroughly objective view of duties, whilst absorbing at least some of the intuitive pressure that pulls us towards subjective duties. Generalizing from the moral case, all practical reasons will be features of the situation and not features of the agent's perspective. Reasons are not a product of our psychology but are part of the world.

3. The Motivational Side

We now turn from normative issues to issues of motivation. Dancy's third thesis was the following: Desires are not what motivate an agent. Dancy's argument consists in an already familiar train of thought: The desire to fi cannot motivate fi-ing. If the desire to fi cannot motivate fi-ing, it cannot motivate what promotes fi-ing. Thus, desires can't motivate at all. But matters seem worse for this cousin of the simple argument. In contrast to the normative argument, where the problem lied in the first premise, both premises of the motivation argument look questionable.

If the desire to fi can be explained in terms of reasons, what explains fi-ing, Dancy argues, will ultimately be those reasons and not the desire to fi. And if the desire to fi cannot be explained in term of reasons, it does nothing to explain fi-ing.

> If we cannot say why we want to do it, the fact that we want to do it offers nothing by way of explanation for the action. It merely means that we were, incomprehensibly, motivated to do this incomprehensible thing. (85f)

Consider the following case. You are thirsty. You want to drink. Given the opportunity and the absence of other motivational influences, you will drink. In simple terms, you drink because you want to. Wanting to drink, it seems, is the very aspect of being thirsty that in ordinary circumstances might well explain my drinking. We encounter something familiar and nothing incomprehensible.

This point against Dancy's first premise relies on a notion of desire that is conceptually independent of motivation. Dancy would deny that this notion could properly capture desires. For him, to desire just means to be motivated. If that is correct, the first premise of his argument becomes

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indeed unassailable. Being motivated to fi cannot explain why one is motivated to fi, because successful explanations require some conceptual space between what is to be explained and what does the explaining. Dancy thinks that this gives him all he needs.

> If [the desire to psi] cannot be what motivates the action of psi-ing, it cannot be what motivates the action of 'doing what promotes psi-ing', namely fi-ing. The relation of motivation, that is, of motivating, if it cannot hold between psi-ing and the desire to psi, cannot hold between psi-ing and doing what promotes psi-ing. (86)

If we agree that the desire to exercise cannot explain my exercising—because it is conceptually too close—why shouldn't it be able to explain that I put on my running shoes'? If the reason for failing to explain was conceptual closeness, this reason simply disappears once a conceptual gap has been opened. This sort of explanatory failure is simply not transferable in the way Dancy imagines. (In contrast, if someone holds that astrological facts fail to explain my running, then he might well infer that they also won't explain my putting on running shoes.) Thus, even if we granted Dancy's starting point, he won't succeed in establishing the intended conclusion.

The starting point was that to desire is to be motivated. What about things I want but can't bring about, for example that it be nice weather tomorrow? The following account of motivation is introduced to deal with these cases.

> A is motivated to fi iff, were an opportunity of fi-ing per impossible to arise, A would seize it, in the absence of contrary motivation. (88)

This account turns potential motivation into actual motivation. I have never played golf, and it would sound ludicrous to ascribe to me the motivation to beat Tiger Woods in next year's US Open. But should the opportunity arise, and Tiger were ten strokes behind me when I am already on the green of the last hole, I'll certainly be motivated to win, and I'd cautiously putt the ball closer and closer. Dancy's account of desiring as being motivated doesn't work. To desire is not to be actually motivated because I want things I can do nothing about. To desire is not to be potentially motivated, because, if it were, there would probably be nothing that we didn't desire.

Dancy's fourth thesis was that beliefs are not what motivate an agent. Desires don't motivate; beliefs don't motivate, what does? The answer is, not your beliefs but what you believe motivates. This claim is a consequence of three things: the two commitments that I highlighted at the beginning, which were, first, that there is one sort of thing, namely reasons, which are able to guide and to move us and, secondly, the Kantian idea that ethics is prior to theories of motivation. As third part we just need to plug in Dancy's claim that what guides us are neither desires nor beliefs but states of affairs. The intended conclusion, beliefs don't motivate us, follows.

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Dancy is not entirely happy with this argument. He thinks that his commitment to its being the very same thing that is able to guide us and to move us might be doubted. Thus he offers a further argument. The argument comes from A. W. Collins ('The Psychological Reality of Reasons', *Ratio* 10, 1997, 108–23) and Dancy describes it as 'controversial' and 'extraordinarily difficult to grasp clearly' (108, 109). Let me try to reconstruct it.

I will call explanations of actions that refer to the agent's belief 'psychological explanations'. To take Collins's example: Joe drives to the ferry because he believes that the bridge is closed. In contrast, the explanation 'Joe drives to the ferry, because the bridge is closed' is an example of what I call a 'realist explanation'. The first premise of Collins' argument is the following:

(1) In the first-person case there is no substantial difference between the psychological and the realist explanation.

Collins points out that in the first-person case giving the psychological explanation is the same as giving a cautious version of the realist explanation. Both 'I do it, because the bridge is closed' and 'I do it, because I believe that the bridge is closed' contain a commitment on behalf of the agent to the status of the bridge. This commitment is not cancelled in the psychological explanation. If it were, it would not be the right explanation. (If the agent could eliminate his commitment to the bridge being closed, he would not have given a sensible explanation of why he is driving to the ferry.)

(2) There is only one correct form of action explanation in terms of reasons.

In our example, there seems nothing wrong with the agent's explanation. A psychological explanation carried out in the third person, however, is usually seen as involving no commitment to the status of the bridge. 'Joe is driving to the ferry, because he thinks the bridge is closed' doesn't carry any commitment in regard to the status of the bridge. This must be an explanation substantially different in form from both of the first-person explanations, because, as we have seen, it is not available to the agent. The agent can never bracket his commitment to the bridge being closed.

Collins, and following him Dancy, draws the following conclusion:

(3) There is no substantial difference between the psychological and the realist explanation, even in the third person case.

My reconstruction of the argument mirrors Dancy's reasoning in the following passage:

> The distinction between first and third person does not allow us to suppose that in the third-person case, there is a radical distinction between the psychologized and the non-psychologized forms of explanation, when there is no such radical difference in the first-person case. There

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> is only one sort of explanation, though the form in which we may choose to give that explanation may vary according to the circumstances. What is more, the most revealing form, perhaps I should say, the form least likely to mislead philosophers, is the simple form which contains no visible reference to belief at all. (135)

There is something puzzling about the way this argument is set up. At the outset we distinguished between two forms of explanation, psychological and realist, but the argument's second premise says that there is only one correct form of explanation. To avoid inconsistency, we have to say that the two forms of explanation are only apparently but not substantially different. Now we have derived the conclusion without mentioning the first premise, which mentions a fact that impressed both Collins and Dancy.

What is really going on is that for Collins and Dancy the first premise introduces not equivalence between the two but the primacy of the realist over the psychological explanation. From the first-person perspective, the psychological explanation is just a more cautious version of the realist explanation. It leaves the commitment to the bridge's being closed, which is the hallmark of the realist explanation in its first-person form, intact. The psychological explanation can only be true if the realist is. This is what we are supposed to learn from considerations regarding the first-person perspective.

Dancy is not as forthcoming as I'd like him to be. Dancy sticks to the official conclusion of the argument: the two forms of explanation are equivalent. He never says explicitly that in using belief terms we just rephrase the only real form of explanation there is, which is the realist form. After stating his official equivalence doctrine, however, he always wants to add something in favour of the realist explanation. The realist form of explanation is the 'most revealing form, perhaps I should say, the form least likely to mislead philosophers' (135). It is simpler and '... if there is a difference, the philosophical advantages lie on the side of the simpler form' (138).

Now we have an interesting philosophical argument for what would certainly be an exciting conclusion. The agent explains his action in realist terms. Joe tells us that he went to the ferry because the bridge was closed. And Joe is right, strictly speaking. But if Joe's explanation is right, we cannot substitute a different explanation, one in which beliefs would take over the explanatory role of facts. Thus, we as observers also have to appeal to facts and not to psychological attitudes in explaining actions.

This view raises three questions. How shall we explain the undeniable fact that if Joe hadn't believed that the bridge was closed he wouldn't have been driving to the ferry? In his answer Dancy introduces a distinction between conditions for the correctness of an explanation and the elements of the explanation itself. I would not run, not very far at least, if there were no oxygen in the air. The presence of oxygen doesn't figure in why I run, but the explanation of my running by, for example, my desire to get somewhere fast, couldn't be correct if there were no oxygen. Similarly, Joe's

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belief is a condition for the correctness of the explanation but not a part of it. The second question is the following: How can we explain Joe's action in a realist way, if we don't believe that the bridge was closed? We cannot say 'Joe drove to the ferry because the bridge was closed', when we think it was open. We have to bracket our commitment to the fact and highlight Joe's commitment without explaining his action by the commitment instead of what he has himself committed to. Dancy suggests the following: Joe does it, because the bridge is closed, as he believes.

> The 'as he believes' functions paratactically here, attaching itself to [what he believes]. Again, it is not part of the specification of his reason, but is a comment on that reason' (129).

The third question is a tough nut, and I will take it up later: How can Joe's action be explained by the fact that the bridge was closed, if the bridge was, in fact, open?

I think Collins's argument confuses two separate levels of discussion. On one level we deal with the question what is involved in the explanation of an action. On another level we ask what is involved in offering an explanation of an action. The distinction between first- and third-person perspectives is only relevant for the second of these questions. We can ask what do you commit yourself to if you explain this action in a certain way, and your commitments will differ depending on whether it is your own or someone else's action. But whatever the true explanation is, it has to be the same whoever gives it. Differences in commitments in offering explanations don't prove differences in the form of explanations offered.

I have denied the principle that underlies Collins's argument. The following picture emerges: it is true that in the first person case the commitments are the same whether we offer a realist or a psychological explanation. But this fact does not show that the realist and the psychological explanation are equivalent. Commitments, I have tried to argue, don't determine the form of explanation. Furthermore, our preference for offering explanations of our own actions in realist terms does not discredit psychological explanations. Whereas an agent's reasons are described when she offers an explanation in psychological terms, they are expressed when she offers an explanation in realist terms. True explanations don't vary with the agent-observer distinction. We explain the action in the same way the agent does, namely by citing the agent's belief This picture is easy to grasp and less interesting. Boring but true, I think.

Dancy distinguishes the idea that beliefs motivate from the idea that the fact that one has a certain belief motivates. This leads to his fifth claim: The fact that the agent believes something is not what motivates the agent. In the following quote Dancy explains the point of this distinction and presents his objection to the idea that the fact that one believes something could always be what motivates the agent.

> Someone who believes that there are pink rats living in his shoes may take that he believes this as a reason to go to the doctor or perhaps a

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> psychoanalyst. This is quite different from the person who takes (his belief that there are pink rats living in his shoes as a reason to call in the pest control officer. (125)

For Dancy, the fact that I believe something is a reason for doing something when it shows me something important about myself He concludes that the unusual nature of such cases renders it implausible to maintain that these cases were the norm.

If, as I have tried to argue above, it is not the fact but the agent's belief in that fact that plays a motivational role, we will treat facts that involve anyone's beliefs like other facts. Accordingly, it will be the agent's awareness of his belief that motivates. The belief that one believes that there are pink rats is a reason to see the doctor. Circumstances are indeed unusual when second-order beliefs play a primary motivational role.

4. Biting the Bullet

When I discussed Dancy's view that facts and not beliefs motivate I left one question open. How can the fact that the bridge is closed explain an agent's action when there is no such fact and, contrary to what the agent believed, the bridge was open? Dancy's answer is given by his sixth claim: what explains an action need not obtain.

Dancy wants the world to guide us. If we believe truly, it is that part of the world, which, for example, we describe as 'the bridge is closed', that is the reason for taking the ferry. Neither that we believe nor our belief but what we believe is a reason that guides and motivates. Dancy does not accept that what we believe is a proposition or some representational content. Propositions and sentences are capable of being true. Having a truth-value renders them representational, because true things represent the world as it is. In contrast, what we believe is not capable of being true but capable of being the case. If the real world is to guides us, representational content won't be a proper substitute. In believing we have to be directly related to the world. Would externalism about belief-contents help? Not, if false beliefs have no content. In believing there always is something that we believe. But after having rejected representational content, we seem to be left without clear options. To some extent Dancy seems to share the reader's puzzlement: '[Rejecting representational content] does not tell us what sort of thing a what-is-believed is when it is not the case—where to place such a 'thing' metaphysically. Perhaps the only answer is that it is something that may or may not be the case. But I do not pretend that this is very enlightening.' (147)

Dancy's book is not about the philosophy of mind (nor is it, somewhat surprisingly, about the philosophy of mind and world). He is pushed into dangerous territory by his insistence to take what we say at face value. 'It is her being in need and not my awareness of it that is my reason to help her.' So far, so good. But if the person is not in need, how can Dancy

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nevertheless insist that it is her being in need that is a reason and explains what he does?

> The worry is based on the mistaken sense that whatever explains an action must be the case, i.e. that all explanation is factive. We should abandon this and allow that where someone's reason for acting is something that is not the case, that is exactly what it is—something that is not the case. (147)

A new name 'non-factive explanations' doesn't make the problem disappear; there might be nothing that has been named. How should one argue for the view that to be the case is a necessary condition for being able to explain something? If the winning goal was never scored, there simply was no victory and any celebrations were pre-mature. People were jumping up and down in joy because they didn't see the linesman's raised flag. They thought they'd won it. But for Dancy it wasn't their false belief but what they believed that explains their actions. Some games you win, some games you lose. If the crowd celebrated prematurely, Dancy would introduce a third category: the games you lost that were also wins, just wins that didn't happen. As it stands, I simply fail to make good sense of such a view, and my fear is that I won't be alone in my failure to understand.

Dancy's seventh thesis, action explanations are not causal, is a sensibly drawn consequence of his difficult sixth thesis. What doesn't obtain lacks causal power.

5. One Last Point

Despite my disagreements with Dancy, there is much to admire in this book. Overall it is an honest and serious attempt to establish an interesting thesis. The book is packed with interesting arguments, and here I could discuss only a few of them. This high level of argumentative energy alone, I would think, makes it worthy of respect. On a view like Dancy's, however, such praise might not be justified. I can admire the rational pursuit of a worthy project without having any belief in its success. If rationality, however, would not depend on an agent's belief and attitudes but only on non-psychological facts, which facts could I cite in defence of my praise?

Christian Piller

The New Wittgenstein
By Alice Crary and Rupert Read (eds.)
London & New York: Routledge, 2000. pp. ix + 403, £17.99.

An observer of the philosophical scene today might get the impression that Wittgenstein scholars are polarized into two camps. In one camp are the defenders of what is sometimes represented as a traditional reading of

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Wittgenstein, harking back perhaps to Norman Malcolm and Saul Kripke, but associated today mainly with the name of Peter Hacker, while the 'new reading' camp, drawing on impulses from Elizabeth Anscombe, Rush Rhees and Hidé Ishiguro, is today primarily associated with Cora Diamond, and also with John McDowell, James Conant and Burton Dreben. *The New Wittgenstein* is designed to be a mustering of the ranks of the latter camp, even if it ends with a commentary by Hacker on Diamond's reading of the *Tractatus,* under the heading 'A dissenting voice'. The collection also contains two previously published essays by philosophers who are somewhat more loosely associated with the new reading, Hilary Putnam ('Rethinking Mathematical Necessity') and Stanley Cavell (an excerpt from *The Claim of Reason*). Cavell's essay opens the collection—a wise choice, since besides being the oldest of the texts, it is the rhetorical high point of the collection. Two of the other essays have been published previously, McDowell's 'Non-Cognitivism and Rule-Following' and Diamond's 'Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*' (the latter in the *Wiener Reihe*). Apart from Hacker's essay, there are newly written contributions by Diamond, David Finkelstein, Martin Stone, James Conant, Juliet Floyd, David Cerbone and Edward Witherspoon, as well as one by each of the editors. The essays, apart from Hacker's, are grouped into two parts: 'Wittgenstein's later writings: the illusory comfort of an external standpoint' and 'The *Tractatus* as forerunner of Wittgenstein's later writings'.

Alice Crary's introduction purports to lay out the assumptions that unite all the contributions except that of Hacker. They share the view of Wittgenstein's aims in philosophy as therapeutic, i.e. as concerned with helping liberate us from the confusions in which we tend to get entangled when reflecting on the problems of philosophy. As Crary puts it, this means that 'our need to grasp the essence of thought and language will be met' not by putting forward metaphysical theories, but 'by attention to our everyday forms of expression *and* to, the world those forms of expression serve to reveal' (p. 1; my italics). The contributors, she says, share two other convictions that distinguish them from earlier advocates of therapeutic readings. First, on their view, the therapeutic reading should also be extented to the *Tractatus;* on the whole, these writers put great emphasis on the continuity between Wittgenstein's early and later work and on the capacity of each for illuminating the other. Second, they argue that one of Wittgenstein's central aims, early and late, was to get us to realize that the idea of an external standpoint on language is confused. Earlier interpreters of Wittgenstein—so Crary claims—have failed to grasp the point that, since the idea of external standards is unintelligible, there is no ground for radical scepticism concerning our knowledge claims.

It is true that we (philosophers and others) are inclined to misconstrue our disagreements about meaning—about the way someone's words were to be taken, etc.—as though they could be settled by invoking some standard existing independently of us. But the notion of any such standard seems hard to grasp, whether it be the behaviour of a population of

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speakers (the tree Quine was evidently barking up)—since the description of that behaviour, if it is to be relevant, would have to invoke the very vocabulary at issue—or some extra-linguistic form of logic (as Russell among others thought). Speakers' claims about their language should rather be thought of as made from what might be called an internal point of view, i.e. as issuing from their position as *users* of the language. In an important sense, they speak *for* their language, not about it. If that is what Crary is saying, I am in complete agreement.

The collection is largely focused on the approach to the *Tractatus* that has primarily come to be associated with Diamond and Conant. This approach stands on two legs: the 'austere' understanding of nonsense, and the idea of a 'resolute' reading of the *Tractatus*. The former is closely associated with what Crary calls the rejection of external standards of language. On this understanding, when an utterance fails to make sense to us, it is not because some rule of sentence construction has been violated, but because we are unable to think of what some of the words in the utterance might mean in the present context. Clearly, if we do not know what a word means, we cannot tell what rules to apply to it. (There is, if you like, not a clash of senses as one is wont to think, but an absence of sense.) If an utterance is nonsense, it says nothing; hence there cannot be such a thing as a distinction between illuminating nonsense and pure gibberish.

The resolute reading of the *Tractatus* consists in taking seriously Wittgenstein's own remark that his sentences must be recognized as nonsensical. When combined with the austere understanding of nonsense, this means that we should resist the temptation to look for a deep, 'ineffable' account of meaning in the body of the *Tractatus*. The aim of the book, putting it crudely, was simply to teach people to see through nonsense when they encountered it. Accordingly, those who criticize the *Tractatus* for endorsing logical atomism and a picture theory of meaning are mistaken in supposing their target exists. The Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* cannot be so easily disposed of. (It is a curious paradox, by the way, that today the plea for the continued relevance of the *Tractalus* is based on the claim that it is mostly nonsense!)

Hacker strongly criticizes the resolute reading, giving rather telling evidence that this was not the way Wittgenstein himself thought about the book. One would be hard put to bestow the apple of contention to one party here. Perhaps the issue depends on what we mean by a 'reading'. Historically, psychologically, Hacker's case seems hard to dismiss, Wittgenstein himself, even in what is thought of as belonging to 'the frame' of the book, the preface, claims that thoughts have been expressed in it, the truth of which seemed to its author 'definitive and unassailable'. But then it might be suggested that perhaps Hacker is committing the 'intentionalist fallacy'. After all, maybe Wittgenstein himself was not resolute enough, or not all of the time. Why, in principle, could not we know better than its author what the book was all about?

It could hardly be denied that the resolute reading has brought up some new and important perspectives. But then, maybe the conflict between the

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readings is not really as sharp as all that. Diamond herself acknowledges that there is a distinction between kinds of nonsense when she talks about trying to understand the predicament of someone who is tempted to utter sentences like those in the *Tractatus,* which, it would appear, is rather different from the idea of understanding the predicament of someone tempted to utter the sounds 'zgrych'.

Among the newly written contributions, a few stand out in particular. Juliet Floyd's essay 'Wittgenstein, Mathematics and Philosophy' is a thoughtful discussion of Wittgenstein's treatment of the proof of the impossibility of trisecting an angle. Her point is that looking for a proof is not simply a matter of hitting on a sequence of propositions that will yield the desired conclusion, but rather groping for a way of regarding the task in which there will be something we are prepared to consider a proof Hence whether or not a proposition is provable is not a matter determined once and for all. My objection is that Floyd takes a somewhat roundabout way to get to her point (a fault shared by several contributors).

Diamond's newly written contribution is a sophisticated essay called, 'Does Bismarck have a Beetle in his Box? The private language argument in the *Tractatus*'. A central theme of the *Tractatus* is the criticism of Russell's idea that logic is the study of the nature of logical objects, e.g. those that the words 'some' and 'all' refer to—the point being that the whole idea of logical objects is confused. Diamond argues that the idea is closely linked with another thought of Russell's: that we can also refer to objects with which we are not acquainted; thus, even though Bismarck is the only individual who knows himself by acquaintance, others can use his name without knowing its meaning. On this reading, logical objects, for Russell, are like stepping stones enabling us to make inferences from propositions we understand to propositions we do not understand. The suggestion that Russell's two errors are linked is intriguing, although I found it hard to see in detail why we should be compelled to accept it. The essay ends with a useful discussion of the continuity *and the discontinuity* between the idea that there might be a language only one person understands as it appears from the point of view of the *Tractatus* and from that of the *Philosophical Investigations*.

Another highlight is 'How to Do Things with Wood' by David Cerbone. Evoking Wittgenstein's mad wood sellers who charge for wood by the area not the volume; he gives a lucid account of the confusion involved in thinking that there might be beings who followed an alien logic. He concludes: 'Wittgenstein's treatment of the ... notion of logical aliens provides a kind of antidote for our thinking that our logical or conceptual skin *confines* us in some way and that there is something "out there" beyond our skin, only we cannot, because of the constraining effect of our skin, get to it' (p. 308).

James Conant's essay 'Elucidation and Nonsense in Frege and Early Wittgenstein' brings out points made before by Diamond and by Conant himself, though presenting them in a clear and pedagogical fashion. He claims that commentators have failed to ask themselves how Wittgenstein

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read Frege, and that this has led them to miss the view of nonsense that Wittgenstein is putting forward in the *Tractatus*. This understanding of nonsense is developed in Diamond's essay 'Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*', as well as in Witherspoon's 'Conceptions of Nonsense in Carnap and Wittgenstein'. Witherspoon gives a very careful and lucid presentation of the austere conception, while arguing that, ironically, philosophers who have been critical of Carnap and sympathetic to Wittgenstein have in fact attributed to Wittgenstein the problematic view of nonsense that Carnap held.

The collection contains a number of solid and insightful contributions, both among those, previously published and those specially written for the collection. It may well prove to be—is already proving to be—a milestone in the history of the Wittgenstein reception. However, I have two major criticisms against the volume, one concerning the contents and the other concerning the packaging.

In my view, Wittgenstein's most radical challenge to the Western philosophical tradition is his insistence that philosophers should never lose sight of the fact that language is something we use: that people utter words because they have something to say, and that how their words are to be taken depends on what it is they are saying. Nothing is easier than to forget this, but it is only by remembering it, I want to say, that we can hope to rid ourselves of the pictures that hold us captive in philosophy. Now, with a few exceptions (notably Cavell), I find that the contributors tend to neglect this crucial aspect of Wittgenstein's thought, falling back into use-oblivion. This inclination is probably encouraged by the emphasis placed on the affinities between the earlier and later work. (Diamond explicitly admits, in a footnote, (p. 292), that the conception of language in the *Tractatus* makes it impossible to see the importance of this kind of attention to language.) Alice Crary, in her own contribution, explicitly criticizes the idea of assimilating questions of meaning too closely to questions of use. I found her discussion of this point bewildering. She criticizes those who, she argues, have attributed a 'use-theory of meaning' to Wittgenstein. What she means by this, as I understand it, is the following: Wittgenstein never argued that we can 'fix' the meaning of an expression by observing the instances in which it has been applied by speakers of the language. That too would be a case of imposing an independent standard. She seems to be right about that. But that seems to me to misrepresent the importance of attention to use: it is not a matter of fixing meanings, but of getting a clear view of the life we live with language. (For an instance of what it means to take use seriously, I would recommend Don S. Levi's *In Defense of Informal Logic,* Kluwer 2000).

As for the packaging, I feel resistance to something with which the editors are trying to make me agree. The editors come close to reduplicating the dualism they are ostensibly rejecting ('there are two kinds of Wittgenstein scholars, those who think there is one Wittgenstein and those who think there are two'). When a philosopher like Malcolm is dismissed as someone who just happened to be 'wrong' in his reading of

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Wittgenstein, one may forget that there is a thing or two one might learn from him, e.g. how to zero in on a point and just make it. Crary says in her introduction that the contributors share some quite unorthodox assumptions about Wittgenstein's conception of the aim of philosophy. However, as soon as unorthodox assumptions are *shared,* one suspects, we are well on our way towards the next orthodoxy. I also had misgivings about the bibliography, which ostensibly purports to put the stamp of approval on certain commentators while excluding others. 'Why just these?' one cannot help asking.

In spite of these misgivings, I would not hesitate to call this an important collection for anyone with a serious interest in Wittgenstein's philosophy.

Lars Hertzberg

Value, Respect and Attachment
By Joseph Raz
Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 194

As Joseph Raz modestly notes, this exploration of value—not his first, nor his most extensive, and we may hope not his last—barely scratches the surface of the topic. Nevertheless, it contains the best account I have read of how partiality works, how personal meaning and universal value are related, and the conceptual structure of respect.

In Ch 1 Raz supports our intuition that the things and persons we care about have unique value, by distinguishing between the universality of value in its abstract form, and its concrete manifestations in social practices. These unique concrete manifestations of value involve what he, borrowing from *The Little Prince*, calls 'taming' (p. 15)—the appropriating of universal value to create personal meaning.

In Ch 2 Raz considers how this might threaten the universality of value. He argues that values are intelligible, and can't be so unless they are universal (p. 47 ff). To be universal a value must be 1) stateable without singular reference, and 2) instantiable at any time or place. (A third condition is considered and rejected on pp. 56–60). Most people think the objectivity of value can only be established by showing that it is independent of social conditions. Raz argues the other way, that 'since values are objective, they cannot be independent of social conditions' (p. 62). (The values he has in mind here sound very like the goods internal to practices which interest Alasdair MacIntyre.) The goods of chess, tennis and friendship can't exist without the practices in which they arise. The realization of value depends on engagement, which presupposes mastery of socially dependent concepts (p. 69).

In Ch 3 Raz considers the value of life, and argues that it has no intrinsic or instrumental value, but is instead a precondition for value. He argues that we can only rationally value ongoing life—survival as a means to valuable experiences (p. 105). Goals that plausibly ground the value of survival must 'be of a kind to make it sensible to live for its sake' (p. 108). These

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include the desire to die in a certain way, to find meaningful goals, or to take pleasure in living. He considers Thomas Nagel's view, that life has no personal value, but an objective value grounded in the goods of experience, ability and opportunity (p. 111 ff), and argues that experience, ability and opportunity, like tools, have only derivative and conditional value, and don't warrant the conclusion that life itself is a good.

In Ch 4 Raz considers respect for persons. He rejects two extreme claims—that the whole of morality is based on this duty, or that this duty is reducible to a duty to behave morally rightly. He rejects the idea that the duty of respect is needed as a criterion for determining the moral status of things. His own positive account draws on Kant (p. 132 ff.). Essentially, respect involves the recognition 'that there are limitations on the way one may impact on' (p. 138) the object. The limit comes from a recognition of what the object is: we may only treat objects as they should be treated. Raz recognizes that this seems trivial: for any object, we should treat it as it should be treated. To show up the difference between the general requirement to respect things, and the proposed universal value of respect for persons, we need to see whether there are any intrinsic properties of persons which provide reasons to treat them in a certain way that are a) unconditional and b) complete. For most objects, the requirement to treat them as they should be treated is conditional, Raz suggests: it depends on what we are trying to do with them. And the reasons they provide are incomplete: they arise out of extrinsic features, to do with how the object features in our life.

What feature of persons might provide an unconditional and complete reason for treating them a certain way? Something has value in itself if a) there are things that are good for it and b) this is not conditional on its contribution to some ftirther good (pp. 151–2). Raz argues that persons meet these requirements in being valuers. First, only valuers can recognize, honour and engage with intrinsic values, so there is the 'mutual asymmetric dependence'—intrinsic values are *good for* valuers, but the converse does not hold. Second, the way intrinsic values are good for valuers cannot be understood in terms of the good that valuers do for others. Social sharing of values is not a final good to which valuers are instruments. Third, the very idea of having value 'in itself signals an ability to relate to value. Attributions of value single out potential in objects: instrumental value singles out a potential to contribute to certain ends. intrinsic value singles out a potential to be engaged with in the right way; and in-itself value singles out a potential to engage with value in the right way, and be thereby enriched (p. 157).

Having outlined the conceptual structure of respect, Raz now turns to consider how respect fits into the concrete practices of responding to value. He distinguishes three stages (pp. 161–3). The first stage is to recognize the value. The second stage is to preserve it. The third stage is to engage with it. The third stage is special, because value is only realized when it is engaged with—recognizing and preserving are preliminaries. Reasons of respect belong to the first two stages. They are more

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fundamental or universal than the third stage, because what values you engage with can legitimately depend on your tastes and inclinations, whereas what you recognize and preserve is independent of all that.

The only flaws I could see in this book emerge from Ch 3. First one wonders why Raz, who so respects moral intuitions, tries to defend such an extremely unintuitive thesis as that life has no value. Then one notices that, whatever his motives, his arguments in Ch 3 seem to be in tension with those of Ch 4. First, he doesn't show a difference in kind between having a capacity, ability or opportunity, and being a valuer. Being a valuer surely just is having a capacity (to value); but if this is right, his arguments in Ch 3 imply that being able to value has no intrinsic value, and so cannot support the conclusion drawn in Ch 4, that persons have value in themselves. Second, the account of the in-itself value of persons in Ch 4 states that the value of a person is independent of the content that person's life (p. 124). But we have been told in Ch 3 that a person's life has no value apart from its content (pp. 77–8). This looks like a contradiction. One solution would be to drop the unintuitive claim that life has no value, and instead offer a more plausible explication than the present Ch 3 does, of why we think it has. The bones of a good answer are there in Ch 4.

Soran Reader

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