Having reasons and the factoring account

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Abstract   It's natural to say that when it's rational for me to φ, I have reasons to φ. That is, there are reasons for φ-ing, and moreover, I have some of them. Mark Schroeder calls this view The Factoring Account of the having reasons relation. He thinks The Factoring Account is false. In this paper, I defend The Factoring Account. Not only do I provide intuitive support for the view, but I also defend it against Schroeder's criticisms. Moreover, I show that it helps us understand the requirements of substantive rationality, or what we are rationally required to do when responding to reasons.

1 Introduction

It's natural to think that whenever it's rational for me to φ, I *have* reasons to φ. That is, there are reasons for φ-ing, and moreover, I have some of them. So, suppose I'm rationally required to go to the doctor. It seems like this can be true only if there are some reasons that I *have*—i.e. that are somehow in my possession. Perhaps I know that it's time for my annual checkup and it's especially important to go to my checkups because of family history. Or perhaps it's because I know that my leg is likely broken. Or whatever. The important point is that those reasons are in my possession somehow. Moreover, it seems like the fact that they are in my possession *explains* why I'm rationally required to go to the doctor.

Unfortunately, this isn't always how we use *having reasons* talk. It is common for philosophers to say that agents have reasons even when those reasons *aren't*

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possessed by those agents. So, suppose that both Tim and Steve love a certain kind of beer and that that beer is going to be at the department party tonight. It's not unnatural to say that they both have a reason to go to the party. But now suppose that Tim knows that the beer will be at the party, whereas Steve is in the dark. It's also natural to say that Tim has a reason that Steve doesn't. This is because Tim possesses the reason somehow. Other things equal, we would expect Tim to go to the party if rational, whereas we don't know enough about Steve to know whether we should expect him to go the party if rational. This paper is concerned with the *possession* sense of having reasons. My main concern is whether we must have reasons to φ in this possession sense φ in order to be rational in φ-ing.

Mark Schroeder (2008) calls this view—i.e. the view that holds that when one has a reason there is independently a reason that one has in her possession—the Factoring Account. He calls it this because it factors the *has a reason* relation into *having* and *reason*. The Factoring Account holds that there is some analysis that determines what a reason for an attitude (or action) is, and that there is a further analysis that determines what it takes for a particular agent to *have* that reason for that attitude or action. The latter analysis will be a conjunctive analysis. It will be the conjunction of the former analysis with some epistemic relation that the agent stands in with the reason that is had.

Schroeder thinks that the Factoring Account is false. I think that he is wrong. Schroeder's arguments against the Factoring Account are less than compelling. Not only is the Factoring Account intuitively plausible, it can help us understand and greatly simplify our talk about substantive rationality—what it takes to be rational by correctly responding to reasons.[1] Plus, the Factoring Account does a better job than Schroeder's positive view explaining our intuitions. In this paper, I will argue for all of these claims.

The structure will be as follows. In Sect. 2, I will introduce my particular factoring account. In Sect. 3, I will defend my factoring account against Schroeder's criticisms and argue that it does a better job handling our intuitions than Schroeder's positive view. Finally, in Sect. 4, I will briefly explore some implications of my factoring account. Namely, I will sketch how it can help us better understand what we are required to do when responding to reasons.

2 The factoring account

As Schroeder points out, the Factoring Account is a very natural view to take in epistemology. I will start my defense of the Factoring Account by considering epistemology. In Sect. 3 I will extend my account to practical matters.

I will assume here that the contribution that epistemic reasons make to the rationality of beliefs is providing a mediator between our beliefs and what is true. Due to this tight connection between reasons and truth, it is *prima facie* plausible that p is an epistemic reason to believe that q only if p makes q more likely to be

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[1] Note that when I say one correctly responds to her reasons I mean that she actually responds correctly to her reasons—i.e. forms beliefs and intentions in a way that is appropriately connected to her reasons. I *don't* mean that she merely has dispositions to respond in the right way to her reasons. I thank Michael Young for pointing this ambiguity out to me.

true than q is on its own.[2] It's hard to see how something could be a *reason for believing that q* if it didn't raise the likelihood of q being true.[3] In light of these natural thoughts, I propose Raises as a necessary condition that any proposition p must meet in order to be an epistemic reason:

raises: p is a reason to believe that q only if the probability of q being true given p is higher than the probability of q on its own.

Raises is *prima facie* very plausible; moreover, it is widely held.[4] I will not defend it here, but let its plausibility rest on intuitions and the arguments of others.

   Meeting Raises is only a necessary condition. I will also assume here that in order for a proposition p to be an epistemic reason, p must be true. That is, I will assume that reasons are *factive*.[5] After all, it might be the case that the probability of the proposition *my wife is at home* is higher conditioned on the proposition *my wife's car is in the driveway* than it is conditioned on nothing, but there is a reason to believe my wife is home only if it is *the case* that my wife's car is in the driveway. So, in order for some proposition p to be a reason to believe q, p must fit the Epistemic Model:

epistemic model: Necessarily, p is a reason to believe q iff (1) the probability of q given p is higher than the probability of q on its own and (2) p is true.

Factoring accounts are conjunctive accounts. The first conjunct of the factoring account defended here is the Epistemic Model. In order for one to have a reason R to believe that p it must be the case that R is a reason to believe that p. The second conjunct has to do with *access*. Access is the intuitive idea that the things that make a particular belief rational must be accessible to the agent holding the belief.[6] It is plausible to think that what one has access to in the relevant sense is constituted by

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[2] Note that I am using the 'reason to [judgment sensitive propositional attitude]' construction to mean the same thing as the 'reason for [judgment sensitive propositional attitude]-ing'. So, 'reason to believe' means the same thing as 'reason for believing'.

[3] For our purposes here, read this sentence only to be about evidential reasons for belief. Some hold that there are pragmatic reasons for belief. For example, some think that because I would be happier if I believe my spouse isn't cheating on me, there is a reason to believe that she isn't cheating on me, even if I have very good evidence that she is. Many argue that pragmatic reasons for belief don't exist—for example, Parfit (forthcoming). My official stance here is agnosticism. If pragmatic reasons exist, then my claims here are only about evidential reasons.

[4] Cf. Williamson (2000, Chaps. 9 and 10, 2007, Chap. 7). For a nice summary of how orthodox Raises is, see Kelly (2006).

[5] Raises is compatible with non-factive views about reasons for belief—i.e. views that hold that a proposition p can be a reason to believe q even if p is false. And if one combined a non-factive view of reasons for belief with a non-factive epistemic property—e.g. believes that—then one would have a factoring account that clearly avoids Schroeder's objections. His arguments crucially turn on one's account of reasons being factive. In personal communication he admits that he has no problems with these non-factive factoring accounts. The views he is mainly concerned with refuting are accounts that factor the reasons had out of factive accounts of reasons for belief.

[6] Concerns about access have traditionally led philosophers to internalism about epistemic justification. I show in (unpublished-a) that a commitment to access doesn't commit one to internalism. In fact, a commitment to access strongly supports a type of externalism. See also Gibbons (2006).

what one is in a position to know.[7] Because of this, it is very intuitive to think that the reasons that one has are the reasons one is in a position to know. I cannot believe that φ for reason R if I am not in a position to know that R.[8] If I cannot believe that φ for R, then I cannot have R.

These intuitive thoughts suggest that the second conjunct of the Factoring Account should have something to do with what one is in a position to know. Thus, I propose the Factoring Account for having an epistemic reason for belief (TFA-B):

factoring account-b: Agent A *has reason R* to believe that p iff (1) R fits the Epistemic Model and (2) A is in a position to know R.

Generalizing, we have the Factoring Account for having an (objective) normative reason (I'll call this TFA; X stands in for either an action or a propositional attitude; the Reason Model is an umbrella term referring to the correct analysis of a reason for whatever domain is relevant):

factoring account: Agent A *has reason R* to X that p iff (1) R fits the Reason Model and (2) A is in a position to know R.

Although Schroeder thinks that all versions of TFA are false, the version of TFA that Schroeder is most excited to attack is the Factoring Account-Practical (TFA-P):

factoring account-p: Agent A *has reason R* to (intend to) p iff (1) R fits the Practical Model[9] and (2) A is in a position to know R.

I think that we can both understand and greatly simplify our talk about substantive rationality if TFA is true. Our attention will turn to those matters in Sect. 4. Before we get to those remarks, however, we must first examine Schroeder's (2008) arguments against TFA.

3 Schroeder vs. the factoring account

Schroeder argues that all factoring accounts are false. He holds the view that there are two mutually exclusive reason relations, viz. the objective reason relation and the subjective reason relation. In other words, he holds that the *possession* sense of having a reason doesn't factor into *reasons* and *having*. In this section we will look first at his arguments against factoring accounts. We will then move on to why TFA does a better job explaining the data than his view.

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[7] Again, I'm not going to argue for this here. See my (unpublished-a) for several arguments. See also Gibbons (2006).

[8] As David Chalmers has pointed out to me, it's plausible that one's intuitions about the matter don't change much when you lower the bar from being in a position to know to being in a position to being justified. A close cousin of the view defended here is the view that A has reason R just in case A is in a position to be justified in believing R (i.e. has propositional justification for R). For reasons that cannot be gone into here, I favor my version. See my (unpublished-c) for more.

[9] A proposition p will fit the Practical Model just in case p is a practical reason. I'll remain mostly neutral as to what it takes for some proposition to fit the Practical Model. I will assume, however, that practical reasons are also factive. Also, see the appendix for some discussion about Schroeder's view of what it takes to fit the Practical Model.

Schroeder acknowledges that it is very natural to say that when Penelope rationally φ-s for reason R, she has reason R to φ. Moreover, he admits that it's natural to say that Lois cannot rationally φ for R if she does not have R. Despite the ease of this kind of talk, Schroeder argues that there are cases involving false beliefs such that no factoring account can simultaneously cite facts (or true propositions) that are reasons for an action and reasons that the agent in question plausibly *has*. Moreover, Schroeder argues that even if a factoring account could come up with candidates that fulfilled those desiderata, no factoring account can give a unified analysis that explains all cases of possession *having reasons* talk.

Schroeder's preferred false belief case is Williams's (1981) famous gasoline example. Imagine that Bernie is at a party and he is thirsty. He thus orders a gin and tonic from the bartender. The bartender gives him a glass with a clear liquid in it. Bernie rationally believes that the glass contains gin and tonic. If he intends to drink the liquid, it's intuitive to think that his intention is also rational. However, *unbeknownst to him*, the glass really contains petrol. Thus, his quite rational belief is false.

Schroeder claims that in the case of Bernie, there is nothing that can count as both a sufficient reason for taking a sip and something that Bernie has. I don't think that he canvassed the options well enough.

First, let's see how TFA-B handles the rationality of Bernie's belief that the glass contains gin and tonic. I think that there are several true propositions that Bernie is in a position to know that sufficiently raise the likelihood of it being true that there is gin and tonic in his glass. That is, intuitively Bernie has several reasons *to believe* that the glass contains gin and tonic. For one, there is a clear liquid in his glass. Moreover, he ordered his drink from a bartender whom he has no reason to believe is unreliable. He is also at a cocktail party surrounded by people that he justifiably believes are drinking potable alcoholic beverages obtained from said bartender.[10] This gives him strong reason to believe the bartender is reliable. If we were to spell out Bernie's case in more detail such that we confidently believed he was rational, more specific and tedious details would be elucidated. But you get the idea. Because those true propositions sufficiently raise the likelihood of it being true that his glass contains gin and tonic and he is in a position to know those true propositions, it is plausible to think that his belief that the glass contains gin and tonic is rational.

So, TFA-B gives a nice explanation of why Bernie's belief about the contents of the glass is rational. However, Schroeder is not primarily interested in this case because it causes problems for TFA-B, but instead, Schroeder thinks this case causes problems for TFA-P.[11] His contention is that there are no objective practical reasons to drink from the glass that Bernie has.

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[10] If we were to spell the case out in more detail, it is plausible that Bernie would know that many people were drinking potable liquids. That is, he would see them drinking and not getting sick, enjoying the drinks, not having unusual reactions etc.

[11] As readers of Schroeder's paper will know, the main motivation for arguing against The Factoring Account in the practical case is to motivate a case against epistemic factoring accounts. He sketches the upshot for epistemology at the end of (2008). He makes his case more fully in (forthcoming). For my reply to his main arguments against the Factoring Account in (forthcoming), see my (unpublished-c).

My contention is that the same propositions that are his reasons for belief are practical reasons, given his desire for gin and tonic.[12] These propositions are the things that make it rational for him to intend to drink from the glass.[13] The true propositions that justify his belief also count in favor of him drinking, given his desire for gin and tonic. If those justifiers can justify his belief, then it is plausible to think they also justify his intention. *Ex hypothesi* they justify his belief; thus, his intention is rational. If this is right, then the reasons that justify his intention are all reasons that he has.

Here is an argument for my position. Imagine that Bernie's friend Billy really is holding a gin and tonic. For Billy, it is both rational to drink and the balance of *all* of Billy's objective practical reasons supports drinking. Obviously, the reason why the latter claim is true is because Billy's glass contains gin and tonic. The important difference between Bernie and Billy is that Billy's glass contains gin and tonic and Bernie's doesn't. But isn't the fact that there is a clear liquid in Billy's glass a reason to drink? And isn't the fact that Billy got his drink from a reliable bartender a reason to drink? I think that the answer is obviously Yes. For suppose that the liquid in Billy's glass isn't clear—suppose the bartender put food coloring in it. Isn't that a reason for Billy not to drink? Or suppose that the bartender isn't reliable. Isn't that a reason for Billy not to drink? Again, I think the answer to these questions is obviously Yes—even if Billy's glass actually contains gin and tonic. And if there is a reason for Billy not to drink when the glass doesn't contain a clear liquid, then it's natural to think that there is a reason for Billy *to* drink when there is a clear liquid in the glass, and likewise for the bartender's reliability.

However, if those are reasons for Billy, then they are also reasons for Bernie. For the important difference between Bernie and Billy is just that Billy's glass contains gin and tonic, whereas Bernie's doesn't. And so if those facts are reasons for Billy, then they are for Bernie as well. Moreover, according to TFA-P, Bernie has those reasons. Since Bernie doesn't *have* the reason to not drink (the fact that his glass contains gasoline), it's natural to think that Bernie is rational to intend to drink (and to drink).

The preceding story about Bernie seems plausible to me. That is, the preceding story seems like a good one to me in explaining what reasons make Bernie's intention to drink rational. Moreover, the preceding story is consistent with TFA.

However, Schroeder has another objection to the Factoring Account. Namely, that no factoring account can give a univocal explanation of all possession *having reasons* talk. In order to make this argument, he introduces us to Ronnie and Freddie. Both Ronnie and Freddie like to dance. Moreover, there is going to be dancing at the party tonight. Thus, there is a reason for both Ronnie and Freddie to go to the party tonight. One natural way to say this is to say that they both have a reason to go to the party tonight. However, only Freddie knows about the fact that

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[12] In (unpublished-a) I argue for the general principle that if p is an epistemic reason to believe q and q is a question of practical importance for some agent A, then necessarily p is also a practical reason for A.

[13] There are obviously implied facts about Bernie that contribute to his intention being rational. For example, it is implied that he is not dangerously allergic to gin and tonic, that drinking won't put him in any other danger etc. If those things weren't true, it's plausible to think that he wouldn't have sufficient reason to drink, although he would still have the reasons above to drink.

there will be dancing at the party tonight. Ronnie is in the dark about the dancing tonight. Thus, in a different way than above it is natural to say that Freddie has a reason to go to the party, whereas Ronnie doesn't.[14] Although there is a reason for Ronnie to go, he doesn't have this reason. TFA endorses this conclusion.[15] Since Freddie is the only one who is a position to know that there is going to be dancing at the party tonight, he has a reason to go to the party whilst Ronnie doesn't.

Schroeder's final objection to the Factoring Account, then, is that it cannot give a univocal analysis of the possession *having reasons* relation that explains the reasons that Freddie has and the reasons that Bernie has. The details of this objection come when he outlines why the three options for what Bernie's reason is cannot work. We don't need to examine these details, for I think it is fairly clear that this objection doesn't impugn TFA. TFA can give a univocal analysis of the relation that explains both the reasons Freddie has and the reasons Bernie has. The fact that there will be dancing at the party tonight is a reason for Freddie to go to the party and he is in a position to know that there will be dancing. Thus, he has a reason to go to the party (given the background desire to dance). The fact that Bernie received the drink from a reliable bartender is a reason to drink from the glass and he is in a position to know this.[16] Thus, he has a reason to drink from the glass (given the background desire to drink a gin and tonic).

Unfortunately, Schroeder doesn't even consider this type of view. He only considers three options for what his reason could be: viz. the fact that he believes it contains gin and tonic, the belief itself, and the proposition that the glass contains gin and tonic. All of those options seem deeply problematic for reasons Schroeder mentions and many others beside. Schroeder thinks that the third option is the best option. He rightly points out that the Factoring Account cannot endorse the third option.[17] Bernie is not in a position to know that the glass contains gin and tonic because it's not true that the glass contains gin and tonic. Schroeder rejects the Factoring Account, however, and so he is open to take the third option. I think TFA will seem more plausible if we distinguish it from Schroeder's positive account.

Schroeder argues that the proposition that the glass contains gin and tonic is a reason that Bernie has, even though it's not a reason for drinking from the glass. He is attracted to this view for reasons of univocality. It is very plausible that the content of Freddie's belief is his reason. Since we want a univocal account of the *having reasons* relation, Schroeder holds that the content of Bernie's belief is his

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[14] Remember that we've already been through this dialectic when we talked about Tim and Steve in the introduction.

[15] TFA might *not* endorse this conclusion given the information Schroeder provides. He only states that Ronnie doesn't know that there will be dancing. He doesn't state that he isn't in a position to know that there will be dancing. I take it he has the latter in mind when he states the former. If that is the case, then TFA endorses his conclusions.

[16] In Bernie's case, there will be other reasons to drink. But I assume the same is true for Freddie as well.

[17] For reasons mentioned in footnote 5, it's false to say that *all* factoring accounts cannot endorse the view that the content of Bernie's belief is the reason that he has. Only factoring accounts that hold that reasons are factive are forced into this conclusion. Nevertheless, I obviously cannot hold that the content of Bernie's belief is a reason he has since I think the reasons had are factive.

reason as well.[18] TFA holds that in order to have a reason to φ, there must be a reason for φ-ing. Since Schroeder thinks TFA is false, he is open to explore the possibility that Bernie can have a reason to φ that isn't a reason for φ-ing.[19] He maintains that there are two mutually exclusive reason relations: the subjective relation and the objective relation. Bernie has a subjective reason to drink, viz. the proposition that there is gin and tonic in his glass. If that proposition were true, then Bernie would also have an objective reason to drink.[20]

Schroeder uses a piece of linguistic data to support his view. If we were to ask Bernie, prior to him coming to know that the glass contains gasoline, what his reason to drink would be if he were to take a drink, it's likely he would say that his reason is that the glass contains gin and tonic. In other words, he would say that the content of his belief that the glass contains gin and tonic would be his reason. If we asked Bernie the same question after he found out that the glass contains gasoline, he would likely say that his reason would have been that he believed that the glass contains gin and tonic. Schroeder argues that, despite the fact that Bernie's answer changes, Bernie is merely changing the way he represents his reason. Since he ceases to believe that the glass contains gin and tonic upon finding out it contains gasoline, Bernie uses the 'I believed…' modifier to answer the question the second time it's asked. This is because he does not want to implicate that he still believes that the glass contains gin and tonic. Nonetheless, Schroeder maintains that Bernie's two answers are essentially the same.

He argues further that Bernie's answers help support his view, for on his view what Bernie says is literally true. The reason that Bernie has is the content of his belief (or what was the content of his belief). Thus, when he says that his reason is that the glass contains gin and tonic, he is answering literally. Bernie is not answering literally if TFA is true, for his intention's justifiers (according to TFA) are things other than the glass containing gin and tonic. Schroeder chalks this up as an advantage for his view and a serious disadvantage for TFA.

But Schroeder's argument goes too fast. First, the question is ambiguous. We could be asking Bernie what his *normative* reason would be or we could be asking him what his *motivating* reason would be. Plausibly, Bernie might be confused about what exactly a normative reason is, and quite naturally might take the question to be about his motivating reason for intending to drink. If that is the case, then I agree that Bernie says something literally true. The content of his belief is his motivating reason.[21] But that is potentially a much different question that what his normative reason would be to drink.

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[18] In effect, Schroeder argues that the reasons that make attitudes and actions rational are all motivating reasons. In (unpublished-b) I argue that something close to his account of motivating reasons is correct. However, I maintain that the reasons that justify one's action need not only be one's motivating reasons, provided that they fulfill some counterfactual requirements. Also see my (unpublished-c) for more.

[19] Of course, this sounds really bizarre. It's equivalent to saying that Bernie has a reason to φ even though there is no reason to φ.

[20] In (2008) Schroeder wishes to be agnostic about what the relationship between subjective and objective reasons is. I take this view from Schroeder (2007) and (2009).

[21] Moreover, even if Bernie was clear about the question, why should we think that he is an expert about what his normative reasons are? I don't see why his answer supports any view one way or another. I thank David Sobel for pointing this out to me.

Moreover, if we asked Bernie about why he believed that the glass contained gin and tonic, we would get answers not in line with Schroeder's view (and remember he thinks that all factoring accounts—both practical and epistemic—are false). Bernie *would not* say that the reason he believed the glass contained gin and tonic is that he believed the glass contained gin and tonic. And if he did, we would naturally think that he is confused about the question. Instead, he is likely to cite the facts that TFA predicts—viz. that he ordered the drink from a reliable bartender, that others are enjoying alcoholic drinks at the party etc. And again, given his background desire for gin and tonic, it is plausible that these types of considerations are going to determine whether his intention is rational. Thus, I think it's fair to conclude that Bernie's answers don't support Schroeder's view any more than they would support TFA.

Schroeder uses a test to pump our intuitions about whether one has a reason in the sense we are interested in here. We'll call the test The Expectation Test:

the expectation test: If one would expect A to φ if A is rational, then A has a reason to φ.

Many will surely have the intuition that we shouldn't expect some agent to φ if rational if she is *only* in a position to know sufficient reasons to φ. For one can be in a position to know those sufficient reasons without believing the propositions that constitute them. Michel might be in a position to know that pushing the button will result in the deaths of all of his family members, but if he doesn't believe that pushing the button will do this, then it's not correct to expect him not to push the button if rational. Schroeder's view doesn't have this problem because a necessary condition for something to be a subjective reason is that one must believe the proposition that constitutes the subjective reason.

I grant that many will have this intuition. But given an assumption Schroeder accepts, whether or not Michel is rational is what is at issue. The assumption is Has-Rational.

has-rational: Necessarily, A is rational only if A does/believes what she *has* decisive reason to do/believe.[22,23]

Those who have the intuition that Michel shouldn't be expected to not push the button before he *internalizes* (in this case, believes) the information have internalist intuitions about justification. Many don't share this intuition, and instead have the intuition that since Michel can find out very easily about the dire consequences of

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[22] Note that what Schroeder and I agree about is that one is rational only if one does/believes what one has in the possession sense of has most reason to do. One can have a reason on Schroeder's view, remember, even if the proposition constituting that reason *isn't* an objective normative reason. I obviously deny that. Schroeder implies Has-Rational in (2009). He explicitly states it in (2004) and (forthcoming).

[23] Has-Rational is only a necessary condition because plausibly one can be irrational even if she does/believes what she has decisive reason to do/believe. For it might be that her act/belief doesn't have any connection to the reasons she has to do/believe what she does/believes. And so in order to be rational, one must both do/believe what one has decisive reason to do/believe *and* one's act/belief must be appropriately connected to the reasons one has.

pushing the button, he is not being rational by pushing the button. These people will expect Michel to not push the button *if* he is rational.

Thus, I think that for those who have the internalist intuition have some evidence to believe Schroeder's proposal. But it's clear that intuitions about the matter are far from universal. Moreover, those who have my externalist intuitions will have evidence to believe my proposal. The result of all of this is that we cannot decide the matter solely on these types of intuitions. Other considerations must play a role. I have attempted to provide other considerations elsewhere.[24]

The final argument against Schroeder is on the offensive. I think that TFA handles other cases better than Schroeder's view. Consider Barnie and Buddie. Barnie and Buddie are like Bernie insofar as they are thirsty and they want a gin and tonic. Unlike Bernie, however, they are at a party commemorating Bernard Williams's life and work. The organizers of the party thought it would be a fun joke to use 'gin and tonic' to mean 'gasoline' and 'gasoline' to mean 'gin and tonic'. They let everyone invited to the party in on the joke by writing it on the invitation. Barnie read the invitation, and thus knows about the joke. Therefore, he orders a gasoline. Intuitively, if Barnie drinks from the glass, he is rational. I hold that this intention is rational because he has sufficient reasons to intend to drink. Buddie also got the invitation, but he only read where and when the party was being held. He brings his invitation along because he needs it to get in. He plops the invitation down on the bar when he orders a gin and tonic (he uses the words 'gin and tonic'). Intuitively, he is not justified in believing that his glass contains gin and tonic. Likewise, he is not rational if he intends to drink from the glass. This is because he is in a position to know decisive reasons not to drink from the glass. In other words, he has decisive reasons not to drink.

Schroeder is committed to saying that they are both equally rational. Both have a sufficient subjective reason, viz. that the glass contains gin and tonic. Barnie, unlike Buddie, also has a sufficient objective reason to drink from the glass. However, Schroeder cannot say that this explains the *rational* difference between Barnie and Buddie because Bernie doesn't have a sufficient objective reason to drink yet we think his intention is rational. But TFA can explain the rational difference between Bernie and Barnie on the one hand and Buddie on the other. Both Bernie and Barnie have sufficient reasons to drink, whereas Buddie does not. This is because both Bernie and Barnie are in a position to know true propositions that make the likelihood of the glass containing gin and tonic sufficiently high. Buddie, on the other hand, is not in a position to know true propositions that make the likelihood of the glass containing gin and tonic sufficiently high. Therefore, Bernie and Barnie are rational and Buddie is not.

Therefore, TFA not only retains its initial plausibility, but it can withstand the criticism leveled against it by Mark Schroeder in (2008). Moreover, TFA can handle the cases of Barnie and Buddie better than Schroeder's positive view. I take it we now have sufficient reasons to believe that TFA is an attractive alternative to Schroeder's view.

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[24] See especially my (unpublished-a, d).

4 Having reasons and substantive rationality

The truth of TFA might not seem to matter, at least thus far in the dialectic. As it turns out, I think that TFA is quite important (and, of course, so does Schroeder). This is because I think it can help clarify and explain *substantive rationality*. Substantive rationality, as I understand it, has to do with correctly responding to reasons. When we correctly respond to our reasons, we are immune from one type of rational criticism.[25]

For example, when my end is to go to Harlem, and the best way to Harlem is on the A train, then I ought to take the A train.[26] But it is plausible that (1) my intending to take the A train and (2) the existence of sufficient reasons to take the A train is not enough to make my intention substantively rational. There are at least two possible worlds where both (1) and (2) obtain where I am intuitively not substantively rational.

The first is the world where I form my intention because of some other fact that really isn't a reason to do so—even when I am in a position to know the actual sufficient reasons for the intention. For example, I form my intention because I reason that since A is the first letter in the alphabet, the A train must be the best way to get where one wants to go. This is a shoddy piece of reasoning, and my intention is intuitively not substantively rational in that world. This suggests that in order for my intention to be substantively rational, it must be *based on* sufficient reasons. In other words, my intention to take the A train must be properly related to my sufficient reasons.

In the second world where (1) and (2) obtain and I'm not substantively rational, I intend to take the A train and there are sufficient reasons to intend to do so. However, I am not in a position to know those reasons—the scheduling sign is temporarily broken. I arbitrarily intend to take the A train. The A train approaches the station and I arbitrarily get on, not having any information whatsoever about where it goes. Again, I am not substantively rational in this case. My intention is not based on sufficient reasons. Moreover, it's impossible for it to be based on sufficient reasons given that I'm not in a position to know the sufficient reasons. I think that this conclusion generalizes over all cases where I am not in a position to know reasons to believe/intend that φ and I do believe/intend that φ. I am irrational in all of those cases. This suggests a strong connection between substantive rationality and what we are in a position to know.

Thus, I think that one can be substantively rational in believing/intending that φ only if one is in a position to know sufficient reasons to believe/intend that φ. In other words, one can be substantively rational in believing/intending that φ only if one *has* sufficient reasons to believe/intend that φ. Thus, it seems as if *having* sufficient reasons is necessary to being substantively rational. If we don't have sufficient reasons to believe/intend that φ, it is *impossible* for us to be substantively rational in believing/intending that φ.

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[25] There is a second type of rational criticism having to do with the structure our attitudes take. I am open to this type of criticism if I, for example, believe a contradiction.

[26] This example is lifted from von Fintel and Iatridou (unpublished). It is also discussed at length in chapt. 4 of Huitink (2008).

Therefore, TFA can help explain our intuitions about substantive rationality. The reasons we have are the reasons that make attitudes rational. The reasons we don't have cannot play this role. I take it we now have sufficient reasons to think that the truth of TFA is philosophically important.

Appendix: Schroeder's hypotheticalism and Bernie's reasons

A key claim in my argument above was that there are reasons *for* Bernie to drink from his poisoned glass (i.e. there are objective reasons for Bernie to drink). Schroeder argues that if there are objective reasons for Bernie to drink, they are not reasons that he *has* in the relevant sense. One of my claims was that this is false. There are reasons for drinking that Bernie has—e.g. that there is a clear liquid in the glass, that Bernie received his drink from a reliable bartender, and that others are enjoying potable alcoholic beverages. Together with the background condition that Bernie desires to drink a gin and tonic, these types of considerations are reasons to drink. And, since Bernie is in a position to know these propositions, he has those reasons according to TFA.

I will suggest in this appendix that it is plausible that Schroeder is committed to the view that those propositions are objective reasons for Bernie to drink from the glass. In order to see this, we must understand his Humean theory of reasons for action—which he calls Hypotheticalism—that he meticulously defends in (2007).

Hypotheticalism's main claim is expressed by Reason:

reason: For R to be a reason for X to do A is for there to be some p such that X has a desire whose object is p, and the truth of R is part of what explains why X's doing A promotes p.[27]

In short, Reason holds that in order for a proposition p to be a reason R for some agent X to do A, X must have some desire that would be promoted by doing A. Thus, Reason places a necessary condition on what it takes for some proposition to be a reason—viz. doing the thing that the proposition speaks in favor of must promote some desire that the agent has.[28]

But the curious reader will wonder exactly what this promotion relation amounts to. For there are many ways in which one could cash out the promotion relation. One possible view holds that as long as there is greater than 0 probability that the

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[27]   P. 59.

[28]   It's very important for Schroeder's overall view that the condition placed on propositions by Reason is only a *background* condition. In other words, the role that desires play with respect to the existence of reasons is *not* constitutional. This allows Schroeder's account to give answers to long-standing objections to so-called Humean theories of practical reasons.

thing that one desires will come about by doing the action, the condition is satisfied. This is not the view Schroeder holds, however. He holds that in order for the condition to be satisfied the probability that the object of the desire will obtain by doing the action must be higher than the probability that the object of the desire will obtain by doing nothing.[29]

The question we are concerned with here, then, is whether the probability that Bernie will receive a gin and tonic conditioned on the truth of the propositions in question is higher when he acts than when he does nothing. Now it is not at all clear exactly how we are supposed to determine these probabilities. Moreover, Schroeder gives us little to no guidance.[30] My intuitions on the matter suggest that the probability that his desire is promoted is greater when he acts than when he does nothing.[31] If this is correct, then the condition on R being a reason presented in Reason is satisfied. And it is not far from here to the conclusion that the propositions I cite as the reasons for drinking that Bernie has are in fact reasons on Schroeder's hypotheticalist theory of reasons.

Furthermore, if those propositions don't pass Schroeder's test in Bernie's case, then I think that Hypotheticalism is open to a version of what Schroeder calls the Too Few Reasons objection to Humeanism. For I take it that in Billy's case those propositions would pass Schroeder's test. And I cannot see any good explanation in the offing about why those propositions are reasons in Billy's case but not in Bernie's.[32]

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[29] An immediate problem with this is that he has a hard time explaining why we often have reasons to do nothing; *a fortiori*, he has problems explaining why we sometimes have most reason to do nothing.

[30] In fact, in (pers. comm.) he confesses that he doesn't have many answers to these types of questions.

[31] In personal communication Schroeder admits that most of the reasons I cite are the reasons Bernie has are reasons according to Hypotheticalism. However, he denies the general thesis (which I accept) that *any* epistemic reason can be a practical reason given certain background conditions. Again, see my (unpublished-a) for a defense of this general principle.

[32] For another worry of this kind, see Bedke (2008).

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