

Norms of Reasoning

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Abstract

When we reason, we can be assessed against diverse norms. Unfortunately different types of such norms are often conflated. This article distinguishes some different types of norms to which we are subject when we reason, and shows how this can help to clarify certain philosophical debates. It then considers, briefly, 'norms of starting points', and, at more length, 'norms of transitions'. In closing it briefly considers whether we might expect to find a unifying account of the source of these norms, and if so what it might look like.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Through reasoning, we actively change our minds: we form, revise, and relinquish some attitudes on the basis of others. When doing so we can be assessed against diverse *norms* – standards of goodness, rationality, permissibility, and so on. Philosophers since at least Aristotle have had much to say about some of these norms, yet there is little consensus on their contents or sources. Moreover, different types of norm are often conflated, leading to confusion and obscuring from view important questions about how they relate to each other. Here I aim to impose some systematicity by distinguishing some different types of norms to which we are subject when we reason. I show how this can help to clarify certain philosophical debates. I then narrow my focus to consider, briefly, what I call 'norms of starting points', and, at more length, 'norms of transitions'. I close by considering whether we might expect to find a unifying account of the source of these norms, and if so what it might look like.

For simplicity I will focus on reasoning that concludes with the acquisition of a belief (theoretical reasoning) or an intention (practical reasoning).¹ I will not explicitly discuss reasoning towards other attitudes or reasoning that concludes in giving up an attitude. I will call the attitudes you reason from the 'premise-attitudes' of your reasoning. I assume that intentions and beliefs can be premise-attitudes.² When they are beliefs, their contents are your 'premises'. The attitude you acquire is the 'conclusion-attitude'. When it is a belief, its content is your 'conclusion'.

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2 | DIVERSE NORMS

Ken believes that policies that hurt motorists are bad, and so he campaigns against a new carbon tax. Ken performs two pieces of reasoning, one theoretical and one practical. From the belief that such policies are bad, he reasons to the belief that the carbon tax is bad, and from this belief he reasons to the intention to campaign against it. Is Ken performing well in his reasoning? It depends. Take his theoretical reasoning. If he does not also base his conclusion on the belief that the tax will hurt motorists, then he has committed a non-sequitur. On the other hand, if he does so base his conclusion, but that belief is unjustified, then he makes a different kind of mistake. And he is going wrong in a yet different way if he is ignoring evidence that this particular policy is an exception to the general rule that policies that hurt motorists are bad.

Similarly, Ken's practical reasoning could be faulty in different ways. It goes wrong in one way if he does not believe there is any point in campaigning against bad policies, and in another if he does believe this but should instead be campaigning against some other policy that he thinks is worse.

This example illustrates just some of the diversity of the norms against which we can be assessed when we reason. Some norms govern the *starting points* of reasoning. Ken plausibly goes wrong by this sort of norm if his belief that the carbon tax will hurt motorists is unjustified. It is a mistake to reason from this premise if he does not believe it justifiedly. Similarly, Ken's intention to campaign against bad policies might be an inappropriate starting point for reasoning if, say, campaigning is counterproductive.

A reasoner can also be criticised for *failing* to include a certain attitude among their premise-attitudes. For example, is Ken aware of compensating benefits of the carbon tax that he should have considered? Did he ignore some other intention of his whose satisfaction will be affected if he campaigns against this policy?

Other norms govern the *transition* from a given set of starting points to a conclusion-attitude. These concern whether the conclusion-attitude is appropriately related to the premise-attitudes. Ken goes wrong by such a norm in his theoretical reasoning if he commits a non-sequitur as described earlier, and in his practical reasoning if the badness of policies doesn't support campaigning against them.

Such assessment of a transition is independent of assessment of the starting points. Two reasoners might start from equally inappropriate premise-attitudes – wicked intentions and stupid beliefs about how to satisfy them, say – and yet might differ in respect of whether the transition they perform is a good one. One of them might reason *well* or *correctly* from their admittedly inappropriate starting points (e.g. by moving from them to the intention for what they take to be the necessary means), while the other may reason badly or incorrectly (e.g. by moving to an intention not to take the means). While both of these reasoners go wrong in one way, the latter makes a further mistake that the former does not.³

As well as norms of starting points and norms of transitions, there are what we might call norms of *end-states*. These assess the state in which the reasoning leaves the reasoner's attitudes. For example, is Ken's intention to campaign against the carbon tax justified? The answer to this question is clearly not independent of whether Ken has satisfied norms of starting points and of transitions in coming to hold this attitude.⁴ Importantly, though, a conclusion-attitude's being unjustified does not by itself tell us what sort of prior norm was violated in its formation.

There are yet further ways in which we can normatively assess reasoners. We can ask whether a reasoner took the most efficient route to their conclusion-attitude – did they perform a five-step piece of reasoning when an equally good two-step one was available? Did they include premises that were extraneous, for instance because irrelevant or redundant? And we can ask whether it was appropriate for the reasoner to be thinking about the subject-matter in the first place. But I take it that the norms of starting points, of transitions, and of end-states that I have distinguished are the most central ones – those most closely tied to the nature and role of reasoning understood as a method of attitude-revision.

Many debates appear in a different light when we appreciate the diversity of these norms. These include debates about norms of reasoning themselves. Accounts of such norms often focus exclusively on theoretical or

exclusively on practical reasoning, giving little consideration to how their claims might generalise to the other.⁵ And, among views that are supposed to apply to both, potential confluences lurk. For instance, the influential view that good reasoning consists in responding to reasons (Dancy, 2018; Grice, 2001), arguably seems more compelling than it really is when we fail to distinguish norms of starting points from norms of transitions (see Section 4). After all, reasons are both (contents of) good starting points for reasoning (Schroeder, 2007) and also considerations from which you can reason well to the beliefs or intentions they support (Hieronymi, 2005). But, as we saw, you can reason well from bad starting points. In that case, it seems, you will be reasoning well but not responding to reasons.

The ramifications are broader than the philosophy of reasoning. Some of these relate to the fact that apparently valid inferences do not always represent permissible ways of revising your beliefs. For example, if you believe that the forecast is accurate and that it predicted sun now, then you can validly infer that it is sunny – but if it is clearly overcast then you should reconsider your premises rather than believing this conclusion. A different type of example is this: classical logic tells us that anything follows from a contradiction, but if you find yourself believing a contradiction, it doesn't seem permissible to believe anything whatsoever on its basis.

Such cases have been taken to support some highly controversial claims. They are a central plank of Harman's influential argument that logic has no special relevance for rational belief-revision (Harman, 1986). And the second type of case is a prominent motivation for the rejection of classical logic (Priest, 1979). These arguments look less convincing once we distinguish norms of transitions from norms of end-states. As in Ken's case, the inferences in question might constitute good reasoning, in the sense of involving faultless transitions, but fail to lead to justified attitudes because the starting points are inappropriate. Logic is most plausibly relevant to the goodness of reasoning in this specific sense – good transitions – rather than providing a recipe for ensuring that your conclusion-attitudes are as they ought to be.

These are just some examples. Recognising the diversity of norms governing reasoning is crucial not only in the philosophy of reasoning but also the philosophy of logic, epistemology, and beyond.

3 | NORMS OF STARTING POINTS

Work explicitly addressing the norms governing the starting points of reasoning has tended to focus on *epistemic* norms governing premise-beliefs. It is clearly some sort of mistake to reason from a premise that is not true. But reasoners can also be criticised for starting from premises with respect to which they are not appropriately epistemically positioned, even when those premises are true. For example, you might criticise Jules for reasoning from the premise that it won't rain (to, say, the intention not to bring an umbrella) if he is not justified in believing this – even if he turns out to be right. Many philosophers have taken such criticism to indicate that there is a norm proper to (at least some types of) reasoning, that specifies a condition, such as justification or knowledge, under which it is epistemically permissible to use a proposition as a premise in reasoning.⁶

Suppose this is right. Is there an analogous norm for premise-intentions? There is arguably a distinctive kind of criticism that applies to reasoning from foolish, wicked, or otherwise inappropriate intentions. Consider Jim who, intending to take the first train and knowing that getting up early is necessary for this, decides to get up early. Jim's transition and his means-end belief are irreproachable, and getting up early might in fact be a good idea. Yet he is criticisable if taking the first train is pointless or is part of some dastardly plan. In that case his intention to take the first train is an impermissible starting point for reasoning.

Are Jules and Jim criticisable for *reasoning* from these attitudes or are they criticisable merely for *having* them? Plausibly, for both. We might criticise Jules, for instance, for believing without good evidence that it won't rain, but when he bases a decision on this belief he seems liable for *further* criticism.

However, this does not mean that the norms underlying these criticisms are *independent* of each other. On the contrary, it seems plausible that they are not. Consider the view that to believe that *p* is, at least in part, to be

disposed to use $\langle p \rangle$ as a premise in reasoning. This might suggest that the permissibility of believing that p goes together with that of reasoning from the premise that p . Certainly, it seems odd to suppose that it could be okay to believe a proposition but not okay to reason from it, or vice versa – at least in normal circumstances.⁷

Similarly, it is plausible that part of the essential role of an intention is to feed into reasoning, for instance about how to satisfy that intention, and how to pursue other goals without frustrating it.⁸ And this might suggest that the permissibility of intending to φ goes together with that of reasoning from the intention to φ . Again, it seems odd to suppose that it could be okay to intend to do something but not okay to reason from that intention, or vice versa.

4 | NORMS OF TRANSITIONS

Most recent literature on what counts as good or correct reasoning concerns norms governing transitions. It is usually assumed that these norms are *general*: that a given piece or episode of reasoning is good when, and because, it falls under a good pattern (rule) of reasoning. The following table sets out some plausible examples of good patterns:

Pattern	Premise-attitudes	Conclusion-attitude
Modus Ponens Pattern	Belief that p ; Belief that if p then q	Belief that q
Testimony Pattern	Belief that S told you that p	Belief that p
Means-End Pattern	Intention to E ; Belief that in order to E you must M	Intention to M
Promise Pattern	Belief that you promised to φ	Intention to φ

The exact formulation of the patterns is debatable,⁹ but these examples will suffice for illustration. I will proceed as though this generalist view is correct. However, not all of the views canvassed below require this assumption.

As the Testimony and Promise Patterns illustrate, some good patterns of reasoning are plausibly *defeasible*. That is, there are premise-attitudes one could add – for instance the belief that S is a liar, or that the promise was coerced – that would turn them into bad patterns.¹⁰ Here we have a connection between norms of transitions and of starting points. If you reason, ‘John told me that p , therefore p ’, you have reasoned well – you have instantiated a good pattern. But this is not so if you reason, ‘John told me that p , and he’s a liar, therefore p ’. John’s being a liar is therefore a defeater for the first piece of reasoning. Because of this, if you do this reasoning while *ignoring* the fact that John is a liar, you might be criticisable for that. You have satisfied a transition norm but, by ignoring a defeater for that transition, violated a starting-point norm.

Can we say, in general, what makes for a good pattern? Broome (1999, 2013) argues that, roughly, reasoning is good when and because it makes you rational; instantiating a good pattern of reasoning is a way to come to satisfy a rational requirement. The relevant rational requirements here are *structural* – they are requirements that your attitudes fit together coherently.¹¹ An example might be the requirement that: if you believe that p , and you believe that if p then q , then you believe that q . Instantiating the Modus Ponens Pattern is a way of coming to satisfy (instances of) this requirement. This is what makes it a good pattern.

We can state a simple version of this account as follows:

(Rationality Account): It is good reasoning – to move from $P_1 \dots P_n$ to C iff and because there is a rational requirement that (If you have $P_1 \dots P_n$ then you have C).¹²

I mention two problems for this simple account.¹³ First, some good reasoning seems not to correspond to any requirement. For instance, reasoning according to disjunction-introduction is good, but there is no rational requirement to believe that p or q whenever you believe that p . Doing so would lead to an explosion of pointless beliefs; you are not irrational for avoiding this (Harman, 1986).

In fact the requirement stated above corresponding to the Modus Ponens Pattern seems implausible for the same reason. Broome (2013) offers refined versions of this requirement (p. 157) and others. For instance, perhaps the modus ponens requirement includes in its antecedent the condition that you consider, or, as Broome suggests, care, whether q .

However, this does not solve the problem. Reasoning according to the Modus Ponens Pattern is good even if you don't consider or care whether q .¹⁴ In that case you don't thereby come to satisfy the refined modus ponens requirement; since you didn't consider or care whether q , you weren't violating it in the first place. Thus, it's not clear that, even for Modus Ponens reasoning, the goodness of the pattern can be straightforwardly derived from a rational requirement.

The second problem is that the Rationality Account is not well placed to accommodate defeasibility. There are not, in general, rational requirements corresponding to defeasible good reasoning. You are not necessarily irrational if you fail to believe some testimony, or fail to intend to keep a promise. After all, the testimony might be from a liar, and the promise might have been coerced. So the goodness of the Testimony and Promise Patterns does not seem to derive from any rational requirement.

If reasoning well isn't about coming to be structurally rational, what is it about? A very natural thought is that it is about responding to reasons: in particular that, when you reason well, your premises are reasons for your conclusion-attitude (Grice, 2001; Dancy, 2018; cf. Kauppinen, 2018). Roughly:

(Reasons Account): It is good reasoning to move from $P_1 \dots P_n$ to C iff and because the contents of the beliefs in $P_1 \dots P_n$ are reasons for C .

This account has much going for it. It allows for good reasoning that we're not required to do. It promises to explain the defeasibility of good reasoning in terms of the defeasibility of reasons: some reasons can support a conclusion-attitude even though further considerations might make it the case that your reasons do not overall support that attitude. And the account fits with the compelling thought that there is *some* tight connection between good reasoning and reasons.

However, the Reasons Account faces the *problem of bad starting points*.¹⁵ As we saw in Section 2, you can reason well from false beliefs. In that case your premises are not reasons for your conclusion-attitude, since, according to the standard view, falsehoods are not reasons for anything.¹⁶ In response, the account might be refined to claim that good patterns are those such that their premises are reasons *when true*. However, consider the Means-End Pattern. If your end is wicked or pointless, you may have no reason to take what you believe to be the means to it, even if the belief is true.

One might respond with a further refinement: good patterns are such that their premises are reasons when they are true and when any intentions among the premise-attitudes are, in some sense, appropriate. This significantly complicates the account and may face further counterexamples.¹⁷ One might instead take the problem of bad starting points to show is that good reasoning as such isn't about responding to reasons. More generally, good reasoning isn't fundamentally about ensuring any particular normative status for your conclusion-attitude. Rather, one might think, good reasoning is about *keeping you on track*. That is, good reasoning *preserves* some normative status, in the sense that if your premise-attitudes have it then so too will your conclusion-attitude. Thus:

(Generic Preservation Account): It is good reasoning to move from $P_1 \dots P_n$ to C iff and because, if $P_1 \dots P_n$ have status N, then so does C.

What is N? In the spirit of the Reasons Account, one might say that it is the status of being supported by some reason, or, sufficient reason, or decisive reason.¹⁸ However, the Generic Preservation Account has been developed in a different direction. The thought that good reasoning preserves some status fits well with the familiar idea that good theoretical reasoning is about preservation of truth. While truth is not itself generally thought to be normative, the truth of a proposition does arguably confer a normative property on the belief whose content it is: it makes that belief correct, or, as some philosophers like to say, fitting. If intentions can also be correct, or fitting,¹⁹ then a straightforward general account of good reasoning suggests itself: good patterns of reasoning are fittingness-preserving patterns (McHugh & Way, 2018, 2022). Thus:

(Fittingness Preservation Account): It is good reasoning to move from $P_1 \dots P_n$ to C iff and because, if $P_1 \dots P_n$ are fitting, then so is C.

As it stands, like the Rationality Account, this does not accommodate defeasible reasoning: in some instances it won't be fitting to believe someone's testimony, or to intend to keep a promise. This problem affects other Preservation Accounts too. For instance, you don't always have sufficient reason to believe (what you believe with sufficient reason to be) someone's testimony, or to intend what (you believe with sufficient reason) you promised to do.

This problem can in principle be addressed by adding an anti-defeat clause to the right-hand-side of the biconditional. A natural thought is that good patterns preserve fittingness (or whatever) *other things equal*.²⁰ McHugh and Way (2022) suggest understanding this 'other things equal' clause in terms of what is *normally* the case.

It is arguable that Preservation Accounts fail to offer a sufficient condition for good reasoning. This is suggested by several types of apparent counterexample:

- Reasoning from an attitude to the belief that that attitude has N, for instance from intending to ϕ to believing that it is fitting to intend to ϕ . This preserves fittingness on the assumption that true belief is fitting, but might seem to be objectionable *bootstrapping*;
- Reasoning that preserves N but seems to go in the *wrong direction*, for instance from intending to ϕ , and believing that it is not fitting to intend to ψ , to believing that ψ ing is not necessary for ϕ ing (Brunero, 2019);
- Reasoning that preserves N but in which there is *no connection* between the premise- and conclusion-attitudes, for instance from the belief that grass is green to the belief that 79 is prime;
- Reasoning in which the connection between the premise- and conclusion-attitudes is *opaque*, for instance from belief in the Peano axioms directly to belief in Fermat's Last Theorem (Boghossian, 2014; Broome, 2013).

Strategies to deal with such counterexamples are available. One can deny that truth suffices to make belief fitting, holding instead, for example, that only knowledge does. Or one can add further necessary conditions on good reasoning, for instance that the N-preserving character of the reasoning have a certain type of *ground*, or can be relied on in *competent* reasoning. Alternatively, or in addition, one can bite the bullet and maintain that some of the 'counterexamples' are good reasoning, while attempting to explain away our intuitions to the contrary – for instance, by appeal to the fact that it is hard to imagine them being performed competently.²¹

However, one might take all of these types of counterexample to point to the conclusion that Preservation Accounts omit something crucial that the Reasons Account captures: the premise-attitudes of good reasoning must

support the conclusion-attitude, at least conditionally on their being themselves well supported. That is, they must help to give the conclusion-attitude whatever status it has, or conditionally has, and not merely guarantee, or conditionally guarantee, that it has that status.

In sum, recent work on norms of transitions has been dominated by three main accounts, all of which face significant *prima facie* problems. The Rationality Account faces powerful objections. The Reasons Account is attractive but cannot easily overcome the problem of bad starting points. Preservation Accounts handle bad starting points but in doing so might seem to lose sight of an essential feature of good reasoning, the supporting connection between the premise-attitudes and conclusion-attitude.

5 | UNIFYING EXPLANATION?

It would be surprising if there were no interesting relations between norms governing the starting point of reasoning and the norms for transitions from those starting points. At the least, these norms must surely fit together coherently. Yet the question of how they are related to each other has not received much attention in the literature.

One way such norms might be unified is by having a common explanation. This explanation might lie in the *nature* of reasoning – for instance, in a constitutive aim or *telos* of reasoning. This would be something that thinking must be, in some sense, trying to accomplish in order to count as reasoning at all, rather than, say, free association. Prominent candidates for an aim of reasoning include responding to reasons (Dancy, 2018; Kauppinen, 2018), acquiring fitting attitudes (McHugh & Way, 2018), satisfying rational requirements of coherence (Broome, 2013), and rationalising attitudes we already hold (Mercier & Sperber, 2017).

If reasoning has some such aim, then, plausibly, only attitudes that serve it are appropriate starting points, and good transitions are those conducive to satisfying it given appropriate starting points. For instance, if the aim is responding to reasons, then it is natural to think that only attitudes corresponding to reasons will be appropriate starting points. If only facts you know can be reasons for you (cf. Kiesewetter, 2017), then this view entails the 'knowledge norm', according to which only what is known is an appropriate premise for reasoning.²² By contrast, if the aim of reasoning is acquiring fitting attitudes then, plausibly, appropriate starting points will be fitting attitudes, and good transitions will be those that keep us on track, by yielding fitting attitudes given fitting starting points (see the Fittingness Preservation Account Above).²³

This approach would seem to fit less well with the other candidate aims of reasoning mentioned above. That's because it's not clear that the aim of coherence, or of rationalising attitudes we already hold, would impose significant constraints on starting points. Almost any attitudes could equally well be starting points for achieving those aims. Whether or not this is a reason to reject these conceptions of reasoning depends, in part, on how plausible it is that we should expect the sort of unifying explanation of the norms of reasoning envisaged here.

6 | CONCLUSION

We are open to a range of different normative assessments when we reason, including assessments of the appropriateness of our starting points, the goodness of the transitions we make from them, and the attitudes we thereby end up with. There are further distinctions within those categories, and other types of assessment besides. The overall picture is thus a complex one. Recognising this complexity is a first step towards addressing the issues that these norms raise – sometimes it is necessary for clearly seeing problems in the first place. Doing so also allows us to pose the question whether some explanatory unity might be found among the diversity.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Some hold, following Aristotle, that the conclusion of practical reasoning is an action (e.g. Dancy, 2018). Others hold that it is a belief about what you ought to do (e.g. Raz, 2011; Simion, 2021). I will not explore the implications of these views. The view that practical reasoning at least sometimes concludes with an intention is standard. For discussion see Tenenbaum, 2007; Broome, 2013; Paul, 2013.
- ² Again this is standard, but some deny that intentions can be premise-attitudes (Raz, 2005; cf. Kauppinen, 2018).
- ³ Transition norms might plausibly be regarded as *process* norms, in contrast to norms of starting points which are *state* norms (on this contrast see Kolodny, 2007; Podgorski, 2017). However, even if reasoning in the relevant sense is, as some claim, not a process (e.g. Kietzmann, 2022), transition norms remain distinct from norms of starting points. For example we can still say that the reasoner who forms the intention for what they take to be the necessary means to their end, on that basis, has made a good transition, despite their inappropriate starting points.
- ⁴ More precisely, this is true of *ex post* justification – roughly, justification an attitude has when based on what justifies it (commonly called ‘doxastic’ justification in the case of belief). There is also *ex ante* justification (‘propositional’ justification in the case of belief), which you can have whether or not you actually base your attitude on it, or hold the attitude at all. Norms of starting points and of transitions likewise admit of the *ex post* v. *ex ante* distinction. This is a further dimension of diversity, but not one I dwell on here.
- ⁵ For accounts focused exclusively on theoretical reasoning see Harman, 1999; Boghossian, 2008, Ch. 11, 12; Enoch & Schechter, 2008. For an overview of accounts of good practical reasoning see Wallace, 2020.
- ⁶ E.g. Hawthorne, 2004; Hawthorne & Stanley, 2008; Littlejohn, 2014. For discussion see Brown, 2008; Fassio, 2017.
- ⁷ For arguments along roughly these lines see Fantl & McGrath, 2009; Littlejohn, 2014; Whiting, 2014.
- ⁸ See Bratman, 1987.
- ⁹ For instance reductionists about testimony might hold that the Testimony Pattern requires a premise-belief to the effect that S is reliable; and see Broome (2013) for possible refinements of the Means-End Pattern.
- ¹⁰ A natural suggestion would be that the patterns stated in the text aren't really good, and that refined versions of them (see previous note) will not be defeasible. However, while they may indeed need refinement, it is doubtful that we can ‘refine away’ defeasibility; the variety of possible defeaters, defeater-defeaters, and so on, for many intuitively good patterns of reasoning is too open-ended. For related discussion see Wedgwood, 2007, Ch. 7; Nolfi, 2015; Schroeder, 2021.
- ¹¹ Some doubt that there really are any such requirements (cf. Kiesewetter, 2017). For an overview of structural rationality see Kiesewetter & Worsnip, 2023.
- ¹² ‘P₁...P_n’ and ‘C’ are schematic letters to be replaced by terms for attitude-types of the sort that feature in the statements of good patterns of reasoning. The idea is then that, for each instance of a given rational requirement the corresponding reasoning is good. Similar remarks apply to the accounts considered below.
- ¹³ For discussion of how they apply to Broome's considered account, and further problems, see Kolodny, 2005; Kauppinen, 2018; McHugh & Way, 2018; Worsnip, 2019.
- ¹⁴ Maybe in reasoning to the belief that q you consider whether q. But you needn't have considered whether q before you performed that reasoning, so you need not have been violating the refined modus ponens requirement.
- ¹⁵ This problem is identified in Broome, 1999. See Kauppinen, 2018; McHugh & Way, 2018 for discussion.

- ¹⁶ E.g. Scanlon, 1998; Dancy, 2000; Parfit, 2011; Kiesewetter, 2017. Not everyone agrees (e.g. Comesaña & McGrath, 2014; Schroeder, 2007). But note that you can also reason well from beliefs that are not only false, but irrational, unjustified, or crazy. And it's doubtful that when you form such a belief you thereby give yourself a reason to, say, believe the further crazy things that follow from it. So the problem here does not obviously turn on whether falsehoods can be reasons (McHugh & Way, 2018).
- ¹⁷ E.g. from *disabled* reasons. Consider a coerced promise. If a coerced promise is no reason at all to do what you promised (Dancy, 2004), then reasoning according to the Promise Pattern, as stated earlier, does not suffice for responding to reasons. Similarly for the testimony of a liar and the Testimony Pattern. While the statements of these patterns might need refinement, such cases will arise for any pattern in which reasons provided by the premises can be disabled.
- ¹⁸ For criticism of variants of this view see McHugh & Way, 2018. Views on which N is permissibility, justification, or *ought* can be understood as reason-preservation views, in so far as these properties are a matter of the balance of reasons. Worsnip (2019) criticises a justification-preservation account.
- ¹⁹ For recent discussion of fittingness see Howard, 2018; Howard & Rowland, 2022.
- ²⁰ The analogous move is not straightforwardly available to the Rationality Account. It's not the case that, other things equal, there is a rational requirement to believe testimony (for example). There is simply no such requirement.
- ²¹ See McHugh & Way, 2022, Ch. 2, for discussion of several of these strategies.
- ²² Hawthorne & Stanley, 2008; Littlejohn, 2014.
- ²³ If reasoning has an aim, mustn't good reasoning be conducive to it in respect of both starting points *and* transitions? I don't object to a use of 'good reasoning' that requires both appropriate starting points and good transitions. I insist only that we distinguish norms of starting points and of transitions, and note that the use of 'good reasoning' to express specifically the latter is a standard use.

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