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How Can Intentions Make Actions Rational?

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Rational agents, it seems, are capable of adopting intentions which make actions rational and which they would otherwise have no reason to do, or even have reason not to do.[1] Howard Sobel imagines the following, uncontroversial but somewhat contrived, example: 'I'll give you a nickel if you now *intend* to hand me the red [pencil] in five minutes. I'll give you the nickel now. I don't care if you do hand me the red one when the five minutes are up. The nickel will be yours whether or not you do that then, *if* you manage now to intend to do it then' (Sobel, 242-3, emphasis in original). In response to this offer, it seems a rational agent could adopt this intention, and thereby get the nickel. Now before adopting the intention, handing over the pencil was not rational: there was no reason to do so, and even reason not to do so, given the slight bother. But after adopting the intention, handing over the pencil must have become rational: a rational agent does not intend to do irrational things. In my view, there are less contrived (though more controversial) examples of

1 Howard Sobel, 'Useful Intentions,' in H.J. Sobel, *Taking Chances: Essays on Rational Choice* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press 1994) 237-54, at 237. Thanks to Howard Sobel, Bruno Verbeek, François Schroeter, and anonymous referees for helpful comments on the issues raised by this paper, the OSPRO Committee of the University of Newcastle for their approval of the sabbatical leave during which it was written, and the Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, for financial support during this period.

this phenomenon, chief amongst these being sincere agreements. Imagine, for example, the offer: 'I'll give you thirty dollars now if you mow my lawn while I am away for the next ten weeks.' In response, it seems a rational agent, and even a lesser mortal, could sincerely agree to mow my lawn, and thereby adopt an intention to do so, and thereby get the thirty dollars. Again, before adopting the intention, mowing my lawn was not rational, given the effort involved; but afterwards, it seems to have become rational, given we would not typically accuse someone of irrationality just because they went ahead and mowed the lawn on the basis of their intention to do so. But how is all this possible? How can intentions make actions rational?

I Four Accounts

The answer to this question depends on what types of mental states provide reasons for action. I shall not question the familiar assumption that *desires* and *preferences* provide reasons for action. More precisely, I shall assume that all desires and preferences (perhaps of a certain type) together with certain beliefs (namely, those specifying how the relevant desires and preferences can be satisfied) are complete normative reasons for action.[2] Rather, I shall question how *intentions* provide reasons for action.

There are four possible answers to this question.

On what we may call *Reductive* accounts, intentions are simply reducible to desires or preferences (and, perhaps, beliefs). There is no shortage of such accounts. To take just two, a person intends to perform some action A: when they believe their doing A is likely, and they desire to A more than they desire to do anything else;[3] or, when they believe they will A because their desire to A will so motivate them.[4] Such accounts

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2 To explain this assumption, consider the idea that your desire to mow my lawn and your belief that to do so you must refuel the mower is a reason for you to refuel the mower. First, it may be that only desires of a certain type are reasons for action, so that your desire to mow my lawn is a reason only if, for example, it would survive some reflective examination process. Second, strictly speaking, your reason to refuel the mower is not just your desire to mow my lawn, but rather the combination of that desire and your belief about what you must do to achieve this. And third, this combination is a *complete* reason for you to refuel to mower, in the sense that your reason to refuel the mower is just the combination of belief and desire, and does not include reference to any other mental state.

3 R. Audi, 'Intending,' *Journal of Philosophy* **70** (1973) 387-403

4 W. Davis, 'A Causal Theory of Intending,' *American Philosophical Quarterly* **21** (1984) 43-54

can, it seems, explain how intentions can make actions rational. Audi's account, for example, implies that if you adopt an intention to mow my lawn, you come to desire to mow my lawn more than you desire to do anything else, and so, given the familiar assumption that desires and preferences provide reasons for action, you come to have a very good reason to mow my lawn.

However, it is not clear that reductive accounts can, in the end, explain how intentions make actions rational. For it is a large and open question whether intentions really are reducible to desires, preferences, and beliefs.[5] Furthermore, in my view, reductive accounts of intention commit us to rejecting long-standing commitments to the relation between judgment and evidence; reconsideration and new information, preference and judgments of preferability, and (in some versions) commit us to attributing overly complex forms of motivation.[6] Having discussed these objections elsewhere, I consider reductive accounts no further.

So let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that intentions are *not* reducible to desires and preferences (and, perhaps, beliefs). The remaining possible answers divide on the issue of whether intentions provide *complete* normative reasons for action.

On what we might call *Commitment* accounts, intentions are states not reducible to desires and preferences (and, perhaps, beliefs), and are normative reasons for action without the assistance of desires or preferences. More precisely, all intentions (perhaps of a certain type) together with certain beliefs (namely, those specifying how the relevant intention can be satisfied) are complete normative reasons for action. For example, in David Gauthier's view:

> sometimes my life will go better if I am able to commit myself to an action even though, when or if I perform it, I expect that my life will not thenceforth go as well as it would were I to perform some alternative action. Nevertheless, it is rational to make such a commitment, and to restrict my subsequent deliberation to actions intentionally compatible with it, provided that in so doing I act in a way that I expect will lead to my life going better than I reasonably believe that it would have gone had I not made any commitment.[7]

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5 See M. Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reasoning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1987) and A. Mele, 'Intention, Belief, and Intentional Action,' *American Philosophical Quarterly* **26** (1989) 19-30, at 20-4 for non-reductive accounts.

6 See J. Mintoff, 'Buridan's Ass and Reducible Intentions,' *Journal of Philosophical Research* **26** (2001) 207-21.

7 D. Gauthier, 'Assure and Threaten,' *Ethics* **104** (1994) 690-721, at 707; cf. Bratman, 34, on intentions as *framework reasons*.

Thus it is rational for you to sincerely agree to mow my lawn, and, having agreed to, it is also rational for you to mow my lawn, since not mowing my lawn is intentionally incompatible with your prior actions (in particular, with your sincerely agreeing to do so), so long as mowing the lawn remains better for you than not having agreed to do so in the first place. For Gauthier, commitments are states not reducible to desires or preferences, but they nevertheless provide their own rational justifications for action.

Clearly, the chief task for any Commitment account is to explain how intentions can provide their own type of reasons. Sobel himself thinks that this supposed ability is entirely mysterious. In discussing this issue, he considers the view that 'adopting intentions that it would be rational to adopt is a way of "just like that" (presto!) making acts intended in them rational. Actions are made rational on Gauthier's view by the logic of rationality as it relates to intentions and actions — or by the magic of it, an orthodox Bayesian detractor might say' (Sobel, 244). Sobel obviously has little sympathy for the idea that intentions, and by extension intentional structures, could make intended actions rational. Intending to elaborate and defend the view elsewhere, I consider Commitment accounts no further.

So let us further suppose, for the sake of argument, that no intentions are normative reasons for action, at least not without the assistance of desires or preferences. Now given that desires, preferences, and intentions are the only hypothetically possible candidates as reasons for action, it follows from our assumptions so far that *all and only* desires and preferences are reasons for action. And given that an action is rational (in the sense of being rationally permitted) if and only if there is at least as much reason for that action as there is for any alternative action, it further follows that an action is rational if and only if one desires to perform that action no less than one desires to perform any alternative action; or, in other words, if and only if one weakly prefers (= does not disprefer) that action to any alternative action. So an intention makes an action rational if and only if it makes it that one weakly prefers some action to any alternative action. So the question for this paper now becomes how *this* is possible?[8]

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8 This paragraph assumes that desires, preferences, and intentions are the only hypothetically possible candidates as reasons for action, but (as a referee pointed out) the argument of the paper does not really depend on excluding the possibility of external reasons. If we assume instead that desires, preferences, intentions, *and external reasons* are the only hypothetically possible candidates as reasons for action, then it would follow instead that an intention makes an action rational if and only

There are two ways an intention might do this.

On what we might call *Constraint* accounts, adopting an intention to perform some action makes it the case that there are no alternatives to that action, thus vacuously satisfying the relevant condition. There are at least two ways this might happen. It might be that adopting an intention to A makes it the case that one cannot *perform* any alternative to A. 'In order to be sure that she does not answer the door, a person could, instead of handcuffing herself to the stove, do that sort of thing "all in her head"' (Sobel, 247). Or it might be that adopting an intention to A makes it the case that one cannot *will* any alternative to A, perhaps (as explained in more detail below) by preventing one from considering the reasons there are to perform alternative actions, or by disabling normal psychological inhibitions which would have one perform some alternative action. Note that the Constraint accounts to be considered in this paper will also come with the supposition that intentions are not reducible to desires and preferences (and, perhaps, beliefs), and the supposition that intentions do not provide complete normative reasons for action. After all, if intentions are reducible, or provide complete normative reasons, then we can explain perfectly well how they can make actions rational, and so need not bother with (as we shall see) the complications of arguing that adopting intentions renders us unable to act or will otherwise.

By contrast, on what we might call *Indirection* accounts, adopting an intention to perform some action does not affect the alternatives to that action, but rather, for each alternative, makes it the case that the intended action is now weakly preferred to that alternative. Michael Bratman canvasses (but does not endorse) three ways this might happen:

> First, intentions may have indirect *practical* relevance. This would happen if the agent's desires concerned the realization of earlier intentions. For example, she might just desire to stick to her guns or to improve her reputation for steadfastness. Second, intentions may have indirect *epistemic* relevance. The agent might see her prior intention to *A* as evidence that she will *A*, and so take her *A*-ing for granted.... Third, intentions may have an indirect *second-order* relevance. The agent might see her prior intention to *A* as evidence that *A*-ing is in fact favored by the balance of her present desire-belief reasons. (Bratman, 21, emphasis in original)

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if it makes it that one weakly prefers some action to any alternative, *or makes it that one has a new external reason for action*. But intentions cannot make it that one has a new *external* reason for action, and so it still follows that we only need to focus on how an intention can make it that one weakly prefers some action to any alternative. I shall therefore persist with the assumption in the text.

Again (and for the same type of reason), the Indirection accounts to be considered in this paper come with the supposition that intentions are not reducible to desire and preferences (and, perhaps, beliefs), and the supposition that intentions do not provide complete normative reasons for action (see also Bratman, 20).

These, then, are the four possible answers to the question of how intentions can make actions rational: the Reduction, Commitment, Constraint, and Indirection accounts. The specific purpose of this paper is to introduce and examine the Constraint and Indirection accounts. I shall argue that various formulations of each fails in one way or another. The significance of those failures is that if the arguments mentioned above against Reductive accounts are correct, and if arguments introduced below against Constraint and Indirection accounts are correct, we will have reason to examine closely the idea that our ability to make actions rational by intending them is to be explained by the Commitment account.

II Constraint Accounts

Constraint accounts, recall, claim that adopting an intention to perform some action makes it the case that there are no alternatives to that action, and in this way makes that action rational. We canvassed two ways this might happen: through rendering one unable to *do* otherwise; or through rendering one unable to *will* otherwise. Consider each in turn.

1. Constraint of Action.

Sobel provides a good example of the first. On what he calls his First Way, sometimes a rational agent can decide to do something otherwise irrational because so deciding involves rendering herself unable to do otherwise. 'A person can have a capacity to set her mind adamantly, and to make decisions for the future that are not only firm but irrevocable. By dint of sheer will, a person may be able to "tie her hands" and make necessary and inevitable some action, while making impossible every action that would otherwise have been a possible alternative to it' (Sobel, 247). In this way, you could make mowing my lawn rational, since, at the time of action, mowing my lawn will be the best thing you can do, by being the only thing you can do. But what is it to 'make necessary and inevitable' (or, as I shall say, to *necessitate*) some action, and how is this related to deciding to perform that action?

Sobel's own understanding seems to be that one can decide to perform some action, and *thereby* make that action necessary and inevitable.

Having said that a person may by dint of sheer will make necessary and inevitable some action, he illustrates this as follows: 'In order to be sure that she does not answer the door, a person could, instead of handcuffing herself to the stove, do that sort of thing "all in her head"' (Sobel, 247). This suggests that deciding, for example, not to answer the door is like handcuffing oneself to the stove, and that this decision by itself makes necessary and inevitable that one will not answer the door. While we are still left wondering what the mental equivalent is of handcuffing oneself to the stove, this passage does at least suggest that the only difference between handcuffing and necessitation is that the first is external while the second is internal.

The problem with this, however, is that if necessitation really is like handcuffing oneself to a stove, then it is not a process of forming an intention at all.

The reason for this is that, whether one endorses a reductive or functionalist account, a given mental state is an intention only if it plays certain functional roles. (The reductionist and functionalist need not differ over whether intentions have such roles. They differ, amongst other things, over whether certain combinations of desires and preferences, and perhaps beliefs, play those roles.) Bratman, for example, identifies the following: (i) intentions are *conduct-controlling pro-attitudes*, in that if an intention manages to survive until the time of action, and nothing else interferes, then it will control my action at that time; (ii) intentions have a *characteristic stability*, in they are disposed to persist without reconsideration, though given relevant new information, it is possible for one to reconsider them; and (iii) intentions are *reason-centered*, in that they involve a disposition to reason from this retained intention to yet further intentions which implement it, and to constrain other intentions in the light of this intention. (15ff.) Alfred Mele offers a similar list of functional roles (20-4ff.), and so I will assume for the sake argument that something like Bratman's list is correct.

However, the mental state induced by necessitating your doing A does not fully play any of the roles Bratman identifies. The mental state induced by necessitating your doing A is simply your inability (internally grounded) to do other than A (which, on the current suggestion, is like your being handcuffed to the stove, and unable to do other than not open the door). Now: (i) if your inability to do other than A survives until the time for doing A then it will control your doing A; however, this inability does not count as a 'pro-attitude' towards A (you may most desire to open the door, and struggle violently against the handcuffs); (ii) your inability to do other than A is disposed to persist; however, reconsideration is not possible (once handcuffed, you can do nothing to release the handcuffs, even if you realize you have made a big mistake); and (iii) your inability to do other than A will constrain other intentions;

however, there will be no sense in which you reason from this inability to do other than A to further intentions which implement your doing A (you do not reason from your being handcuffed to the stove to further intentions which implement your not opening the door). On Sobel's understanding, necessitation puts one in a mental state which is not an intention; necessitation is not a way to adopt intentions; and so, *a fortiori*, necessitation is not a way to form *intentions* which make actions rational.

Sobel, then, is wrong to claim that 'Inner necessities manufactured by reasoned irrevocable decisions would be deliberately controlled and contrived conditions not of driven and compulsive minds, but of in-charge and self-controlled "hyperautonomous" minds' (Sobel, 248). For even if the agent is in-charge and self-controlled before the manufacture of the inner necessity, she completely lacks charge and control after its creation (otherwise it would not be irrevocable). The First Way is not so much a method of making actions rational, but rather a method of making non-actions which, perforce, are not irrational.

2. *Constraint of Will.*

Perhaps necessitation needs to be understood differently. Scott Shapiro's views on the normativity of instrumental rules suggests an alternative.[9] On this understanding, one can decide to perform some action, and *thereby* form an intention so to act and at the same time make that intention irrevocable. We may illustrate this idea by supposing that, in order to make sure that she *does* answer the door, a person could, in the normal way, decide, and so intend, to answer the door, as well as bringing it about that she cannot revoke this intention. There are a number of ways this might happen (cf. Shapiro, 37ff.). The intention might prevent her from considering the reasons against acting on the intention. Or it might disable her normal psychological inhibitions, and

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9 In his 'Judicial Can't,' *Nous*, forthcoming, Shapiro considers the question of how the adoption of *rules* makes actions rational which otherwise would have been irrational. After endorsing the view that rules operate as constraints on action (31ff.), and rejecting the idea that they do this through rendering agents unable to act otherwise, he suggests that they do this through rendering agents unable to will otherwise, through repressing contrary reasons or disabling inhibitions against following the rule (37ff.). My description of the alternative understanding owes much to Shapiro's discussion, though Shapiro himself does not explicitly address the question of how the adoption of *intentions* can make actions rational. Thanks are also due to François Schroeter for independently suggesting this alternate understanding.

make her no longer able to withstand certain emotional pressures to act on the intention even if she is aware of the reasons not so to act. Either way, she will not be able to decide otherwise.

Unlike Sobel's account, it seems this alternative understanding of constraint can explain how adopting intentions make actions rational, consistently with the functional features of intention identified above. Since it came about in the normal way, her intention initially plays the functional roles identified by Bratman. It will be (i) a conduct-controlling pro-attitude, (ii) with characteristic stability, (iii) which is reason-centered. Further, the fact she brings it about that she cannot revoke it does *not* imply that her intention now fails to play these roles: (i) her intention to open the door remains a pro-attitude, and, if it survives until the time for opening the door, will still control that action at that time in the usual way intentions control actions; (ii) her intention is even more disposed to persist (though, admittedly, reconsideration is no longer an option);[10] (iii) her intention still constrains other intentions, and she is still disposed to reason from it to further actions, such as walking to the door and opening it. The fact she is unable to change her mind need not impair the usual functioning of her intention to open the door. If so, then one could in this way form intentions which make actions rational.

This may well be how constraint allows one to form intentions which make actions rational, but not on the suppositions we have made for the purposes of this paper. These suppositions, recall, were that intentions are not reducible to any combination of desires or preferences (and perhaps beliefs), and that no intentions are (together with beliefs) normative reasons for action. This meant that, for the purposes of this paper, all and only desires and preferences, together with certain beliefs, are normative reasons for action. Now, in general, a given event is an intentional action only if it is caused ('in the right way') and rationalized by some mental state or combination of mental states. Hence, in particular, a given event is an intentional action only if it is caused ('in the right way') and rationalized by a desire and a belief.[11] But what combination of desire (more generally 'pro-attitude') and belief rationalizes and causes our agent's walking to the door and opening it?

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10 As we are about to conclude, this is the only one of the roles Bratman identifies which the putative intention does not play. I assume for the sake of argument that the relevant mental state shares enough of the other features of intentions still to count as an intention.

11 See D. Davidson, 'Actions, Reasons, and Causes,' in D. Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon 1980) 3-19, who writes more generally of 'pro-attitudes.'

One suggestion is that her walking to the door and opening it is intentional because it is caused and rationalized by her intention to answer the door and belief that to do this she must walk to the door and open it. But this won't do. Since, on the suppositions we have made, intention-belief combinations are not reducible to desire-belief combinations, and since intention-belief combinations are not complete normative reasons for action, they do not rationalize behavior. Her behavior may be caused, but is not rationalized, by the suggestion combination.

A second suggestion is that it is intentional because it is caused and rationalized by her belief that walking to the door and opening it is (vacuously) preferable to any alternative action and a standing desire to do whatever she believes is preferable to any alternative action. But this won't do either. Since her intention to open the door is irrevocable, it follows that (obstacles aside) she will indeed open the door, and, more to the point, would still open the door even if she came to believe that doing so was no longer preferable. That's what makes her intention irrevocable. And this means she does not open the door *because* she believes doing so is preferable to any alternative. Her behavior may be rationalized, but is not caused, by the suggested combination.

Hence, even on this alternative understanding, our agent's walking to the door and opening it is not an intentional action at all, and can only be mere behavior. And this means that it is neither rational nor irrational. Even on the alternate understanding, then, necessitation causes behavior which is not an intentional action, which is neither rational nor irrational, and so, *a fortiori*, it is not a way to form intentions which make actions *rational*.

3. Is Constraint Realistic?

Furthermore, there is doubt about how widespread the ability to make actions rational through constraint really is.

Consider first the idea that intentions can make actions rational through constraint of action. Sobel claims that a capacity for irrevocable decisions would be 'useful for both perfect and imperfect agents in toxin puzzles, for deterrent threats when credible bluffs are not possible, and more generally, given agents' ''basic needs for coordination, both social and intra-personal''' (Sobel, 247). These considerations, however, give us no reason to think Sobel's First Way is available to anyone.

The more general consideration relating to the 'basic needs for coordination, both social and intra-personal' is well illustrated, in my view, by agreements. For example, our agreement that you mow my lawn for $30 involves the chance of mutual benefit: we each do better fulfilling our part of the agreement than neither doing so. But without your

making a decision (irrevocable or otherwise) to mow my lawn, it would not be rational for you to mow my lawn: we are not friends, and we both know that after I pay you, I will be going away for a few weeks, and that we may never need to meet again. Whether or not you are an ideal agent, you obviously would have some use for a capacity for irrevocable decisions: you could give me all the assurance I need to hand over my money.

However, while it would be useful to have a capacity for irrevocable decisions in such cases, it is just as useful but much less risky to have a capacity for *revocably resolute* decisions. Irrevocably deciding to A by rendering yourself incapable of doing otherwise, while it does bring it about that you do A, has undesirable side-effects. It results in the loss not only of the ability to A, but as well in the loss of the ability to reconsider your decision were you to discover that you had been mistaken in the exercise of this capacity, or that things had changed in the meantime. By contrast, revocably resolutely deciding to A has the same positive effect, of bring it about that you do A, without these undesirable side-effects. Since your decision is resolute, you would persist with your intention if you had no reason to reconsider. And since your decision is revocable, you would presumably reconsider were you to discover that you had reason to reconsider.

Admittedly, as Sobel suggests when he refers to 'toxin puzzles,' there are types of situation in which it would be more useful to have a capacity for irrevocable decisions, rather than a capacity for revocably resolute decisions. Sobel is referring to the familiar Toxin Puzzle, in which you are offered a million dollars, paid tomorrow morning, to intend at midnight to drink a vial of toxin tomorrow afternoon, whose only ill effect is a day of illness.[12] To get the million you need not drink the toxin, you only need to intend to do so at midnight, but the person making the offer will be able to tell whether or not you have the relevant intention. In this situation, it seems drinking the toxin would not be rational without the exercise of this capacity (better not to drink, if you can), and it thus seems one would have no revocable way of intending to drink the toxin (since even if one intended to drink, after tomorrow morning one rationally ought to revoke the intention and avoid drinking the stuff, but one's awareness at midnight of all this would preclude one's forming such an intention).

However, even if it would be most useful in such (unusual) situations to have a capacity for irrevocable decisions, that is no reason to suppose

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12 G. Kavka, 'The Toxin Puzzle,' *Analysis* **43** (1983) 33-6

that rational agents have such a capacity. For while it would be very useful for all of an agent's beliefs to be true, an ability to achieve this is hardly a requirement of rationality, even ideal rationality. Rather, on the Bayesian conception of rationality which Sobel himself endorses (see Sobel, 244), rationality of belief consists merely in the fact that an agent's beliefs and credences are coherently related in certain 'ideal' ways (specified by the probability axioms). Furthermore, even if rationality of beliefs consisted in more than coherence, and required the truth of some beliefs, these would most likely be things like perceptual beliefs in normal situations. Similarly, while it would be very useful for all of an agent's desires to be satisfied (in particular, your desire for the million dollars), an ability to achieve this is no requirement of rationality. Again, on the Bayesian conception, rationality of desire consists merely in the fact that an agent's desires and preferences are coherently related in certain 'ideal' ways (specified by the preference axioms). Furthermore, even if rationality of desires consisted in more than coherence, and required the efficacy of some desires, these would most likely not include million-dollar desires in toxin puzzles. The primary (if not only) abilities rational agents have, *qua* rational agents, are abilities to relate one belief or desire with other beliefs and desires.

Consider now the idea that intentions make actions rational through constraint of will. We have canvassed two mechanisms. First, repression: an intention might prevent one from considering the reasons against acting on the intention. Second, disinhibition: it might disable one's normal psychological inhibitions, and make one no longer able to withstand certain emotional pressures to act on the intention even though one might be aware of the reasons not to do so. Both mechanisms are well-known (cf. Shapiro, 37ff., from which the following points are taken). One of the powers of the human mind is that of repression, the ability to hide our reasons from ourselves, and so render ourselves incapable of taking those reasons into account in our behavior, the easiest way of inducing such a state being to habituate oneself to not prompting oneself for reasons in the first place. Further, the powers of the human mind to suffer from disinhibition are also well-known from people who act in monstrous ways through being subject to orders. Such people — such as the experimental subjects of Stanley Milgram's infamous experiments — are aware of the good reasons for acting otherwise, but seem unable to oppose the demands of the authority issuing the directives for them to continue.

These considerations, however, do not establish that these are the methods rational agents have to make actions rational.

There is little reason to think these methods are widespread. We may take as established by the above considerations the relatively weak claim that repression and disinhibition are common phenomena. However,

what needs to be established by the supporter of the Constraint account is the much stronger claim that repression and disinhibition (or some such mechanisms) are always the explanation of how intentions make actions rational. And this seems unlikely, particularly in light of the fact that it would be just as useful but less risky to have a capacity for revocably resolute decision-making. It seems, at least to me, that we are often aware of the reasons contrary to our intentions, and that we often do not stand over ourselves as Milgram did to his experimental subjects.

Furthermore, there is good reason to think anyone who exercised this capacity would not be a rational agent. Admittedly, their irrationality does not consist in the irrationality of what they do. They have made it the case that there are no alternatives to what they do, and so made it the case that what they do is weakly preferred to any alternative, and so (on our assumptions) made it the case that their action is rational. Indeed, I have argued that what they do is not intentional action at all, and so neither rational nor irrational. Rather, their irrationality consists in the irrationality of how they deliberate. They are irrational because their ability to conduct practical deliberation has been impaired: those who engage in repression get themselves not to consider information they saw was relevant; those who engage in disinhibition are aware of this information but are unable to let that information have its appropriate effect on their deliberations. Any method which renders one unable to revoke an intention by disabling one's deliberational capacities will, *ipso facto*, render one irrational whenever the decision is made.

I conclude, then, we should be skeptical about constraint mechanisms. Even so, Sobel claims (Sobel, 249) that there is nothing dubious about other ways of making actions rational by adopting intentions.

III Indirection Accounts

Indirection accounts, recall, claim that adopting an intention to perform some action, for each alternative, makes it the case that the intended action is now weakly preferred to that alternative, and in this way make that action rational. As we saw, Bratman canvasses three ways this might happen: through a standing preference to do what one intends (indirect pragmatic relevance); through taking one's intention as evidence that one will perform the intended action (indirect epistemic relevance); or as evidence about what action is favored by the balance of one's present desire-belief reasons (indirect second-order relevance).

Bratman himself objects to such views, arguing that they are in tension with our common sense understanding of means-end reasoning (Bratman, 22ff.). Suppose I need to decide how to get to San Francisco, but my desire-belief reasons in favor of taking the 101 balance those in favor

of the 280. Suppose, in particular, that I form an intention — albeit arbitrarily — to take the 101, and then perform means-end reasoning leading to a further intention to turn right (toward the 101), rather than left (toward the 280), at Page Mill. Bratman comments: 'In this means-end reasoning I treat my prior intention to take route 101 as *directly relevant* to the rationality of my derivative intention to turn right at Page Mill' (Bratman, 23, emphasis added). In other words, our common sense understanding has it that this intention and this belief *by themselves* provide a complete normative reason to justify my turning right: it seems I need do no more than say I intend to take the 101 and believe that to do so I must turn right. But indirection accounts insist that my intention to take the 101 and belief that to do so one needs to turn right at Page Mill are *not* themselves directly relevant to my decision to turn right, and that the complete normative reason for doing so needs to specify something extra (different on different Indirection accounts).

Perhaps appearances are deceptive, however, and so it is worth spending some time examining in more detail the three different Indirection accounts Bratman briefly identifies.

1. Intentions as Having Indirect Pragmatic Relevance.

Howard Sobel provides a good illustration of the view that intentions have what Bratman calls indirect pragmatic relevance.

On Sobel's so-called Second Way, sometimes a rational agent can decide to do something otherwise irrational if she prefers doing what she intends (in particular, when it pays so to decide). He says she can do this

> if she puts a premium on steadfastness and on being a person of her word to herself, the premium varying perhaps with the firmness with which she makes a decision. For, given such a premium, she could change her reasons for acts by committing herself to them. That she had committed herself to doing something, or resolved to do it, would be for her a new reason for doing it, much in the way in which promises to others provide most people with new reasons for doing what they have promised to do. (Sobel, 249)

Sobel thinks that this is at least part of the way decisions work for most ordinary people, but admits that there are limits to the value people place on steadfastness.

So it is congenial that there is a Third Way, if a rational agent disprefers failing to do what she intends. He asks us to

> consider a person who has the capacity by acts of commitment to make alternatives not impossible ... but difficult and costly according to the firmness of her commitment and consequent intention ... rather than [as on the Second Way] attaching bonuses that make new reasons for doing intended things given the attractiveness to her of steadfastness and her appreciation of its importance, this third way fixes penalties that make new reasons against failing to do intended actions. (Sobel, 250)

Either way can, it seems, explain how intentions can make actions rational. Consider again my decision to turn right at Page Mill, toward the 101, on my way to San Francisco. The key feature of this example that needs explaining is that after I decide to take the 101, but not before, I rationally *ought* to turn right at Page Mill. On the second way, if I intend to take the 101, and value steadfastness, then I will prefer to take the 101 to the 280 (since only the first displays steadfastness) and so prefer to turn right rather than left. A similar story can be told on the third way. In a nutshell, on Sobel's view of the Second and Third Ways, an intention generates a new reason to act only if, in addition, one prefers — whether for positive or negative reasons — to do what one intends.

However, intentions do not make actions rational in the way Sobel suggests, by having indirect pragmatic relevance.

Such a view implies, in some cases, that forming an intention renders one irrationally insensitive to new and relevant information.[13] Suppose that after I had decided to take the 101 but before I had done anything about it, I learn that a new section of the 280 has been opened, making the trip to San Francisco via the 280 slightly more convenient than the 101. How should I deal with this new information? It depends. Suppose that if I had had this piece of information before I had made the decision to take the 101 then I definitely would have decided to take the 280 instead, that it has no cost at all (internal or external) for me to change my mind, and so on. Intuitively, I ought to change my mind: I should forget about the decision to take the 101, and now decide instead to take to 280. The view we are currently considering, however, need not imply this. Suppose, for example, that the increase in my desire for taking the 280 which results from the new information (that the 280 is now slightly quicker) is less than the supposed increase in my desire for taking the 101 which results, on this view, from my preferring to do what I intend. Before my decision, I was indifferent between the 101 and the 280; after

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13 This general point is also made by D. Gauthier, 'Commitment and Choice: An Essay on the Rationality of Plans,' in *Ethics, Rationality, and Economic Behavior*, F. Farina, F. Vannucci, and D. Hahn, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon 1996), 218 and by T. Pink, *The Psychology of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996), 126ff., and also applies to Reductive accounts.

the decision but before the new information, my desire to take the 101 increased; and after the new information, my desire to take the 280 increased, but not as much as my desire to take the 101 had. The present view implies that I ought not change my mind, since I still desire to take the 101 more than I desire to take the 280. There is nothing to be said for the persistence of the intention to take the 101 — to repeat, if I had had the new information at the start, I would not have decided to take the 101 — but on Sobel's view I am stuck with it.

Furthermore, this view has untoward implications when we consider the question of whether intentions are not just (normative) reasons, but also motives. We are told that intentions generate new reasons only if, in addition, one has a preference to do what one intends. But what about motives? Here are three possible views. First, that intentions are inert: they have no motive force of their own, and get whatever motive force they do from a supplementary preference to do what one intends. Second, that intentions are one force amongst others: they have motive force of their own, but it is perfectly possible for contrary preferences to have greater motive force. Third, that intentions are predominant motive forces: they have motive force of their own which necessarily overrides any contrary preference. Consider these views in turn.

a. Intentions not as predominant motives.

First, the view that intentions are inert. That is, an intention gets both its normative force, and its motive force, only from an additional preference to do what one intends. This is the interpretation suggested by Sobel's analogy between the way intentions provide reasons and the way promises (considered solely as public speech-acts) provide reasons, since, on the conception of rationality which he endorses, a belief that one has said 'I promise to A' gets both its normative and its motive power only from a preference to do what one has said. Lacking such a preference, one need have no reason or motive to keep one's promise. This suggests that, similarly, lacking a preference to do what one intends, one need have no reason or motive to do so.

This account implausibly suggests that one could, in full consciousness, intend to do something which one is predominantly motivated not to do. On this interpretation of the motive force of an intention, an intention to A and a preference to do what one intends are distinct existences. This implies that a person could have the first without the second, and, worse still, that they could intend to A but prefer not to do what they intend (in the same way a person could promise to A but prefer not to do what they promised), and for them to be aware of all this. Now since, on this interpretation, the motive force of an intention derives only from an additional preference, this implies that a person could intend to A but be disposed not to do A, and be fully aware of this. But this is not

possible.[14] Someone who has no inclination to do something, who would do the opposite if they realized the time had come, and who is aware of all this, simply does not count as intending to do that thing. If, in full consciousness, I am predominantly motivated to take the 280, and I take the 280 when the time comes, it is implausible to suppose I had — indeed, still have — an intention to take the 101.

Second, the view that intentions are one motive force amongst others. That is, while an intention gets its normative force only from a supplementary preference, they have motive force of their own, though it is possible for contrary preferences to have greater motive force. This view, however, suffers from the same problem as the first. For it implies that a person could have an intention to A and so be (somewhat) motivated to A, even though they also have a preference not to do what they intend (and so they have predominant reason not to do A) whose motive force is greater than that of the intention (and so they have a predominant motive not to do A). Again, we have a person supposedly intending to A but, in full consciousness, predominantly motivated not to A. Again, that does not make sense.

b. Intentions as predominant motives.

Finally, then, consider the view that intentions are predominant motive forces. While they have no normative force, they do have a motive force of their own which necessarily overrides any contrary preference. In my opinion, this is the most sensible view of the motive force of intentions, for (as we saw above) one of the distinctive functional roles of intention is that of *controlling* conduct, and a motive state will play this role only if, together with beliefs about means, its motive force cannot be overridden by contrary motive forces.

The problem with this interpretation is that it implies that the specific actions which implement a given intention are not themselves intentional, and so are neither rational nor irrational. For on this interpretation

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14 But, I have been asked by Bruno Verbeek, might they not be weak-willed? And if weak-willed, could they not intend to A but in full consciousness be disposed (due to their weakness) not to A? They may indeed be weak-willed, but this is no problem. First, the weakness of such a person does not consist in a failure to act as they intend (for, to repeat, they have no intention to A), but rather consists in a failure to intend as they judge (since, presumably, they judge that they ought all-things-considered to do A). Second, even if they really did intend to A, they are hardly rational, since they are nevertheless disposed to act against what they judge they ought all-things-considered to do. So it would still follow Sobel has failed to show how a *rational* agent could use the Second and Third Ways to make actions rational by intending them.

of the motive force of an intention, it follows that the intention, perhaps together with beliefs about the means to satisfying the intention, will be *causally sufficient* (barring obstacles) for the intended action — the only thing that could prevent this (barring obstacles) is a contrary motive force, and on the view we have been assuming this can only come from preferences. However, on our assumption about the (lack of) normative force of an intention, the intention, together with beliefs about means, provide *no reason at all* for the intended action. This conjunction of claims is a problem because it runs against the view that a given event is an intentional action only if it is caused ('in the right way') and rationalized by a desire (or 'pro-attitude') and a belief.

Suppose, to take a trite example, you ask me why I turned right at Page Mill Road, and I say it is because I believed that to take the 101 one needs to turn right. This response makes my behavior intelligible only if we suppose it is not the *complete* explanation of my behavior, only if we assume that the complete explanation necessarily includes a reference to some pro-attitude — such as a preference to take the 101. But suppose this is not so, that the complete explanation of my behavior does not include any reference to some preference which acted in concert with the belief. In that case, if the belief unaccompanied by preferences really is causally sufficient for my turning right, then since the belief unaccompanied by preferences is no reason at all for turning right, it would follow that it is impossible to make sense of my turning right as an intentional action. To mention that what one did is a means to some end one does not have leaves one's behavior completely mysterious.

This conclusion does not change if we supplement the belief with an intention to take the 101, but keep our assumption about the (lack of) normative force of intentions. For suppose you again ask me why I turned right at Page Mill Road, and this time I say it is because I intended to take the 101, and believed that to take the 101 one needs to turn right. Now, if one assumes that intentions, together with beliefs, can provide normative reasons for action, this is a perfectly good explanation of my behavior. But not otherwise, since in that case the intention-belief combination differs in no important way from the mere belief (mentioned in the previous paragraph) that to take the 101 one needs to turn right. Just like that belief, the intention-belief combination is a predominant motive, but no reason at all, for that behavior. Thus, since, on Sobel's view, the intention-belief combination, unaccompanied by preferences, is causally sufficient for my turning right, and since the intention-belief pair, unaccompanied by preferences, is no reason at all for turning right, then it is again impossible to make sense of my turning right as an intentional action. It follows from Sobel's view that an intention causes behavior which is not an intentional action, which is neither rational nor

irrational, and so, *a fortiori*, it is not a way to form intentions which make actions *rational*.

2. Intentions as Having Indirect Second-Order Relevance.

The third view Bratman canvasses is that intentions have what he calls indirect second-order relevance. On this view, 'The agent might see her prior intention to *A* as evidence that *A*-ing is in fact favored by the balance of her present desire-belief reasons; or as evidence that the costs of reconsidering that intention would not be worth it, from the standpoint of her present desires and beliefs' (Bratman, 21). Bratman says no more, but the idea seems to be this. Wanting to bring her deliberations to some conclusion, an agent adopts an intention to A (say) as a way of summarizing the fact that A-ing seemed at that time to be favored by the balance of her desire-belief reasons. Wanting to avoid the costs of reconsideration, she thenceforth takes that intention to be sufficient evidence that A-ing is favored by the balance of her desire-belief reasons (subject to sufficiently important new information).[15] And, preferring to do what she has sufficient evidence to believe is favored by her desire-belief reasons, she comes to prefer to A (if she doesn't already).[16] Her intention has *second-order* relevance because it gets its normative force from a second-order desire to do what she believes she most desires.

It is clear how such a view would have to explain how intentions can make actions rational. Consider, for example, my decision to take the 101 (and subsequent decision to turn right). In deciding to take the 101, I come to take the resulting intention to take the 101 to be sufficient evidence that doing so is favored by the balance of my desire-belief reasons. And since I prefer to do what I have sufficient evidence to

15 She takes her intention to be *evidence* for, rather than (say) entailing, a judgment that A is favored by her present desire-belief reasons, since she will be aware that her original deliberations might have been mistaken. However, she takes her intention to be *sufficient* (subject to new information), rather than (say) one piece of evidence amongst others, since if it were just one piece of evidence amongst others then she would need to consider all the other evidence before acting, and so would forego the benefits of having adopted the intention in the first place.

16 This account must presume the agent prefers to do what she has evidence to believe is favored by her desire-belief reasons. For the distinctive feature of this account is that an action, A, is made rational by her evidence that A-ing is favored by her desire-belief reasons, but (on the assumptions we have made in this paper) such evidence will provide reason to A only if accompanied by an appropriate desire or preference, and the appropriate preference seems to be a preference to do what she has evidence to believe is favored by her desire-belief reasons.

believe is favored by my desire-belief reasons, I therefore come to prefer to take the 101 (and to turn right), and so make taking the 101 (and turning right) uniquely rational.

It is just as clear, however, that intentions do not make actions rational by having indirect second-order relevance.

In the first place, this account cannot explain how a *rational* agent could use intentions to make actions rational. Consider my decision to take the 101. Before I have decided whether to take the 101 or the 280, all my evidence points to the fact that the desire-belief reasons in favor of the 101 *balance* those in favor of the 280. But, since (we are assuming) intentions are not reducible to desires or preferences, adopting an intention to take the 101 does not alter the balance of desire-belief reasons. And so, before I have made any decision, an intention to take the 101 is *no evidence whatsoever* that taking the 101 is favored by the balance of my desire-belief reasons. This means that, if I am rational, I would *not* take such an intention to be evidence, let alone sufficient evidence, that taking the 101 is so favored. Or consider your decision to mow my lawn, promoted by my offer of thirty dollars. Before you decide to do this, all your evidence points to the fact that your desire-belief reasons favor *not* mowing my lawn (given the effort it involves), and so your intention to mow the lawn will be *no evidence whatsoever* to think otherwise, and, if rational, you would not take it to be. An indirect second-order account cannot explain how an intention can make an action rational (if it was not rational already).

In the second place, this account has the same problem as the suggestion that intentions have indirect pragmatic relevance, but are not predominant motives (see III.1.a above). The account suggests that intending to A and taking this intention to be sufficient evidence that A-ing is favored by one's desire-belief reasons, and preferring to do what one believes is favored by one's desire-belief reasons, are distinct existences. This implies that one could do the first without the second, and, worse still, that one could do the first while preferring the opposite, and be fully aware of this. For example, it implies that I could intend to take the 101 and take this as evidence that the 101 is favored by my desire-belief reasons, while preferring to do the opposite of what I believe is favored by my desire-belief reasons. In other words, it implausibly implies that I could intend to take the 101 while preferring to take the 280 and while actually taking the 280, and be fully aware of this. Any view — such as Sobel's in III.1.a, and this one now — which claims that intentions are not predominant motives will suffer from this problem.

3. Intentions as Having Indirect Epistemic Relevance.

Thomas Pink provides a good example of the view that intentions have what Bratman calls indirect epistemic relevance. Pink's view of decision-making is that 'the point of deciding to act is to *determine* that one does act as decided [conditional on there being no subsequent decision-relevant belief change]. Deciding to act is not just about raising the chance somewhat of the action decided upon' (Pink, 74, emphasis in original). He explains later how such a conception of decision operates:

> Decisions to do A later ... give rise to persisting intentions. And so they make it *more likely* that before doing A, I shall have performed other actions on the assumption that I may or shall do A. Such actions tend to increase the benefit I derive from doing A.... On the other hand, taking a decision to do A later, because of this co-ordinatory influence, also *increases the likelihood* of my performing actions I shall regret performing unless, in the end, I do A. (Pink, 130, emphasis added)

The idea seems to be that, in deciding to A, I come to expect that I will A (since decisions determine actions, subject to no decision-relevant belief change), and so come to expect that I will take the preliminary means to A (since, obviously, I will not do A without taking the preliminary means), and so desire more to A (since, Pink suggests, taking the preliminary means will make doing A more beneficial, and not doing A more costly).

This view can explain how decisions can (as Pink puts it) perpetuate pre-existing motives. To see how, consider an example of Pink's own:

> by deciding to holiday in France [more generally, by coming to intend to A] well in advance of actually going, I am led to put deposits down on hotel rooms in France, [etc.]... These actions increase what I gain from going to France on holiday. I have a better prepared and so more enjoyable holiday. But, at the same time, these same actions increase what I lose if I do not eventually act as decided. If I do not actually holiday in France, the actions will cost me ... the deposit money [etc., and so I desire more to A]. (Pink, 75)

Before his decision, his desire-belief reasons in favor of holidaying in France presumably *outweighed* those against. Now if his decision determines (or even just raises his expectation somewhat) that he will holiday in France, then it will determine that he will book hotels etc. And this means that the benefits of holidaying in France and the costs of not doing so will increase, and so he will desire more to holiday in France. Now, given the fact that his desire-belief reasons already favored holidaying in France, this increase in his desire to do so will confirm this favoritism.

This view also seems able to explain how decisions sometimes make actions (uniquely) rational. Before my decision, my desire-belief reasons in favor of the 101 by hypothesis *balanced* those in favor of the 280. Now

if my decision determines (or even just raises my expectation somewhat) that I will take the 101, then it will determine that I turn right at Page Mill, and before that get into the right lane, etc. And this means that the benefits of the 101 and the costs of the 280 will increase (to take the 280, I will have to get back into the left lane), and so I will desire more the 101. Now, given the fact that my desire-belief reasons were originally balanced between the 101 and 280, this increase in my desire to take the 101 will make it that my desire-belief reasons in favor of the 101 now outweigh those for the 280. Immediately after deciding to take the 101, and even before I get to Page Mill, I come to prefer the 101, and so have made the 101 uniquely rational.

However, intentions do not make actions rational in the way Pink suggests, by having indirect epistemic relevance.

In the first place, this account will not always explain how intentions make actions rational which otherwise would have been irrational. Consider, for example, your decision to mow my lawn. Before your decision, your desire-belief reasons in favor of mowing my lawn by hypothesis *were outweighed by* those against. Now if your decision determines (or, worse still, just raises your expectation somewhat) that you will mow my lawn, then it will determine that you will drive to my house, unload the mower, etc. However, this is no reason to think that you will desire *more* to mow my lawn. For unlike hotel bookings on Pink's holiday to France and my turning right at Page Mill on the way to the 101, your driving to my house and unloading the mower does not seem to make mowing my lawn any more attractive to you. Furthermore, even if you will desire more to mow my lawn, this is no reason to think that you will now *prefer* to mow my lawn. Given the fact that your desire-belief reasons to mow my lawn were originally outweighed by those against, this supposed increase in your desire to mow my lawn may not be strong enough to reverse this favoritism.[17] Even after deciding to mow my lawn, and even after driving to my house and unloading the mower, etc., you may still prefer not to mow my lawn. An indirect epistemic account cannot explain in such cases how an intention can make an action rational (if it was not rational already).

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17 This problem is even worse if (contrary to Pink's claim) a decision to A does not determine that one will A, but only raises the expectation somewhat that A will be performed. For then one will not be certain (but only raise the expectation somewhat) that one will perform the preliminary means to A, and so not be certain (but only, etc.) that one will incur increased benefits by doing A and increased costs by not doing A — even assuming there are such benefits and costs. The increase in one's desire to A will be correspondingly smaller.

In the second place, this account has the same problem as the suggestion that intentions have indirect pragmatic relevance, but are predominant motives (see III.1.b above). For as we have seen, this account states that intentions are predominant motives: recall, 'the point of deciding to act is to *determine* that one does act as decided. Deciding to act is not just about raising the chance somewhat of the action decided upon' (Pink, 74, emphasis in original). That is, an intention, perhaps together with beliefs about the means to satisfying the intention, will be *causally sufficient* (barring obstacles) for the intended action. However, given our assumptions at the beginning of the paper, an intention, together with beliefs about means, provide *no reason at all* for the intended action. This is a problem (as we saw) because, for example, it would mean implausibly that my turning right at Page Mill would not be an intentional action, and so neither rational nor irrational. Any view — such as Sobel's view in III.1.b, and Pink's here — which claims that intentions are predominant motives but no reasons at all for action will suffer from this problem.[18]

IV Conclusion

I conclude by summarizing what has been an involved discussion. Rational agents, it seems, are capable of adopting intentions which make actions rational and which they would otherwise have no reason to do, or even have reason not to do. How is this possible? Now, I did not in this paper consider Reductive and Commitment accounts, and assumed for the sake of argument that intentions are not reducible to desires and not themselves reasons for action. Rather, I considered Constraint and Indirection accounts, and argued in various ways that both should be

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18 It should be noted that, after reflecting on Bratman's example involving the decision to take the 101, Pink ends up claiming that intentions provide what he calls '*rationality-constitutive* requirements' for action. He says: 'Rationality-constitutive requirements just specify the proper functioning of our capacity for applying *end-derived* [=desire-belief] requirements.... One example of such is the requirement that if we intend the end, we should also intend the means' (Pink, 134, emphasis in original). However, saying that an intention together with a belief about means *requires* some action is very close, it seems to me, to saying that they together are a *complete normative reason* for that action, albeit a reason of a different type from what Pink calls end-derived requirements. See Bratman, 34, on a similar distinction between *framework* and *desire-belief* reasons, and J. Mintoff, 'Are Decisions Motive-Perpetuating?' *Analysis* **59** (1999) 266-75 on intentions as motive (and reason) generators.

rejected. Some arguments depended on the claim that intentions play certain functional roles, central amongst these being the fact that they are conduct-controlling pro-attitudes. This eliminated Constraint of Action accounts (Section II.1), Indirect Pragmatic accounts which assume intentions are *not* predominant motives (III.1.a), and Indirect Second-Order accounts (III.2). Other arguments depended on the claim that an action is rational or irrational only if it is intentional, and is intentional only if it is caused and rationalized by some mental state or combination of mental states.[19] This eliminated Constraint of Will accounts (II.2), Indirect Pragmatic accounts which assume intentions *are* predominant motives (III.1.b), and Indirect Epistemic accounts (III.3). If all this is right, and if Reductive explanations should also be rejected, then we have good reason to investigate the plausibility of what I called Commitment accounts. That investigation, however, I leave for another occasion.

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19 A defender of one of the challenged accounts (a referee has pointed out) could claim that the analysis of what is to count as an intentional act should refer only to causes (or motivating reasons), in particular causation by intentions, and not to (normative) reasons. An act might be intentional if done with an intention, if it had a cause in the form of an intention, even if that intention is not itself a reason for that action and there is no other motive that is a reason.

But what analysis could such a defender give of what is to count as acting with an intention? Consider the following cases: (i) I turn right at Page Mill because I intend to take the 101 and believe I must turn right to do so; (ii) I turn right at Page Mill because I intend to take the 101 and believe I must turn *left* to do so. In both cases my action is caused by an intention, but, presumably, in case (i) I act with an intention (and so intentionally) while in case (ii) I do not (if such a case is even possible). What is the difference? The obvious suggestion is that in case (i) my intention and belief together are a *reason* to turn right, while in case (ii) they are no reason at all to do this — but not if (as our defender claims) intentions are not reasons for action. Another suggestion is that in case (i) I believe that what I do is a means to, or a part of, or etc., what I intend, while in case (ii) this is not so — but it seems the plausibility of this suggestion, and how the defender ends up filling out the 'etc.,' will depend implicitly on the idea that if an action is a means to, or a part of, or etc., some action we intend then that is a *reason* to perform that action. And so the onus is on the defender of one of the challenged accounts to explain what it is for an action to be done with an intention without explicitly or implicitly relying on the idea that intentions are reasons for action. If they cannot, then while an act might indeed be intentional if done with an intention, one acts on an intention only if that intention is a reason for that action.