4. To say that a person is open to rational criticism is not to say that this person is *irrational*, since a person can properly be called irrational only if he or she is open to severe rational criticism (see Parfit 1984, 119; and Scanlon 1998, 25–30).

5. More exactly, it is often called "Humeanism about normative reasons," to distinguish it from Humeanism about motivating reasons (see, e.g., Smith 1994). Our focus in this chapter is on normative reasons.

6. We say "a new *empirical* belief" to exclude evaluative or normative beliefs, such as beliefs about what an agent has reason to do.

7. Williams himself does not call his conception of practical rationality "procedural." This term is applied to Williams's view by Parfit 1997.

8. It may be thought that (P3) should be formulated without "by rational deliberation." But, given that Williams's conclusion is that all practical reasons are internal, and given how Williams defines internal reasons, he either is committed to (P3) as we have formulated it, or his conclusion does not follow.

9. Here and in what follows, "φ" represents the performance of an action.

10. We draw here on Harman 1977. In essentials, Harman's views have not changed, as is apparent in Harman 1996.

11. For Harman's endorsement of this, see Harman 1977, 87, 125–28.

12. In Williams 1985, Williams attacks "the morality system" (chap. 10). But Williams has since admitted an important place for judgments like "φ-ing is wrong" (Williams 1995c, 19–34, 32).

13. This is a leitmotiv of Harman's work in ethics. See, for example, Harman 1975, Harman 1977, 84, 106, and Harman 1996.

14. To hold this is compatible with holding that one's own future well-being is less important than some other things, such as the well-being of others.

15. This will be most clearly true on an expressivist view about the meaning of judgments about reasons for action, such as R. M. Hare's view that the meaning of normative judgments (e.g., "A has reason to φ") does not determine the truth conditions of such judgments (Hare 1981, esp. 207).

CHAPTER 5

HUMEAN RATIONALITY

MICHAEL SMITH

HUME famously thought that the scope of human reason was far more limited than many of us are inclined to think. As he puts it at one point, in an often quoted passage:

> 'Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger. 'Tis not contrary to reason for me to chuse my total ruin, to prevent the least uneasiness of an Indian or person wholly unknown to me. 'Tis as little contrary to reason to prefer even my own acknowledg'd lesser good to my greater, and have a more ardent affection for the former than the latter. . . . In short, a passion must be accompany'd with some false judgement, in order to its being unreasonable; and even then 'tis not the passion, properly speaking, which is unreasonable, but the judgement. (Hume 1739, 416)

In his discussion of this passage Mark Johnston suggests that "an adequate response might be: not contrary to reason in one sense perhaps, but brutally insane, psychopathically callous and demonically indifferent" (Johnston 1989, 161). He goes on to develop an alternative sense of the term "reason" according to which the preferences Hume cites would indeed count as contrary to reason. But while Johnston's response seems to me admirably to capture the reactions many of us have when we first read the passage just quoted, and though I agree with him that we need to develop alternative senses of the terms "reason" and, for that matter, of its cousin "rationality," it seems to me that we must face up to the fact that the view Hume puts forward in this passage is difficult to avoid. Hume gives a plausible argument for the claim that the terms "reason" and "rationality" have just one sense, a sense that

makes what he says seem inevitable (see also Hooker and Streumer, chap. 4, O'Neill, chap. 6, and McNaughton and Rawling, chap. 7, this volume).

In what follows I will begin by explaining how, as I understand things, Hume is led to his (grotesque) conclusion. The explanation lies in his view that the concepts of reason and rationality are best explained by reference to their relations in the theoretical domain, specifically in the domain of deductive reasoning. As we will see, this leads Hume to take a very radical view about the scope of reason and rationality even in other aspects of the theoretical domain—namely in the domain of inductive reasoning. I will then consider how we might avoid Hume's conclusion. The issue, to anticipate, is whether, once we liberalize our understandings of the terms "reason" and "rationality" in the way required to take a more sensible view about the nature of reason and rationality in the theoretical domain, there is a stable position left to take in the practical domain that retains anything of the spirit of Hume's remarks. The question, in other words, is whether a sensible liberalizing of Hume on the nature of reasons and rationality sends us down a slippery slope all the way to Kant.

Before starting the discussion proper, however, let me offer the following disclaimer. Though in what follows I will speak incautiously about what Hume's views are about the nature of reasons and rationality, my real interest lies not in what Hume, the historical figure, thought about these matters. Indeed, I have become convinced that Hume's own views are far more complicated, and certainly far more controversial and beholden to the times at which he was writing, than they are normally taken to be in contemporary discussions (compare Stroud 1977, Baier 1991, Snare 1991, Millgram 1995, Bricke 1996, and Owen 2000). What really interests me, then, is not what Hume himself thought about these matters, but rather, as the title of the chapter makes plain, what a Humean, a contemporary philosopher whose philosophical views have been greatly influenced by certain of Hume's writings, would have to say (see especially Davidson 1963; Williams 1980, 1995a; Gauthier 1986; Bratman 1987, 1999; Mele 1987, 1992, 1995; Lewis 1988; Copp 1997; Dreier1997; Railton 1997; Blackburn 1998).

1.   THE RADICAL HUMEAN VIEW ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REASONS AND RATIONALITY

Our topic is to be the relationship between reasons and rationality. Note that we can make a rough distinction between two domains in which these concepts have

application: the theoretical domain and the practical domain. The theoretical domain is the realm of belief formation: that is, the realm in which we come to a view about the way the world is. The practical domain, by contrast, is the realm of desire formation: that is, the realm in which we become disposed to make the world be one way rather than another.

Hume's view, of course, was that the theoretical and practical domains are utterly distinct from each other. This is because, inter alia, belief and desire can always be pulled apart, at least modally. No matter what beliefs a subject has, and what desires, we can always imagine a possible world in which the subject has those beliefs but has different desires, and vice versa (Smith 1987, 1988). Hume thus rejects the possibility of there being any beliefs that are desires (though contrast McDowell 1978): that is, to use James Altham's wonderful term, the possibility of besires (Altham 1986). It is also because, as Hume sees things, no belief can rationally produce a desire: "Thus it appears, that the principle, which opposes our passion, cannot be the same with reason, and is only call'd so in an improper sense. We speak not strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat of passion and of reason. Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them" (Hume 1739, 415). Note, however, that we haven't yet assumed that the theoretical and the practical domains are utterly distinct from each other in either of these ways. For all that we have said so far, these domains may well overlap. Whether or not they overlap, and if they do the extent to which they do, will emerge in what follows.

With the distinction between the theoretical and practical domains in place, let's now restrict our attention to the theoretical domain and ask, What is it to have a reason, and rationally to form beliefs on the basis of that reason, in that domain? As I understand it, Hume thinks that we should answer this question by generalizing from a case in which reasons and rationality stand in a more or less transparent relation, namely from the case of deductive reasoning.

Suppose I believe that p, and I believe that if p then q, and I rationally go on to form the belief that q. What should I say if I were to be asked what my reasons were for forming that belief? The answer would seem plain enough. I should say that my reasons for forming the belief that q were that p and that if p then q. Put another way, I should say that p, and if p then q, are the reasons why q. Of course, the fact that I should say this does not entail that there are, in fact, reasons why q. All that it entails is that, if things are as I take them to be, then there are reasons why q: namely that p and that if p then q.

This, in turn, suggests an explanation of why the transition between my beliefs is a rational one, an explanation that presupposes the possibility of there being reasons why the things I believe are true. Suppose I begin by believing that p, and believing that if p then q, and, on the basis of these beliefs, come rationally to believe that q. The obvious explanation of the rational transition between my

beliefs is that, inter alia, there is an isomorphism between their relations and the logical relations between the propositions I believe, that is, the propositions which give the reasons why q (at least if things are as I take them to be).

This idea can be neatly captured in table 5.1 (compare Pettit and Smith 1990). What we have on the left hand side is a set of transitions between psychological states, my beliefs, and what we have on the right hand side is a set of relations between the propositions to which I would advert in giving expression to my various beliefs: that is, the propositions I believe. The suggestion just made is that the explanation of why a rational transition from the beliefs mentioned in (1) and (2) to the belief mentioned in (3) is possible—in other words, the explanation of why the beliefs mentioned in (1) and (2) may rationally give rise to the belief mentioned in (3)—is that the propositions mentioned in (1') and (2') logically entail the proposition mentioned in (3'). The possibility of a rational transition between beliefs in this way seems to presuppose the possibility of there being independent reasons. The rationality of the transitions between the beliefs is derived from the logical relations between the propositions believed. (A good question to ask at this point is how beliefs are supposed rationally give rise to other beliefs. What is the mechanism by which this happens? There must be such a mechanism because, since irrationality is possible, the mere possession of the beliefs responsible for the rational production cannot be sufficient all by itself. I will, however, postpone answering this question until later.)

It will, I hope, be admitted that this is an attractive, even if somewhat revisionary, account of the relationship between reasons and rationality in the case of deductive reasoning (see also Broome 1999, 2001b). The idea that reasons are propositions that logically entail the propositions for which they are reasons would, after all, seem to comport well with our prereflective conception of a reason as a consideration that justifies (Smith 1987, 1994; Dancy 2000). For the considerations that justify do indeed seem to be propositions. Moreover it also seems plausible to suppose that the rationality of forming a belief depends on our believing there to be reasons for doing so—or, more generally, that the rationality of a psychological transition must have something to do with the possibility of there being reasons for that psychological transition. To this extent, rationality does indeed seem to presuppose that we believe there to be reasons.

Having said that, however, it must also be admitted that the account is at least somewhat revisionary. For it entails that whenever we talk of having reasons for our beliefs, as we often do and indeed just did, we are at best speaking loosely. What we ordinarily describe as "reasons for beliefs" are really reasons why the propositions we believe are true: the reasons are true propositions that logically entail the propositions we believe. Strictly speaking we should therefore say that when people believe a proposition that, if it were true, would provide a reason why some other proposition they believe is true, then the first belief of theirs can make the second belief rational.

Table 5.1

Transitions among Psychological States	Relations between Propositions
(1) I believe that p	(1') p
(2) I believe that if p then q	(2') If p then q
So (3) I believe that q	Therefore (3') q

Attractive though it might be, however, the generalization of this Humean account of the relationship between reasons and rationality beyond the realm of deductive reasoning has some rather disturbing consequences. There are, after all, many cases in which we would ordinarily take there to be (speaking loosely again) reasons for forming beliefs where the reasons in question do not have this character. Think of cases in which we have inductive evidence, such as those cases in which we form a belief as a result of inference to the best explanation.

Suppose, for example, I believe that the barometer is falling, and I believe that the best explanation of the barometer's falling is that something is happening that will cause it to rain tomorrow. Suppose further that, as a result, I go on to form the belief that it will rain tomorrow. For this to be a case of rational belief formation the transition between my psychological states would have to be one whose structure is isomorphic to a set of logical relations between the propositions believed. The problem is, however, that there is no such structure, as table 5.2 makes plain. The propositions mentioned in (4') and (5') do not satisfy the condition formulated above for their being reasons for the proposition mentioned in (6'): that the barometer is falling, and that the best explanation of barometer's falling is that something is happening that will cause it to rain tomorrow, simply does not logically entail that it will rain tomorrow. Nor will it help to suggest that the evidence in any real case would be much richer than we have supposed it to be in this case. For the crucial point is that the hallmark of inductive reasons—reasons such as those provided by the consideration that something or other is the best explanation of some aspect of our experience—is precisely that they do not logically entail the conclusions that we think that they are reasons for.

The upshot is thus that, if a condition on a set of propositions being reasons why some conclusion is true is that those propositions logically entail that conclusion, then it follows that there are no inductive reasons. Hume famously embraces this conclusion. As he puts it at one point, "Even after the observation of a frequent or constant conjunction of objects, we have no reason to draw any inference concerning any object beyond those of which we have had experience" (Hume 1739, 139). But if the category of inductive reasons is empty, and if the rationality of a transition between beliefs presupposes the possibility of reasons,

Table 5.2

Transitions among Psychological States	Relations between Propositions
(4) I believe that the barometer is falling	(4') The barometer is falling
(5) I believe that the best explanation of the barometer's falling is that something is happening that will cause it to rain tomorrow	(5') The best explanation of the barometer's falling is that something is happening that will cause it to rain tomorrow
So (6) I believe that it will rain tomorrow	Therefore (6') It will rain tomorrow

then it follows that there is no such thing as rationally forming a belief on the basis of inductive evidence; no such thing as, for example, rationally inferring to the best explanation. The formation of beliefs on these bases is not rational. The beliefs mentioned in (4) and (5) cannot rationally give rise to the belief mentioned in (6).

Having seen the way in which Hume is forced to distinguish, within the theoretical domain, between those beliefs that do and those that do not come within the orbit of reasons and rationality, it should come as no surprise that he holds a radical view in the practical domain. Consider the example he gives at the beginning of the passage quoted at the outset.

Hume tells us that it is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger. In order to resist this conclusion consistently with the view of reasons and rationality we have derived from the deductive case, we can now see that we would have to suppose that its being the case that scratching my finger would cause the destruction of the whole world (supposing this to be the case) provides a reason for its being the case that . . . a reason for its being the case that what? A moment's reflection on that question should make it plain that the practical case is even more problematic from the point of view of reason and rationality than the inductive case.

Table 5.3 makes the problem vivid. For there to be a rational transition from the belief mentioned in (7) to the preference mentioned in (8), we can now see, following Hume, there would have to be an isomorphism between the relations between this belief and preference and the logical relations between the propositions to which I would advert in giving expression to the belief and preference. But it seems that there is no proposition to which I would advert in giving expression to my preference not to scratch my finger. Propositions are what I advert to in giving expression to my beliefs, as in (7'), not my preferences; hence the question marks expressing bewilderment in (8'). But in that case it follows that there are no such logical relations, and hence no such isomorphism. If Hume is right that rationality presupposes the possibility of a logical relationship between

Table 5.3

Transitions among Psychological States	Relations between Propositions
(7) I believe that scratching my finger would cause the destruction of the whole world	(7') Scratching my finger would cause the destruction of the whole world
So (8) I prefer not to scratch my finger	Therefore (8') ???

independent reasons, then there is no such thing as a rational transition from the belief mentioned in (7) to the preference mentioned in (8).

The practical case is thus even more deeply problematic than the inductive case. In the inductive case at least there are some propositions to which I would advert in giving expression to my beliefs: there are, in other words, considerations that purport to justify. The problem in that case is that, though there are such propositions, they don't stand in the required logical relations to each other. In the practical case, however, the problem is that there are no propositions to be so much as candidates for propositions that stand in the required logical relations. It will emerge presently that this difference between the two cases is of some significance.

It might be thought that we could avoid this conclusion if we were to suppose, as some have, that we advert to optatives or imperatives in giving expression to our preferences (Hare 1952, Goldman 1970, Castañeda 1975, Kenny 1989). According to this view my preference not to scratch my finger is expressed in the claim "Would that it be the case that I not scratch my finger," or perhaps in the claim "Let it be the case that I do not scratch my finger." If these theorists were right, then the idea is we could develop a logic that would make it plain which logical relations obtain between claims of these kinds and more ordinary propositions. But attempts to develop a logic of optatives or imperatives have not been promising, leading some to conclude that there is no such logic (Harman 1986). Moreover, others have suggested that the best way in which to understand why optatives and imperatives sometimes seem to stand in logical relations, insofar as they do, is because they are really just disguised propositions (Lewis 1970). According to this view, "Let it be the case that I do not scratch my finger" means much the same as "I command myself to scratch my finger." But, of course, if this is right then it turns out that there is no special class of expression that expresses our preferences. For the proposition "I command myself to scratch my finger" is plainly an expression of my belief that I command myself to scratch my finger, not my preference to scratch my finger.

We can now see why Hume holds that the theoretical and the practical domains are utterly distinct from each other. For he has chosen, in the belief mentioned in (7) and the preference mentioned in (8), a belief and desire that are

perhaps among the most promising candidates for a belief that is a desire (or a besire), if such there be; or, if there are none such, for a belief that is rationally related to a desire, again if such there be. But the belief mentioned in (7) and the desire mentioned in (8) are plainly distinct existences, for we have no difficulty in imagining someone who has the belief without the desire, and vice versa. We simply have to imagine people who are, in Johnston's terms, "brutally insane, psychopathically callous and demonically indifferent." And, if the argument given above is sound, then Hume has in effect demonstrated that the belief and desire cannot be rationally related either. For there is no candidate for one of the propositions that would have to stand in the required logical relation.

Let's recap the argument of this section. Hume offers an account of the relationship between reasons and rationality according to which the only realm in which there are reasons and rational transitions between psychological states is the realm of deductive reasoning. There are no reasons or rational transitions between psychological states in the realm of inductive reasoning, nor are there reasons or rational transitions between psychological states in the realm of practical reasoning. The expressions "inductive reasoning" and "practical reasoning" thus turn out to be oxymorons. This is plainly a radical view. Radical though it is, however, I hope it has emerged that the view is at least based on an argument and that that argument has a certain attraction. If we do not like Hume's conclusions, as I assume we do not, then we have no choice but to say where, as we see things, his arguments for those conclusions go wrong.

2. A More Moderate, but Still Quite Humean, View about the Relationship between Reasons and Rationality

Unsurprisingly, many theorists have found it extremely difficult to accept Hume's radical view about the relationship between reasons and rationality. But how are we to resist the radical view? How should we go about constructing a more moderate position?

By all accounts, in order to resist Hume's view we must give up on the strategy of explaining the rationality of transitions between psychological states by reference to the logical relations between the propositions to which we would advert in giving expression to those psychological states: that is, by reference to reasons, in the sense gleaned from the case of deductive reasoning. Instead we must focus on the transitions between the psychological states themselves and come up with

an alternative explanation of why they constitute rational transitions, an account that is independent of the logical relations between the propositions, if such there be, to which we would advert in giving expression to those psychological states. However, in so doing we should try to remain faithful to the idea that the rationality of forming a belief has something to do with the possibility of there being reasons for forming that belief, for that idea has its own independent appeal.

It is not difficult to see how we might do this, at least in broad outline (Strawson 1952). Suppose that someone believes both that the barometer is falling and that the best explanation of the barometer's falling is that something is happening that will cause it to rain tomorrow, and on the basis of these beliefs goes on to form the belief that it will rain tomorrow. In that case it is very plausible to suppose, at least prereflectively, that there is, to that extent at least, far more coherence in that set of beliefs than there is in the set of beliefs that the subject would have had if he hadn't gone on to form the belief that it will rain tomorrow. A subject who has the beliefs mentioned in (4), (5), and (6) has, to that extent, a more coherent belief set than one who has the beliefs mentioned in (4) and (5) but lacks the belief mentioned in (6). But, if this is right, then we might conclude that the transition is, for this very reason, a rational transition. Indeed, we might even conclude that the propositions believed constitute reasons for forming the belief that it will rain tomorrow: that is, that the propositions mentioned in (4') and (5') are considerations that justify the formation of the belief mentioned in (5). What is crucially important, however, is that the order of explanation is the reverse of that proposed by Hume. What comes first is the explanation of the rationality of the psychological transitions between the beliefs: that is, the claim about the coherence of the belief set. The claim about the propositions believed being reasons is derivative from that fact and has no independent force.

Of course, in order to tell this story in a fully convincing way we would have to make good on the prereflective conception of coherence. The coherence of a belief set would have to require more than that the beliefs be logically consistent, for example. We must therefore have in mind something more like explanatory coherence, or probabilistic coherence, or something else along these lines. However, for present purposes it isn't necessary for us to go into detail about the conception of coherence (though see Harman 1986). It will suffice if the following claims seem plausible: first, that a set of beliefs formed rationally on the basis of inductive evidence does indeed display a distinctive kind of coherence, and second, that we could, at least in principle, give a descriptive account of what that kind of coherence consists in. In other words, all that is important is that it be agreed that the story of reason and rationality can begin with an independent story of rationality so that the story of reasons can be derived from it, rather than vice versa.

If some such story can be told about the nature of rational belief formation in the case of inference to the best explanation, an obvious question presents

itself: Can we tell a similar story in the practical realm? In other words, can we give a similar account of the transitions between desires and beliefs that constitute rational transitions? Unsurprisingly, perhaps, it is not clear that we can. A further difficulty presents itself in the practical realm, one related to the difficulty mentioned earlier when we saw that the practical case is even worse than the inductive case.

In order to see this difficulty, it will help if we focus on a transition between desires and beliefs that nearly everyone will agree is rational. Consider cases of means-end rationality, that is, cases in which I form a desire to perform the means to an end because I have a background desire for that end and a belief that the means is a means to that end. Suppose, for example, that I desire to relieve an itch and believe that I can do so by scratching my finger, and, on this basis, go on to form the desire to scratch my finger. As I said, most of us would suppose this to be rational transition. But can we tell a story similar to the story that we just told in the case of inference to the best explanation in order to explain why it is rational?

Table 5.4 illustrates the difficulty. To be sure, it does indeed seem, at least prereflectively, as though someone who has the desire mentioned in (9) and the belief mentioned in (10), and who on this basis goes on to derive the desire mentioned in (11), has a much more coherent set of desires and beliefs than someone who has the desire mentioned in (9) and the belief mentioned in (10), but who doesn't go on to derive the desire mentioned in (11). Moreover it might well be thought that this suffices to explain why we suppose that having the desire mentioned in (9) and the belief mentioned in (10) makes it rational to have the desire mentioned in (11). To this extent it might look like (9), (10), and (11) are straightforwardly analogous to (4), (5), and (6).

The difficulty, however, is that there remains a significant disanalogy between the two cases. Since there are no propositions to which we would advert in giving expression to the desires mentioned in (9) and (11)—no candidates for propositions to be mentioned in (9′) and (11′), unlike (4′), (5′), and (6′)—it follows that we cannot derive from this account of the rationality of forming the desire mentioned in (11) an account of the reasons we have for forming that desire. The disanalogy, in other words, is that we cannot square the idea that this is a rational transition with the independently attractive idea that the rationality of a psychological transition must have something to do with the possibility of there being reasons for that psychological transition. The upshot is that, since there are no means-end reasons, there can be no such thing as means-end reasoning or means-end rationality (Millgram 1995).

This conclusion is likely to come as a surprise to many Humeans, for they are inclined to say that, in the example described above, my reason for forming the desire to scratch my finger is that I desire to relieve the itch in my finger and can do so by scratching it (see, for example, Williams 1980; Gauthier 1986; Brat-

Table 5.4

Transitions among Psychological States	Relations between Propositions
(9) I desire that I relieve the itch in my finger	(9′) ???
(10) I believe that I can relieve the itch in my finger by scratching it	(10′) I can relieve the itch in my finger by scratching it
So (11) I desire that I scratch my finger	Therefore (11′) ???

man 1987, 1999; Dreier 1997). But, as I hope the table above makes plain, Humeans who say this sort of thing are plainly confusing the fact that there is a desire that one has when one engages in so-called means-end reasoning—namely in our example, the desire that I relieve the itch in my finger mentioned in (9)—with the falsehood that one would advert to a proposition to the effect that one has that very desire in giving expression to that desire: that is, in our example, with the idea that the proposition that I desire to relieve the itch in my finger should figure in (9′). That is, they confuse the fact that I have a desire for an end, which is a psychological fact about me, with the claim that my possession of that desire is a consideration that justifies.

In order to see that that is a confusion, it suffices that we ask ourselves the following question. What proposition would have figured in (9′) if the psychological state mentioned in (9) hadn't been the desire that I relieve the itch in my finger, but had instead been the belief that I desire to relieve the itch in my finger? The answer to this question is obvious. The proposition that I desire to relieve the itch in my finger would in that case have figured in (9′). But that proposition can hardly be the proposition to which we would advert in expressing both my desire to relieve the itch in my finger and the belief that I desire to relieve the itch in my finger! But since it is plainly the proposition to which we would advert in expressing the belief, the only conclusion to draw is that it isn't the proposition to which we would advert in expressing the desire (Pettit and Smith 1990). We must therefore conclude that those Humeans who think that the fact that I desire to relieve the itch in my finger is a reason to which we can appeal in so-called means-end reasoning—a consideration that justifies, in other words—are simply mistaken. There are no considerations that justify, or, at any rate, none corresponding to the desires.

Let's recap. We can resist Hume's radical view that there are no inductive reasons, and hence the view that there is no such thing as rationally forming a belief on the basis of such reasons, if we suppose that we have an independent grip on what would constitute a rational transition between beliefs about inductive evidence and those beliefs that we go on to form on the basis of that evidence.

The idea that such beliefs display a distinctive kind of coherence looks like it could provide us with that independent grip. Such transitions are rational when they display the appropriate kind of coherence. This allows us to remain faithful to the idea that the rationality of a psychological transition must have something to do with the possibility of there being reasons for that psychological transition, for we can then suppose that the idea of an inductive reason is simply derived from the account of inductive rationality. The considerations that justify are those to which we would advert in giving expression to the beliefs that stand in the appropriate kind of coherence relations. In this way we restore the possibility of inductive reasons and reasoning.

Unfortunately, however, no similar story can be told about rationally forming desires in the practical realm. For even though there do appear to be rational transitions from (say) desires for ends and beliefs about means to desires for means, we cannot derive from this a parallel story about the reasons we have for forming those desires for means. In other words, in the practical case we cannot remain faithful to the idea that the rationality of a psychological transition must have something to do with the possibility of there being reasons for making that psychological transition. We must therefore conclude that the appearance of rationality in the practical case is, much as Hume said, an illusion. There is no such thing as means-end rationality: talk of "means-end reasoning" remains an oxymoron. There is simply the human habit of forming desires for means on the basis of desires for ends and beliefs about means, a habit that is underwritten by neither reasons nor rationality.

3. An Even More Moderate, but Still Somewhat Humean, View about the Relationship between Reasons and Rationality

Many of us will find it hard to believe that there is no such thing as means-end rationality. But how would we go about constructing an even more moderate position than the moderate Humean position just described, the one that allows for deductive and inductive reasons and rationality but not for practical reasons and rationality, not even means-end reasons and rationality? The answer should be obvious.

Up until now we have simply been assuming that there must be some sort

of nexus between reasons and rationality. More specifically, we have been assuming that the rationality of a psychological transition must have something to do with the possibility of there being reasons for that psychological transition. But the obvious conclusion to draw in the light of our discussion of means-end rationality is that there need be no such nexus. Nor would it be ad hoc to draw this conclusion in the light of that discussion. For, as we saw, people who fail to desire the believed means to their desired ends do not just seem to be unusual, do not just seem to lack a typical human habit. Their psychologies seem rather to suffer from a distinctive kind of incoherence, an incoherence that would be removed if they acquired a desire for the believed means to their desired ends. Since it appears that that kind of incoherence need have nothing to do with being insensitive to reasons, we should take that appearance of incoherence at face value and conclude that they are indeed irrational: means-end irrational. Of course, this would require us to further extend the story of coherence in some appropriate way. But again, much as with the case of inductive rationality, it seems extremely plausible to suppose that that could be done (Harman 1986).

If all this is agreed, then the upshot is that there is an even more moderate Humean position available. According to this even more moderate view, rational transitions are possible wherever we find psychological states that display the appropriate kind of coherence relations. Since these relations are found in both the theoretical and the practical domains, it follows that there is both theoretical and practical rationality. There is, however, the following difference between the two domains. In the theoretical domain there are propositions we believe that justify our acquiring the beliefs we acquire. It therefore follows that, in this domain, there aren't just rational transitions, but that there are also reasons and reasoning. But because, in the practical realm, there are simply desires for ends and beliefs about means to those ends that stand in certain relations of coherence to desires for those means, it follows that in the practical realm there are just the rational transitions themselves. There are no means-end reasons and no means-end reasoning.

Note that we are now in a position to answer a question we postponed earlier. How are beliefs supposed rationally to give rise to other beliefs? More generally, how are psychological states supposed rationally to give rise to other psychological states? What is the mechanism by which this happens? Given what has just been said, the obvious answer is: in virtue of the fact that the subject of those psychological states is rational, where the subject's being rational is a matter of her having, and exercising, a capacity to have a coherent set of psychological states (Smith 1997, 2001). Moreover, and importantly, since this capacity has to explain rational production across the board—that is, since it must explain both how beliefs rationally produce other beliefs, and how desires for ends and beliefs about means rationally produce desires for means—this capacity cannot in turn be thought of on the model of a desire for an end, such as the end of having a

coherent psychology, which works by combining with a belief about the means by which this is to be achieved to rationally produce a desire for that means. For how, after all, would we explain that instance of rational production (Dreier 1997, Smith 2001)? Instead we must conceive of the capacity on the model of the inferential dispositions Lewis Carroll taught us all to believe in (Carroll 1895).

4. The Instability of the Even More Moderate, but Still Somewhat Humean, View about the Relationship between Reasons and Rationality

There is, however, a problem with the even more moderate Humean view. Once we admit that desires can stand in rational relations to each other—coherence relations—it follows, more or less immediately, that we can construct the idea of a consideration that justifies our acquiring a certain desire. And once we have constructed the idea of a consideration that justifies our acquiring certain desires, it is hard to see in what sense we are any longer committed to a Humean view about the relationship between reasons and rationality at all. We seem to have crossed over a threshold. Let me explain.

Many have recently argued that some version of the dispositional theory of value looks to be extremely plausible (Firth 1952; Brandt 1979; Johnston 1989; Lewis 1989; Smith 1989, 1994, 1997). According to the version of the theory that I myself favor, for example, when a subject judges it desirable that p be the case in certain circumstances C, what she has is a belief that she would want that p be the case in C if she had a fully rational desire set—or, more generally perhaps, if she had a set of desires that eluded all forms of rational criticism. Facts about desirability are, in this way, constructed from facts about the desires we would have if we were fully rational. As we will see, it is this fact about desirability—that is, the fact that something is what a subject would desire if she had a desire set that eluded all forms of rational criticism—that looks like it constitutes a consideration that can justify that subject in acquiring a corresponding desire. In order to see that this is so, however, we need first to spell out the dispositional theory more fully. In particular, we need to say what would make it the case that a desire set eludes all forms of rational criticism.

Following the lead of Bernard Williams, who is in turn inspired by something that Hume says in the passage quoted at the outset—"a passion must be accom-

pany'd with some false judgement, in order to its being unreasonable"—we might begin with the observation that the fact that a subject's desires are based on ignorance or error itself looks to be grounds for rational criticism of that desire (Williams 1980). This is because someone who was perfect, from the point of view of reason, would plausibly be omniscient and make no mistakes. This suggests that someone who (say) desires to relieve an itch and who believes, falsely, that she can relieve her itch by staring at her finger, and who on this basis goes on to form the desire to stare at her finger, fails for this very reason to have a desire set that eludes all forms of rational criticism. For a desire set that eludes all forms of rational criticism would contain no desires based, as her desire to stare at her finger is, on a false belief. Likewise, someone who desires to relieve an itch and who can relieve her itch by scratching her finger, but who doesn't believe that this is so, fails to have a desire set that eludes all forms of rational criticism as well. For someone who has such a desire set would lack no desires due simply to her ignorance.

Moreover there are other ways in which a subject's desires might become vulnerable to rational criticism too. For example, as we saw in the earlier discussion of means-end rationality, to say that a subject has a desire set that, as a whole, exhibits incoherence is plainly a rational criticism of that desire set. Nor should it be thought that cases of means-end irrationality are the only cases in which we find incoherence in a desire set. There would seem to be other such cases as well (see, for example, Smith 1994, 1997; for an alternative view, see Sayre-McCord 1997).

For example, imagine that I desire that person A fares well, and I desire that person B fares well, and I desire that person C fares well, and so on, but that I don't desire that person Z fares well. Suppose further that when asked why I don't desire that Z fares well I can't identify any feature of Z that distinguishes him from A, B, C, and the rest—apart, of course, from the fact that he is Z. Perhaps I don't discriminate between Z and the others for any other purpose except his faring well. It is surely then plausible that I could quite rightly thereby come to see my lack of a desire that Z fares well as completely arbitrary. But if my lacking a desire that Z fares well is completely arbitrary, then it surely makes perfect sense to say that my desire set suffers from a corresponding kind of incoherence.

We can represent the situation in table 5.5. The suggestion is that there is incoherence in a psychology that includes the elements mentioned in (12) and (13) but does not include the desire mentioned in (14). The incoherence lies in the fact that that pattern of desire and indifference doesn't fit well with the belief that an arbitrary distinction is being made. In this case too, then, it seems that my desire set would be vulnerable to rational criticism, criticism that I could avoid only by acquiring the general desire that people fare well and, on that basis, together with my belief that Z is a person mentioned in (15), acquiring the desire that Z fares well mentioned in (16) as well.

Table 5.5

Transitions among Psychological States	Relations between Propositions
(12) I desire that person A fares well, I desire that person B fares well, I desire that person C fares well, ... and I desire that person Y fares well.	(12') ???
(13) I believe that it is arbitrary to distinguish person Z from A–Y	(13') It is arbitrary to distinguish person Z from A–Y
So (14) I desire that people fare well	Therefore (14') ???
(15) I believe that Z is a person	(15') Z is a person
So (16) I desire that Z fares well	Therefore (16') ???

Now that we have spelled out a little of what it means to say that a desire set eludes all forms of rational criticism, the crucial point to note is that this fact could be the object of a subject's belief (Smith 1994). Thus, imagine a subject who comes to believe that (say) she would desire that she scratches her finger in the circumstances of action that she presently faces if she had a maximally informed and coherent desire set, but suppose further that she doesn't have any desire at all to do so. Now consider the pair of psychological states that comprises her belief that she would desire that she scratches her finger in the circumstances of action that she presently faces if she had a maximally informed and coherent desire set, and which also comprises the desire that she scratches her finger, and compare this pair of psychological states with the pair that comprises her belief that she would desire that she scratches her finger in the circumstances of action that she presently faces if she had a maximally informed and coherent desire set, but which also comprises instead indifference to scratching her finger, or perhaps an aversion to her doing so. Which of these pairs of psychological states is more coherent?

The answer would seem to be plain enough (see Smith 1994, 1997, 2001; for an alternative view, see Sayre-McCord 1997, Schafter-Landau 1999). The first pair is much more coherent than the second. There is disequilibrium or dissonance or failure of fit involved in believing that you would desire yourself to act in a certain way in certain circumstances if you had a maximally informed and coherent desire set, and yet not desiring to act in that way. The failure to desire to act in that way is, after all, something that you yourself disown; from your perspective it makes no sense, given the rest of your desires; by your own lights it is a state that you would not be in if you were in various ways better than you actually are: more informed and more coherent in your desiderative outlook. There would therefore seem to be more than a passing family resemblance be-

tween the relation that holds between the first pair of psychological states and more familiar examples of coherence relations that hold between psychological states.

If this is right, however, then the upshot is that table 5.6, too, is a rational transition between psychological states. This transition is a rational one because it too is underwritten by coherence. Moreover, and more importantly, it even looks plausible to suppose that the proposition mentioned in (17')—that is, that I would desire that p in C if I had a maximally informed and coherent desire set—is a consideration that, if true, justifies my forming the desire that p. What better justification could there be for me to form the desire that p?

If this is agreed, however, then we might well begin to wonder whether we any longer have any reason to suppose, as Hume did, that the theoretical and the practical domains are utterly distinct from each other. The problem is not that we have come to think that there are beliefs and desires that cannot be pulled apart from each other modally. That possibility has been granted in all of our discussions. The problem is rather that, granting that possibility, we now seem to have an example of a belief that can rationally require the acquisition of a desire all by itself, something Hume had claimed to be impossible. We have, in other words, a case in which reason can produce a motive. For the belief mentioned in (17) can, if the subject is rational—that is, if it operates in conjunction with the subject's capacity to have a coherent psychological state (see again the discussion at the end of the last section)—produce the desire mentioned in (18) without the aid of any desire.

Indeed, we might even begin to wonder whether we shouldn't reconsider the psychological transition from (7) to (8) with which we began—that is, the transition from the belief that scratching my finger would cause the destruction of the whole world to the preference not to scratch my finger. For what we have, in effect, demonstrated is that Hume's argument for supposing that this isn't a rational transition is completely fallacious (see also Korsgaard 1986). It is irrelevant that there is no proposition to be mentioned in (8'), and hence that there is no candidate proposition to be logically entailed by the proposition mentioned in (7'). The rationality of a psychological transition requires no such thing, as we have learned from our discussion of means-end rationality. The crucial question is rather whether the pairing of the belief that scratching my finger would cause the destruction of the whole world and the preference to scratch my finger is an especially coherent pairing, as compared with the pairing of that belief together with indifference to scratching my finger, or an aversion to scratching my finger.

The truth is that I don't myself see how to answer that question decisively one way or the other. On the one hand, it is tempting to simply recall Mark Johnston's remark, quoted at the outset, that though the pairing of the belief with indifference or aversion is "not contrary to reason in one sense perhaps," it is "brutally insane, psychopathically callous and demonically indifferent," and to

Table 5.6

Transitions among Psychological States	Relations between Propositions
(17) I believe that I would desire that p in C if I had a maximally informed and coherent desire set	(17') I would desire that p in C if I had a maximally informed and coherent desire set
So (18) I desire that p	Therefore (18') ???

insist that the conceptions of insanity and psychopathy that Johnston was quite rightly drawing on here are plainly predicated on the supposition of incoherence. However, on the other hand, we all know that such normative conceptions of insanity and psychopathy are themselves hotly contested (Szasz 1961). What we really need here is an independent argument that would clinch the case one way or the other.

As I understand it, it is an independent argument of this kind that Kantians have been searching for all along (Kant 1786, Nagel 1970, Korsgaard 1996b). Humeans have always insisted that the Kantians' search for such an argument is in vain, because Hume provided a decisive refutation of the very possibility of there being such an argument. But, if what we have said here is right, then both Hume and the Humeans are wrong to suppose that he provided a decisive refutation of any such thing. Humeans and Kantians alike should therefore turn their attention to the arguments the Kantians come up with and evaluate them on a case-by-case basis. Whether the arguments provided here have put us on slippery slope all the way to a Kantian view of reasons and rationality is yet to be determined.

CHAPTER 6

KANT

Rationality as Practical Reason

ONORA O'NEILL

KANT is famous for undertaking a critique of reason and for calling two of his most significant works *critiques of reason*.[1] These titles raise suspicions. Does Kant genuinely criticize reason, thereby calling into question the very processes by which any reasoned thought or action—including any criticism of reason—should be conducted? Or does he give these pretentious titles to works that deploy rather than criticize reason? Indeed, could anything really, seriously count either as a *critique* of reason or as a *vindication* of reason? Isn't the very idea that we could *show* that certain ways of thinking or acting are reasoned or reasonable absurd? After all, the demonstration must either build on assumptions that lack reasoned vindication or be supported by arguments that deploy the very conception of reason supposedly vindicated. So it will be either unreasoned or circular: either way it will fail to vindicate reason. We have grounds for suspecting that no ways of organizing thinking or acting have unconditional authority, and that Kant *cannot* have vindicated reason.

Kant's attempt to give an account of practical reason that offers unconditional reasons for action and provides the basis for a reasoned account of human duties is spectacularly ambitious; even if it fails in some ways it is worth the closest attention. In this chapter I aim to give as coherent an account of that attempt as I can offer, although I shall say nothing about the connections Kant draws between practical and theoretical reason (see Neiman 1994; O'Neill 1989, chap. 1,