Being more realistic about reasons : On rationality and reasons perspectivism

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Being More Realistic About Reasons: On Rationality and Reasons Perspectivism

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This paper looks at whether it is possible to unify the requirements of rationality with the demands of normative reasons. It might seem impossible to do because one depends upon the agent's perspective and the other upon features of the situation. Enter Reasons Perspectivism. Reasons perspectivists think they can show that rationality does consist in responding correctly to reasons by placing epistemic constraints on these reasons. They think that if normative reasons are subject to the right epistemic constraints, rational requirements will correspond to the demands generated by normative reasons. While this proposal is *prima facie* plausible, it cannot ultimately unify reasons and rationality. There is no epistemic constraint that can do what reasons perspectivists would need it to do. Some constraints are too strict. The rest are too slack. This points to a general problem with the reasons-first program. Once we recognize that the agent's epistemic position helps determine what she should do, we have to reject the idea that the features of the agent's situation can help determine what we should do. Either rationality crowds out reasons and their demands or the reasons will make unreasonable demands.

0. Three Claims

Consider three *prima facie* plausible claims about normative reasons and rationality.[1]

Standard Factualism says that normative reasons are (typically) the facts about features of the situation that we have in mind when we're thinking about whether to ϕ.[2] Normative reasons determine whether an agent ought to ϕ by doing things like counting in favour or against.[3] They can have weights we compare in practical deliberation.[4] They would be good candidates for being premises of good reasoning or being what these premises concern.[5] They include such facts as the fact that a promise was made (a reason to meet a friend), the fact that the dog didn't bark (a reason to believe the thief was on staff), or the fact that someone betrayed your trust (a reason to be upset

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[2] See Alvarez (2010) and Dancy (2000). Let 'ϕ' stand for any rationally response.

[3] Scanlon (1998).

[4] See Lord and Maguire (2017).

[5] See Way (2017) for the good premise view. Gregory (2016) proposes they are good bases. Mantel (2017) thinks of them as the states of affairs that the premises concern. The issues discussed here arise for all views that allow for reasons that don't supervene upon an individual's non-factive mental states.

with them). Everyone should accept that propositionally specified normative reasons are facts for the boring reason that they figure in explanations of normative matters. The success of an explanation depends, *inter alia*, upon the truth of the explanans. Standard factualists accept this, but they also accept the more interesting claim that the facts that constitute normative reasons are (typically) facts about the situation that we would think of as pros and cons.

Standard Mentalism says that rationality supervenes upon an individual's perspective.[6] If it is rational for someone to ɸ, it couldn't be irrational for her epistemic counterparts (i.e., non-factive mental duplicates) to ɸ, too.[7] In the case of belief, if a thinker knows *p*, her epistemic counterparts in bad cases will be equally rational in their beliefs. The external conditions that distinguish good cases from bad matter to knowledge, not rational status. The same holds true for the rationality of emotion, intention, and action.

These first two claims tell us nothing about how the factors that determine whether someone ought to ɸ relate to the factors that determine whether it's rational for her to ɸ.[8] According to the third, *Equivalence*, normative reasons and rationality always require the same thing. As Lord puts it, 'it is a truism that you should be rational' (forthcoming: 41). This is because, he says, the same things determine what reasons and rationality require.[9] In this discussion, those who defend Equivalence believe that whenever rationality requires an agent to ɸ, this is *because* normative reasons require her to ɸ.[10] If Equivalence so understood is correct, it should be easy to explain why rationality matters. It matters whether we respond rationally because irrational responses are failures to respond correctly to reasons. If anything matters, it matters whether we do what the reasons require. If Equivalence is correct, it's easy to answer the question, 'Why be rational?'. It's difficult to answer the question without Equivalence.

Each claim is plausible taken individually, but the combination might seem implausible. Recall Broome's (2007) objection to the idea that rationality consists in responding correctly to

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[6] In the recent literature, a number of authors (e.g., Fogal (ms.), Pryor (forthcoming), and Worsnip (2018)) have argued that our talk of what's 'rational' or 'rationally required' might pertain to *structural* rationality or *substantive* rationality. The former is taken to be a matter of coherence and the latter is to be a matter of responsiveness to reasons. Reasons perspectivists want to account for all rational requirements non-structurally, in terms of responses to reasons. I adopt their way of speaking.

[7] For a defence, see Cohen (1984) and Wedgwood (2002). See also Lord (forthcoming b) and Kiesewetter (2017: 179).

[8] This 'ought' is Broome's (2013: 26) 'central' ought or Lord's (forthcoming) 'all things considered' ought. Kiesewetter (2017: 10) thinks it's clearest that it's irrational not to ɸ and judge that we ought to ɸ in this sense.

[9] Lord's proposed explanation of Equivalence is, 'the essence of the property of being rational is that the bearer of this property is correctly responding to the objective normative reasons that are possessed' (forthcoming b: 3). See also Kiesewetter (2017: 164).

[10] Lord (forthcoming) and Kiesewetter (2017) try to account for rational requirements by identifying normative reasons that ground them. Take the Enkratic Requirement. They deny that it's a structural requirement that fundamentally has to do with relations among attitudes. On their non-structural account, someone is guaranteed to be irrational if they believe that they ought to ɸ and fail to intend to ɸ because every situation is either one in which there's decisive reason to believe that they ought to ɸ (which ensures that there's sufficient reason to ɸ) or one in which there's decisive reason not to ɸ (which ensures that there's not sufficient reason to believe that they ought to ɸ. One potential benefit of this approach is that it avoids the wide-scoper's symmetry problem. See Broome (2013) and Worsnip (2015) for responses to this problem. For alternative accounts of the Enkratic Requirement, see Gibbons (2013), Littlejohn (2012, forthcoming), and Titelbaum (2015).

normative reasons. Agnes is served the fish. It looks delicious. She knows it's high in protein and low in cholesterol. She doesn't realize it contains salmonella. If reasons are what Standard Factualism says, it seems the reasons to throw the fish away outweigh the reasons to eat. Thus, Standard Factualism seems to imply that Agnes ought to throw the fish away. That would be irrational, though. She's the epistemic counterpart of an agent who ought to eat the fish (i.e., she's the same 'on the inside' as someone who is served fish without salmonella who knows she ought to eat it). It would be irrational for her counterpart to throw it away, so Standard Mentalism says that it's irrational for Agnes to throw it away. Given Standard Mentalism and Standard Factualism, it seems we should deny Equivalence.

The literature is lousy with proposals about how to deal with this mess. Some try to do justice to the relevance of objective and subjective matters by distinguishing between objective and subjective readings of 'ought' and 'reason'.[11] Some reject Equivalence, some reject Standard Factualism, and some reject Standard Mentalism.[12] We'll examine a new proposal, one that tries to accommodate all three theses without appealing to different readings of 'ought' or 'reason'.

Reasons perspectivists say that we can accommodate Standard Factualism, Standard Mentalism, and Equivalence.[13] They argue that *potent* normative reasons (i.e., reasons that help determine whether some individual ought to ϕ) are connected to an individual's perspective. By placing epistemic constraints on potent normative reasons, they try to defuse objections to Equivalence while retaining Standard Factualism and Standard Mentalism.

The basic idea is this. If potent normative reasons are the features of the situation that satisfy certain epistemic constraints, reasons perspectivists can say, in keeping with Standard Factualism, that facts about the situation help determine whether an individual ought to ϕ. Since these reasons are all available to the agent, there's no reason to think that they will require us to act irrationally. Broome's objection to Equivalence assumed that features of the situation an agent knows nothing about can help to determine whether she ought to ϕ, but the epistemic constraints function to snuff these vexatious hidden reasons out.

In §1, I shall provide an overview of Reasons Perspectivism. In §2, I shall show that, contrary to what reasons perspectivists have argued, we cannot consistently endorse Equality, Standard Factualism, and Standard Mentalism. Even after we introduce epistemic constraints on potent reasons, the requirements of rationality will not line up with the demands of normative reasons. In this discussion, I shall assume that the relevant possession condition should be understood in terms of knowledge. The possessed reasons are the facts that the agent is in a position to know. Properly understood, my arguments tell us something about reasons, not knowledge. If the epistemic constraints are loose enough to allow us to possess some of the standard factualist's reasons, it's possible to show that possessed reasons might require us to act irrationally. If the tension between Standard Factualism, Standard Mentalism, and Equivalence cannot be defused, reasons perspectivists cannot appeal to Equivalence to explain why rationality is normative. In §3, I briefly discuss the significance of the problems discussed n §2.

Readers might wonder why they should care if the objections presented here show that the latest view about reasons and rationality is mistaken. Here's one reason to care. Standard factualists dominate the current discussion of normative reasons. By and large, they tend to reject pure objectivist views of 'ought' and prefer some kind of perspectivist view that says that what we

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[11] For recent examples, see Olsen (2017), Smith (2010), and Wedgwood (2016). For critical discussion, see Zimmerman (1996). An anonymous referee noted that perspectivism is compatible with the idea that there are objective and subjective readings of 'ought'. What's crucial to the proposal is that we don't need to appeal to these different readings.

[12] Broome (2005, 2007) rejects Equivalence. Gibbons (2013) rejects Standard Factualism. In a way, Williamson (2017) rejects Standard Mentalism.

[13] The two most prominent reasons perspectivists are Kiesewetter (2017) and Lord (forthcoming b).

'ought' to do depends upon our epistemic position. This suggests that people want a hybrid approach that finds room for the standard factualist's reasons and does justice to the considerations that support perspectivist views of 'ought'. Standard Factualism might be responsible for the problems discussed below. When we see that it is impossible to reconcile the requirements of rationality with the demands generated by the standard factualist's reasons, we will see that the hybrid view many of us want might be unstable.[14]

1. Reasons Perspectivism

Reasons perspectivists are standard factualists, so they think normative reasons are typically what we take them to be, the facts about the situation that we think of when weighing things up, the pros and cons, and the things that count in favour or against. This view about reasons is compatible with any number of views about which reasons matter. Reasons perspectivists are *perspectivists* because they think that the *potent* reasons are *possessed* by agents:

> Possession-Potency: the potent normative reasons are the facts the agent is in a position to know.

To block Broome's objection to Equivalence, reasons perspectivists borrow an idea mentioned in passing by Dancy:

> There is … a manoeuver available … This is to appeal to … an agent-relative epistemic filter through which states of affairs or features of the situation have to pass if they are to be allowed to stand as grounds for duties … Even if duties are always founded in features of the situation, it might be that to serve as a ground a feature has to be one that … the agent is at least capable of discerning (2000: 57).[15]

If we place epistemic constraints on reasons so that only accessible features of the situation help determine what we ought to do, we can see why Broome's objection to Equivalence might fail. Broome thought that rationality requires eating the fish and that the normative reasons require throwing it out. The normative reasons that require things from us are, trivially, potent reasons. (This is how potent reasons are defined.) If Possession-Potency is correct, potent reasons have to be things the agent can know at the time of action. The reasons that favoured throwing the fish away weren't possessed, so they weren't potent. The possessed reasons favoured eating the fish, which was the rational thing to do. This manoeuver undercuts Broome's challenge to Equality.

1.1 Motivation

This was a promising result, but now we see that much turns on whether Possession-Potency is correct. Let's briefly review two of the main motivations for Possession-Potency.

A. Three Options

Intuitions about three-options cases are widely taken to show that pure objectivist views about 'ought' like Moore's (1903) are mistaken.[16] The pure objectivist, to use Kiesewetter's helpful

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[14] I'm not alone in expressing scepticism about the reasons-first approach that is assumed by reasons perspectivists. Titelbaum (forthcoming) argues that it's possible to use dominance reasoning to show that someone can be rationally required to ϕ without possessed reasons to ϕ. This paper provides further support for this scepticism by showing that rationality sometimes requires us to act against decisive possessed reasons.

[15] In personal communication, Dancy made it clear that he did not endorse Possession-Potency.

[16] Regan (1980: 265, n.1) introduced the three-options case to the literature. In addition to reasons perspectivists like Kiesewetter (2017) and Lord (forthcoming b), see Jackson (1991) and Zimmerman's (2008) defence of perspectivism. It's not clear that the cases support the reasons perspectivists proposals about emotion and belief. I haven't seen a three-options case used to shed light on the normative reasons that matter to emotion. While McHugh and Way (2017) use

expression, thinks that facts about the situation determine whether an agent ought to ϕ *and* believes that facts about the agent's epistemic situation have no bearing on whether she ought to ϕ. Pure objectivist views seem to clash with our intuitions about three-options cases. These same intuitions might support Possession-Potency.

This is the basic structure of the three-option case. Agnes knows that ten miners are working at the bottom of one of two shafts. Because of a sudden rainstorm, Agnes needs to act quickly to try to block the shafts so that the water doesn't flood the shafts and kill the miners. She has no information about whether they are in shaft A or B, but it is certain that all 10 miners are in one of them working together. If she does nothing, they all drown. Always the optimist, Agnes thinks she can bring about a better outcome. Three options remain:

> 1. Block shaft A completely. If all the miners are working in A, 10 will be saved and 0 will die. If, however, they are working in B, 10 will be killed and 0 will be saved.
> 2. Block shaft B completely. If all the miners are working in B, 10 will be saved and 0 will die. If, however, they are working in A, 10 will be killed and 0 will be saved.
> 3. Block neither shaft completely but block both shafts partially.

If she partially blocks both shafts, there will be air enough in both shafts for 9 miners. 9 miners will be saved but 1 will be killed. Pure objectivists say that Agnes shouldn't opt for the third option because one of the first two options is better.[17] Many say, however, that it would be unreasonable for Agnes choose any option but the third. Many also say that Agnes ought to choose the third. The lesson that reasons perspectivists take from this is that what an agent like Agnes ought to do is determined by the facts that she knows or is in a position to know, not facts that she couldn't know (e.g., the fact that the miners are in shaft A). In other words, the potent reasons are possessed. Reasons perspectivists think these three-option cases constitute counterexamples to views that don't incorporate a filter like the one imposed by Possession-Potency.

Let me flag an issue that matters later. Possession-Potency tells us that certain facts aren't potent. It tells us nothing more. The fact that the miners are in A is one which, if known, would make it the case that Agnes ought to block A. Since Agnes isn't aware of it, Possession-Potency tells us that *it* doesn't help to determine what Agnes ought to do, but it doesn't tell us how the facts she's aware of determine what she should do. Indeed, it doesn't even say that they play any role in determining what she should do. Thus, while Reasons Perspectivism doesn't deliver a verdict that clashes with intuition, it's not yet clear how it explains these intuitions. When we identify all of Agnes' possessed reasons, it's not clear what these reasons favour. We need something that tells us that these reasons make it incorrect to try to save 10 and incorrect to do nothing. We need something that takes us from this list of possessed reasons to the claim that the correct response is to choose to save 9. At this point, I'd follow the lead of Jackson (1991) and Zimmerman (2008) who import machinery from standard decision theory. They say that Agnes ought to opt for Option 3 because it maximizes expected value.

Our theory of rational response should accommodate Conservatism:

> Conservatism: Standard decision theory is right about pedestrian cases (i.e., rationality requires us to maximize expected value and avoid being dominated).[18]

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them to discuss the epistemic 'ought', their arguments only target an objectivist who identifies what we ought to believe with what's true (and not with what's known).

[17] See Graham (2010) and Thomson (1990) for sympathetic presentations of pure objectivism.

[18] [] rightly observed that there are foundational questions about standard decision theory that have no agreed upon answers. For example, the nature of the relevant kind of value is unclear. Wedgwood (2017) argues that rationality requires us to maximize expected choiceworthiness. In the moral case, Zimmerman (2008) suggests that we can find an appropriate kind of value to rank

Conservatism is independently plausible and provides the only principled explanation of the intuitions about three-options cases taken to favour a perspectivist approach over a pure objectivist approach to 'ought'. Reasons perspectivists might say that Conservatism isn't a commitment of their view, but I think they need it. They need it to explain verdicts about cases. They also need it because the extensional adequacy of standard decision theory is a plausible default assumption in discussions of rational choice. There are foundational questions about decision-theoretic norms that generate discussion, but it's typically taken to be bad for views (e.g., pure objectivist views) if they tell us to choose dominated options or do other than maximize expected value. If reasons perspectivists ultimately have to reject Conservatism, this is a cost of the view. As interesting as the cases discussed below might be, it's hard to believe that I've accidentally refuted Conservatism.

B. Theoretical Considerations

Let's consider the second motivation for Possession-Potency. Reasons perspectivists think that normative reasons have to be things that can guide us.[19] In turn, they think that normative reasons can only do their normative work when it's possible for us to be moved by them to do what we should.[20] In turn, this requires that the reasons are possessed.

Recall Thomson's (1990) example in which an agent flips a switch that sets off a chain of events that she couldn't have anticipated. It results in an electric flash that burns her neighbour. Thomson says that the agent ought to have not flipped the switch. Lord objects:

> … there is simply no way you can do what you ought to for the right reason. In other words, the only way you can do what you ought to do is by being an idiot … There's no way for the right-makers of your act to get any legitimate grip on you. But, we're supposed to believe, they require you stumble around in the dark all the same. Again, this seems implausible (forthcoming: 36).

He proposes that a set of normative reasons can only require an agent to ϕ if she can respond to these reasons in a way that is 'creditworthy' (forthcoming: 35), a way that manifests the agent's competence or knowledge of how to respond properly to those reasons.[21]

To introduce some terminology, the proposal is normative reasons only require an agent to ϕ if (i) ϕ-ing is among the correct responses and (ii) the agent is properly *attuned* to these reasons and their demands. If a set of reasons requires Agnes to ϕ and she ϕ's, she might conform to these reasons or 'track' them, as Kiesewetter puts it, without having any idea that these reasons favour ϕ-ing. To understand mere 'tracking', think about cases where a thinker infers p by reasoning fallaciously from a set of premises that logically entail that conclusion. She's not properly guided by them if she reasons fallaciously. She only heeds their guidance if her response shows her understanding of what these reasons call for.

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options regardless of whether we choose for some consequentialist or non-consequentialist view. There are difficult questions about the proper interpretation of the principles of standard decision theory (e.g., it isn't clear what rationality is concerned in the first instance with our credences or with evidential probability). The difficulties discussed below should arise on any standard view about rational credence. My agents will be probabilistically coherent and their degree of confidence will be proportional to their evidence.

[19] This is not a commitment of Reasons Perspectivism, but it is a consideration that reasons perspectivists offer in support of their view. See also Way and Whiting (2016) for discussion.

[20] Some writers connect this to the idea that 'ought' implies 'can', but it would be a mistake to do so because 'ought' implies 'can' has to do with the ability to perform an act of a type, not the ability to do so while also being motivated by some specific considerations.

[21] See also Kiesewetter (2016: 769).

This point is supposed to vindicate Possession-Potency. If the winning reasons are not possessed, the agent would merely track the requirement generated by them by accidentally doing what they required. But that means that these reasons aren't adequate guides. But that means that they don't have the power to require any response from the agent. The only reasons with potency would have to be the ones that are available to the agent. If they're not available, the agent cannot follow the reason's guidance.

In §3, I shall have more to say about the motivation for Possession-Potency. In this next section, I shall argue that we cannot consistently maintain that Standard Perspectivism, Standard Mentalism, and Equality are correct. Reasons perspectivists might be right that we're not required to respond to things that the agent couldn't have known about, but this doesn't show that rationality might be a matter of responding correctly to possessed normative reasons. It's possible that the standard factualist's reasons, possessed or otherwise, have nothing to do with rationality or play little to no role in determining what we ought to do.

2. Rationality Does Not Consist of Responding Correctly to Possessed Normative Reasons

I'll describe two ways in which the requirements of rationality can diverge from the demands of normative reasons. In these examples (Pond or Diner, Philosopher or Accountant), the winning reasons aren't inaccessible features of the agent's situation. Because of this, Possession-Potency cannot help reasons perspectivists defend Equivalence. If we keep the standard factualist's normative reasons in the picture, the clash between reasons and rationality is unavoidable. I offer two cases because they highlight different problems for Reasons Perspectivism.

2.1 Pond or Diner

Consider four versions of Pond or Diner. In each case, Agnes' mental states are held constant. In the epistemically best version of the case, Agnes knows she promised to meet a friend at a diner to discuss something urgent (Diner), knows that a child is in danger of drowning in the pond she's walking past (Pond), and knows she cannot be in the pond and the diner. She ought to jump into the pond. The weightiest possessed reason favours doing so.

This verdict rests on a plausible principle about normative reasons:

> Weightiest Potent Wins: An agent ought to φ just in case the potent
> reasons that count in favour of φ-ing are weightier than the potent
> reasons that favour any alternative to φ-ing.[22]

Because reasons perspectivists take potent reasons to be possessed, they read the above as follows:

> Weightiest Possessed Wins: An agent ought to φ just in case
> the possessed reasons that count in favour of φ-ing are
> weightier than the possessed reasons that favour any
> alternative to φ-ing.

To test this, we need to see if it delivers plausible verdicts about what the agent ought to do and whether these verdicts fit with our intuitions about rationality.

Consider Agnes' epistemic counterparts (i.e., her non-factive mental duplicates). We can write down the things known by Agnes in Best and then compare this list to the lists of things known by her counterpart in the epistemically worst case. In Worst, she's a BIV. All of her beliefs about the situation are false:

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[22] See Lord (forthcoming: 16. Elsewhere Lord says, "a token φ-ing is ex post rational when (i) one possesses normative reasons to φ that are sufficiently weighty, and (ii) one φ-s for those reasons" (forthcoming b: 7). Since φ-ing is, for him, rational only if permitted, the permission depends upon the comparative weights of potent reasons.

Best: My friend needs my support (weighs in favour of Diner);
That child is in imminent danger of drowning (weighs in favour of Pond).
Worst: ~~My friend needs my support (weighs in favour of Diner); That child is in imminent danger of drowning (weighs in favour of Pond).~~

The strikethrough indicates that the things that Agnes takes to count in favour aren't among her possessed reasons because they aren't facts or aren't ones she's in a position to know.

In Worst, Agnes thinks her reasons are the ones in Best, but we know better. It's hard to say whether the weightiest possessed reasons in Worst decisively favour Pond. By my lights, her list of possessed reasons no nothing on it, so I don' think they favour anything in particular. Let's ignore BIVs and consider less bad cases in which only some of Agnes' beliefs are mistaken:

Bad A: ~~My friend needs my support (weighs in favour of Diner);~~ That child is in imminent danger of drowning (weighs in favour of Pond).
Bad B: My friend needs my support (weighs in favour of Diner); ~~That child is in imminent danger of drowning (weighs in favour of Pond).~~

In Bad A, no possessed reason favours Diner. Nothing weighs against the reason that favours Pond. Thus, Weightiest Possessed Wins implies that Agnes ought to jump into the pond as she should in Best. In Bad B, things are reversed: there is no possessed reason that weighs in favour of Pond. Thus, the possessed reason that favours Diner wins. Weightiest Possessed Wins implies that Agnes ought to act differently in Bad A and B. Thus, Equivalence implies that she's rationally required to act differently in Bad A and B. This contradicts Standard Mentalism, which says that she is rationally required to do the same things in all four cases.[23]

Even if we assume Possession-Potency, Equivalence clashes with Standard Factualism and Standard Mentalism. The permutations show that the response supported by the weightiest possessed reason can vary from one case to the next even when the requirements of rationality do not differ. The epistemic filter that reasons perspectivists introduced to deal with Broome's example handles *ignorance*, not *mistake*. Standard Mentalism tells us that some mistaken beliefs have the same rational standing as knowledge. Thus, Standard Mentalism tells us that it can be rational to treat the objects of false beliefs *as if* they are objects of knowledge. Thus, it predicts that there are rational requirements that require us to act against the strongest possessed reasons when we deliberate from a mixture of false beliefs and knowledge.

If we ought to act rationally, we sometimes ought to act against decisive possessed reasons. If we ought to act in accordance with decisive possessed reasons, we sometimes ought to act irrationally. Standard factualists, including reasons perspectivists, might have to admit that the way to act in accordance with the strongest possessed reason is sometimes to 'stumble around in the dark' and act like 'an idiot'. (Think about Agnes fully believing there's a child in the pond deciding to head to the diner while acknowledging that if there's a child in the pond she ought to jump in.) If that's an unavoidable consequence of Standard Factualism, perspectivists might have to reject

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[23] Dutant (forthcoming) uses similar arguments from error to put pressure on Lord's (forthcoming) view. There are accounts that better handle these cases involving permutations of possessed reasons. Both Bird (2007) and Dutant (forthcoming) give accounts of rational ϕ-ing on which the rationality of an individual's response is determined by reasons they *might* possess. It is no part of their view that each counterpart who is rationally required to ϕ has decisive reason to ϕ. It isn't clear whether these proposals serve the needs of Reasons Perspectivism. They run into trouble in cases where a rational thinker has inconsistent beliefs. I suspect that they'll have to deny Standard Mentalism to address such cases. Dutant (ms.) develops a view that does this.

it.[24] Reasons perspectivists also have to rethink their reliance on considerations of guidance to motivate their views.

A. Response: Backup Reasons

Reasons perspectivists might respond as follows. If the lists of possessed normative reasons in the four versions of Pond or Diner were complete, we would get the bad result that rationality requires the same thing in each case even though the weightiest possessed reasons would require different responses in Bad B and Best. This would show that Equivalence is false. However, the lists of reasons were incomplete. The lists did not take account of further reasons, facts *about* the agent's perspective.[25] In the bad cases, *these* facts about how things appear to the agent are supposed to pick up the slack and provide support for responding as we ought to in the good case. The fact that it looks as if a child is in danger will be a reason for Agnes to jump into the pond in the bad cases. Reasons perspectivists propose that there is always a 'backup' set of reasons that we need to take account of. These backup reasons ensure that the agent's reasons in the bad case favour the same things as the agent's reasons in the good. Thus, (non-backup or backup) reasons decisively support the rationally required response in both cases.[26]

I am not convinced. For this response to work, reasons perspectivists have to show that the reasons concerning the friend's needs are outweighed by reasons that consist of facts about how things appear or seem to Agnes. They need to defend this thesis:

> Exchangeability: if the fact that p constitutes a potent normative reason for A to ϕ that has weight W, the fact that it seems to A that p constitutes a potent normative reason for A to ϕ that also has W.

I don't think Exchangeability is very plausible. How can we explain the surprising strength of these backup reasons? We might grant that it's rational in Bad B for Agnes to jump into the pond. I can see why some people might think that this is some evidence about the weights of the reasons that support Pond in Best and Bad B. Some philosophers, for example, might say that the fact that p has weight W *because* that's the weight that a rational thinker would give it in deliberation.[27] This isn't how reasons perspectivists think about things. Reasons perspectivists want to account for rational requirements by appeal to facts about the possessed reasons and their properties (e.g., what weights they have, how they interact with the other possessed reasons, what they favour or support). On this approach, the rational requirements are what they are *because* the possessed reasons have the properties they do. Once that's clear, I don't see how reasons perspectivists could explain Exchangeability.

My concerns about Exchangeability don't only have to do with an apparent lack of motivation for it. When it comes to determining how much weight a reason has, the external

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[24] There is no entry for 'reason' in Zimmerman's (2008) defense of perspectivism.

[25] Ichikawa (2018), Kiesewetter (2017: 171) and Lord (forthcoming b) appeal to facts about appearances or how things seem to help deal with error. The function of these backup reasons is to ensure that the response that's permitted or required in a good case also finds decisive or sufficient support in the reasons possessed in the bad case so that Standard Mentalism and Equivalence can be preserved.

[26] Williamson (2000: 199) once proposed something similar by saying that the appearances known in the bad case might provide rational support for the beliefs that are rationally held in the good case. It's unclear whether he thought that such reasons provided *equally good* support.

[27] Some conflate (i) the weight that a rational thinker would assign to the case for ϕ-ing as a consequence of the fact that they believed p and (ii) the weight that a rational thinker would assign to the fact that they believe p. These are distinct. While (ii) assumes that the fact about belief is among the weighty reasons that favour ϕ-ing, (i) is neutral on this. In the present setting, weights have to take explanatory priority over the weight a rational thinker would assign.

perspective seems legitimate. When we try to assign weights to reasons, we tend to do so by thinking about what would be preferable, how good or regrettable something would be, and these assessments don't normally take account of the agent's uncertainty or evidence. From this perspective, facts about appearances carry little to no weight. From my external perspective, I would say that the case for Pond is weaker in Bad B than it is Best precisely because we've removed the child from the pond.[28] From this perspective, Exchangeability seems false.

Exchangeability is also problematic when we think about weights from within a deliberative perspective. Facts about how things appear don't carry much weight from this perspective, either. If Agnes is swimming towards the child, it seems perfectly natural for her to think to herself, 'If there is no child there, my reasons for swimming out to the middle of the pond aren't nearly as good as I think they are' or 'If there is no child there, my reasons for swimming out to the middle of the pond aren't nearly as good as they were last time when I swam out here and saved a child'. These thoughts clash with Exchangeability. If readers are convinced that Agnes ought to proceed *as if* there are these weighty reasons to jump in, they should ask themselves whether this is because of some inherent property of the facts that we could think of as some reason's weight or because of something else that generates the normative pressure (e.g., a rational requirement that pertains to all of Agnes' epistemic counterparts that doesn't seem to be grounded in any salient reason).

Finally, if Exchangeability is correct, non-backup reasons and their backup reasons favour the same options *and* carry the same weight (i.e., if the fact that p outweighs the fact that q, the same must be true of the fact that it seems to the agent that p). If the backup reasons didn't have this kind of weight to throw around, they wouldn't ensure that the options most favoured by the non-backup reasons are most favoured by their backup reasons. This doesn't sit well with the agent's own understanding of what it takes for there to be weighty reasons to ϕ. Because of this, I don't think Exchangeability fits with the motivation for Standard Factualism.

Why is Standard Factualism so popular? I think it's because standard factualists make plausible positive and negative points about normative reasons. Their positive suggestion is that reasons should be taken to be what ordinary agents take favourers or good bases to be. Their negative point is that normative reasons are *not* things that ordinary agents would deny count in favour, constitute good bases, or constitute good premises in reasoning. Recall Dancy's (2000) objection to the statist idea that, say, a subject's belief (understood as a mental act or state rather than the object of acts or states) that someone is in need of help is a good reason to render aid. He suggests that this is confused (confusing the condition under which it appears we have such a reason with the reason itself) and proposes that on the ordinary conception, the good reason to pull over is the needs of the people you think about helping. Surely if *this* objection carries the day for Standard Factualism, it applies with equal force to the idea that backup reasons consisting of facts about how things look or appear given the agent's mental profile (e.g., it seemed that people needed help) are carry just as much normative weight as the facts about the situation that an agent takes her reasons to be and would cite in justifying her actions (e.g., the needs of people who have been left stranded). Some of us might agree that being in such states makes it the case that you ought to pull over and offer help. The further claim that we would reject (and the one that clashes with Dancy's insight) is that these facts about appearances ensure that something is rational or ought to be done by virtue of constituting equally weighty reasons as any fact about the situation would. It's important not confuse the intuitive verdicts about what's rational or what ought to be done with questionable theoretical claims about why these verdicts are correct.

If we shift our focus away from the practical and theoretical cases for a moment, cases of emotional responses suggest that there is something very wrong with Exchangeability. Consider Othello. In the (epistemically) good case, Othello's reason for being upset is Desdemona's infidelity. Some people might think of this as a good reason to be upset. Compare this case to a

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[28] Of course, this difference will be lost on Agnes in Bad B.

bad case, the case that Shakespeare described. According to Exchangeability, the appearance of infidelity, if known, is a reason that favours the same things as known infidelity. Now, consider two claims:

> 1. Othello's reason for being upset is that Desdemona was unfaithful.
> 2. Othello's reason for being upset is that it appeared Desdemona was unfaithful.

There are people who would think that the fact that it appears that there was infidelity *is* a fact that makes it right or fitting to be upset, but you would ruin Shakespeare's play if you thought that Othello was like them. He would reject the idea that the thing that (2) specifies as his reason for being upset with Desdemona would have been a reason to be upset with her. Unfortunately, Exchangeability tells us that the facts identified as Othello's reason in (1) and (2) count in favour of the same responses *and* have the same weight. This is *not* how Othello sees things.[29] Exchangeability suggests that Othello would be wrong about what could be a good reason to be upset. Othello knows better what would be a good reason to be upset and what is not (even if he is bad at responding properly to these reasons).

Let me sum up. If Standard Factualism and Standard Mentalism are correct, Pond or Diner is a counterexample to Equivalence. Reasons perspectivists can try to block this by appealing to Exchangeability, but Exchangeability is *prima facie* implausible and is in tension with the considerations that support Standard Factualism. The objection stands.

2.2 Philosopher or Accountant

Pond or Diner was designed to show that in cases of *mistake*, epistemic counterparts that are (according to Standard Mentalism) rationally required to do the same things might nevertheless have possessed reasons that require different things from them. The reasons perspectivists' filter might help them deal with *ignorance*, but not mistake. This next example is supposed to illustrate further difficulties having to do with *uncertainty*. This next example is designed to show that an agent might be rationally required to ϕ even if the possessed reasons require her to do other than ϕ. Because the case doesn't involve mistaken belief or ignorance, neither Exchangeability nor Possession-Potency addresses this next problem.

Consider Philosopher or Accountant. Agnes has to choose between two options: lunch with a philosopher or lunch with an accountant. Let's let '*p*' and '~*p*' stand for lunch with the philosopher is good/not good respectively and let '*a*' and ~*a*' stand for lunch with the accountant is good/not good respectively. Let's suppose that Agnes knows that a good lunch with a philosopher is very good (+10), a lunch that is not good with a philosopher is horrible (-10,000), a good lunch with an accountant is pretty forgettable (+1), and a lunch that is not good with an accountant is perfectly forgettable (0). Agnes knows that she cannot eat alone and cannot eat with both the philosopher and the accountant. As it happens, Agnes knows that lunch with the philosopher is good.

According to Reasons Perspectivism, known facts are possessed reasons. We haven't said anything yet about what knowledge is. Now we should. Because reasons perspectivists think facts about the situation typically determine whether we ought to ϕ, they need a suitably liberal view of knowledge, one that says that we can know things about the situation that are relevant to the options we are considering. Let's start by considering how Fallibilist Reasons Perspectivism handles this case. As the name suggests, the fallibilist reasons perspectivist is a fallibilist, someone who thinks that it's possible for a thinker to know that *q* is true even when her total evidence

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[29] See Alvarez (forthcoming) for further discussion of the example. Reasons Perspectivism tells us something about how rationality and reasons relate in all cases, including emotion. Once we see how strange Exchangeability is in the case of emotion, we can see how strange it is for belief and action, too. For a helpful discussion of reasons, factivity, and emotions, see Dietz (forthcoming).

doesn't entail *q* and rationality requires her to assign positive probability to ~*q*. We'll look at Infallibilist Reasons Perspectivism below.

This decision-table, which I'll call a 'P-Table', represents the states that Agnes assigns positive probability to, her options, and the values of the outcomes (i.e., state-option pairs):

Agnes' P-Table

	p & *a*	*p* & ~*a*	~*p* & *a*	~*p* & ~*a*
Philosopher	+10	+10	-10,000	-10,000
Accountant	+1	0	+1	0

Assume that Agnes' degrees of belief fit her evidence. Since we stipulated that Agnes knows *p*, we have to assign low probability to the ~*p*-possibilities (.1, say) and high probability to the disjunction of the first two state descriptions (.9, say). With these probabilities and values in place, we can determine the expected value of Philosopher and of Accountant. The expected value of Accountant exceeds the expected value of Philosopher. The P-Table recommends Accountant. Conservatism tells us to follow this guidance.

Let's consider a second kind of decision-table. While her P-Table represents the states that Agnes assigns positive probability to, her 'K-Table' represents the states compatible with Agnes' *knowledge*:

Agnes' K-Table

	p & *a*	*p* & ~*a*	
Philosopher	+10	+10	
Accountant	+1	0	

Because we've stipulated that Agnes knows that the lunch with the philosopher will be good, our K-Table is created by just striking out two of the states from the P-Table and then deleting the associated outcomes. To use this table, we zoom in on the possibilities compatible with Agnes' knowledge (i.e., *p* & *a*, *p* & ~*a*) and see whether we can use this information about the outcomes to decide what to do.

The K-Table doesn't represent the states on Agnes' P-Table that she knows doesn't obtain. Since possessed reasons include the states an agent knows to obtain, we can think of the K-Table as representing information about Agnes' possessed reasons, something that Agnes' P-Table does not do. (Looking at this K-Table, we can see that Agnes knows *p* (because all ~*p*-possibilities have been excluded) and that Agnes does not know *a* (because it includes at least one ~*a*-possibility).) Because *p* is one of Agnes' possessed reasons and Philosopher is better given *p* whether *a* obtains or not, the K-Table recommends Philosopher. Weightiest Possessed Wins tells us to follow the guidance of the K-Table in this situation.[30]

The clash should now be clear. If rationality tells us to take the probabilities into account in the way that Conservatism recommends, it tells us to choose the option that maximizes expected value in the P-Table. It tells us to choose Accountant. If, however, the possessed reasons are taken into account and their weights determine what we ought to do, we ought to follow the guidance of the K-Table. In turn, it tells us to choose Philosopher. Thus, there's a conflict. We can now see that there is considerable pressure to deny Equivalence if we accept Standard Factualism and Conservatism. Neither Exchangeability nor Possession-Potency helps to handle this case. Agnes knows the relevant facts and has no mistaken beliefs.

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[30] Since Philosopher is better than Accountant on both of the states under consideration, the probabilities drop out as irrelevant.

A. Response: Infallibilist Reasons Perspectivism

Weightiest Possessed Wins tells us to follow the guidance of the K-Table. It tells us to choose Philosopher. Conservatism tells us to follow the guidance of the P-Table. It tells us to choose Accountant. The source of the tension is that we're working with assumptions about knowledge that should lead us to expect that the P-Table and K-Table can recommend different things. Philosopher or Accountant shows that on a fallibilist view of knowledge, these tables can offer an agent incompatible guidance. Reasons perspectivists need to find a way to ensure that these tables offer the same guidance.

Let's look at one way that this might be done.[31] Philosopher or Accountant is an objection to Fallibilist Reasons Perspectivism. In setting up the case, I said that Agnes knew *p* and rationally assigned positive probability to ~*p*. It was this feature of the fallibilist view that I used to criticize Reasons Perspectivism by showing that this view predicts that an agent's P-Table and K-Table can issue incompatible directives. The reasons perspectivists might say that the source of the problem is the fallibilist view I've pinned on them. Infallibilist Reasons Perspectivism might avoid these problems entirely.

Our infallibilist thinks that there might be thinkers who know *p* and assign positive probability to ~*p*, but they think this thinker's degree of confidence isn't perfectly adjusted to her evidence. She thinks that if the thinker's degree of confidence is perfectly adjusted to her evidence and she knows *p*, she assigns *p* probability 1.[32] On this view, a fully rational thinker's K-Table matches her P-Table. If she's rational and her P-Table assigns positive probability to *p* and to ~*p*, she doesn't know whether *p* and her K-Table has to represent the outcomes associated with *p* and with ~*p*. If, however, she knows *p*, she assigns 0 probability to ~*p*-possibilities and her P-table

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[31] I don't have space to discuss 'shifty' fallibilist views (e.g., the impurist views of Owens (2000) and Fantl and McGrath (2009)). If reasons perspectivists appeal to pragmatic encroachment to address the difficulties discussed here, they would need to appeal to:

> Adequacy: For any *p* such that S's knowing *p* would mean that
> the options recommended by the P-Table differed from those
> recommended by a K-Table, S does not know *p*.

There are debates about whether our intuitions support Adequacy in *high-stakes* cases (e.g., Philosopher or Accountant). As Anderson and Hawthorne (forthcoming) observe, Adequacy has nothing to do with the height of stakes. In *low-stakes* cases, I don't think it's intuitive to deny the agent knowledge. Pragmatic encroachment denies us too much knowledge. Littlejohn (2017) and Roeber (forthcoming) argue that there can be low-stakes cases where it's intuitive to ascribe knowledge to agents even when the agent's K-Table and P-Table would recommend different courses of action. To take a modified example from Roeber, suppose that you're offered a jelly bean if you can answer a question correctly. (It costs nothing to play and you suffer no loss (save the loss of one jelly bean) if you answer incorrectly.) You can choose which question to answer: 'What is 1+2?' or 'What year is it?' You can know the answer to both questions even if, given your rational degrees of confidence, you should prefer answering the first question. If you know the answer to both questions, your K-Table says that you ought to be indifferent to choosing to answer the first or the second. To make sense of your preference for answering the first question, your P-Table has to assign positive probability to the negation of your belief about the year. To get these tables to harmonize, Adequacy requires us to deny knowledge of what year it is. This, I say, is counterintuitive. I don't think this shows impurists are necessarily wrong, only that we shouldn't turn to Adequacy to harmonize an agent's P-Table and K-Table.

[32] This is how Brown (2018) understands infallibilism and it seems to be a consequence of Williamson's (2000) views about evidence. Because Kiesewetter (2017) identifies possessed reasons with the individual's evidence, this might be an option for him.

matches the K-Table from above. On this view, an agent can follow the guidance of her K-Table and her P-Table because these tables harmonize.[33]

Because reasons perspectivists are attracted to half of Williamson's (2000) E=K equation and think that knowledge is sufficient for the possession of evidence and reasons, Infallibilist Reasons Perspectivism is an option they should consider. On standard views of evidential support, p has probability 1 on the total evidence when p is itself part of the evidence. Unfortunately, while this view avoids the objection to Fallibilist Reasons Perspectivism just discussed, it clashes with Standard Mentalism.

We can use a preface case to show this.[34] Agnes' manuscript is the product of careful research. She sends her penultimate draft to her fact checker and is told that her manuscript contains one error. Because she knows her fact checker to be very reliable, she believes this. She writes a preface consisting of a single sentence, one that says that the book contains an error. The fact checker dies before she reveals the location of the error. She doesn't change the body of the book. The book is now complete. It consists of a body of n-1 claims and a preface that consists of one claim. (Readers should choose a suitable value for n.)

Because Agnes believes each of the claims in her book, she believes n claims from the book and n-1 true claims. Consider two versions of the case:

> Bad Body: the fact checker was right and there was one error
> in the body of the book.
> Bad Beginning: the fact checker was wrong. There was no error
> in the body of the book. The preface sentence is false and it is
> responsible for the flawed book.

Discussions of preface cases focus on rationality, but let's focus on Agnes' *knowledge*. What can Agnes know in these cases?

Start with Bad Body. The complete book (i.e., the body and preface), contains n-1 truths. The body contains n-2 truths. Because knowledge is factive, Agnes couldn't know n things from the book, but it's possible that she knew each of the true claims *prior* to hearing from the fact checker. It's possible for her to retain all of this knowledge *after* hearing from the fact checker. Thus, she could have had at least n-2 pieces of knowledge at the end of the story (i.e., the true claims in the body). What about the fact checker's testimony? She believes that her book contains an error on the basis of reliable testimony. Couldn't she know this, too? I think so. If so, she'd know n-1 things from her book.

This optimistic assessment is based on these observations. First, the items recorded in the book are paradigmatic cases of things we can know. Second, preface cases are interesting, in part, because we're supposed to fill things in so that each claim strikes us as a good candidate for being rationally believed. Obviously, rational belief is not enough for knowledge, but a rational belief

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[33] The standard complaint about infallibilism is that it leads to scepticism. See Dutant (2016) for helpful discussion.

[34] The primary purpose of the example is to show that the infallibilist response to Philosopher or Accountant isn't available to reasons perspectivists. Its secondary purpose is to show that reasons perspectivists face the problem of explaining how they can reconcile their commitment to Standard Mentalism with the claim that our evidence could include facts about the situation. The example is inspired by Makinson's (1965) preface paradox. It differs from Makinson's in that it's concerned with knowledge rather than rational belief. See Moeller (2015) for an extended discussion of knowledge in such situations. Littlejohn (2018b) uses preface cases to illustrate problems for subjective reasons approaches to rationality. I think that the best response to the paradox is one that recognizes that rational thinkers can be inconsistent. For defence of this view, see Christensen (2004), Easwaran and Fitelson (2015), and Worsnip (2018). See Ryan (1991) for dissent.

that is true and isn't Gettiered is a great candidate for knowledge.[35] We have n-1 such candidates. Third, the author would be in a good position to learn from the fact checker that some book contains an error if that testimony had concerned any other book. I don't see why this book should be special or different. If *we* can learn from the fact checker that Agnes' book contains an error, it should be possible for her to learn this, too.

We have a *prima facie* plausible case for thinking that Agnes knows n-1 things from her book in Bad Body. What about Bad Beginning? Her beliefs are the same but we've changed the truth values of two of them. Her knowledge isn't distributed through her book in the same places as it was in Bad Body, but the reasoning that supports the claim that she can know n-1 things in Bad Body supports the claim that she can know n-1 things in Bad Beginning.

If the fact checker's testimony doesn't defeat or destroy some of Agnes' knowledge concerning the things reported in the book, we can summarize the state of her knowledge and evidence as follows:

> In both cases, the book contains n-1 truths.
> In both cases, Agnes knows n-1 things from her book.
> In both cases, the probability of any false proposition on Agnes' total evidence is less than 1.
> In both cases, the probability of each of the known propositions on Agnes' total evidence is 1 and the probability of the false proposition is less than 1.
> In Bad Body, the false proposition is expressed by the 123rd sentence.
> In Bad Beginning, it is expressed by the 1st sentence, the one in the preface.

Notice that the evidential probabilities of the propositions expressed by statements in the book are not uniform. Because evidential probability is a kind of probability and the propositions in Agnes' book form an inconsistent set, they cannot each have an evidential probability of 1. If the proposition is known, it has an evidential probability of 1. Thus, if it is false, it's less than 1. The evidential probability of the propositions expressed by the 1st and the 123rd sentences differ.

We need to connect strength of evidential support to the rationality of Agnes' attitudes. Consider two epistemic principles:

> Evidentialism: Rationality requires that a thinker proportion her beliefs to the evidence (i.e., that her degree of confidence in p matches the evidential probability of p).[36]
> Probabilism: Rationality requires thinkers to be probabilistically coherent.

These tell us the degrees of confidence that would be rational given Agnes' evidence. The first tells us about the relation between a rational thinker's degrees of confidence and her evidence. The second is a constraint on her degrees of confidence. Plausibly, a rational thinker who matched her degrees of belief to her evidence would satisfy Probabilism.

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[35] See Bird (2007), Ichikawa (2017), Kvanvig (2009), and Nelkin (2000) for defense of the idea that that which we can see we aren't in a position to know wouldn't be a good candidate for rational belief.

[36] Conee and Feldman (2004) defend the idea that what is rational to believe is determined by what fits the evidence. They focus on full belief, but an extension of this view to credences would be to say that they are justified when they match a probability function conditionalized on one's total evidence. We find this understanding of evidentialism in Easwaran and Fitelson (2015), Silins (2005), and Williamson (2000, Chapter 10).

We can now state the argument against Infallibilist Reasons Perspectivism. Because Agnes' knowledge differs in Bad Body and Bad Beginning, she has different evidence in these cases.[37] This difference in evidence implies a difference in the degree of evidential support she has in these cases for believing the preface proposition (p_1) and the proposition expressed by the 123rd sentence in her book (p_{123}). In Bad Body, P(p_1 | Agnes' total evidence) is 1 and P(p_{123} | Agnes' total evidence) is 0. In Bad Beginning, the values are reversed. These are consequences of infallibilist assumptions about knowledge and evidence and our description of Agnes' knowledge in these cases. Reasons Perspectivism implies Standard Mentalism. Standard Mentalism tells us that the rational credences for Agnes in Bad Body and Bad Beginning are the same. Now the tension is clear. If Agnes' credences were the same in the two cases, she would either violate Evidentialism or Probabilism. (If she assigned probability 1 to everything, she violates Evidentialism and Probabilism. If she had the same credences and did not assign probability 1 to the things she knew, she'd violate Evidentialism.) If she's rationally required to match her degree of belief to her evidence, she's rationally required to have different degrees of confidence in these two cases. This contradicts Standard Mentalism.

Why did we need a preface case to get this result? It nicely illustrates the way that two rational pressures exert themselves on Agnes' attitudes. As the evidence comes in in favour of p, Evidentialism says that it's rational to increase our confidence accordingly. Our infallibilist thinks that in Bad Body, the fact checker's testimony makes it rational to turn her confidence in p_1 all the way up. Standard Mentalism tells us that if it's okay to do this here, it must be okay to do this in Bad Beginning. Maybe this is what reasons perspectivists will say. Maybe they'll appeal to backup reasons again. They might, but the evidence tells us to increase confidence in other propositions, too. In Bad Beginning, the evidence tells Agnes to be certain of everything in the body. Now Probabilism kicks in. This is the second rational pressure that applies to Agnes' attitudes. It tells us that if she has these degrees of confidence turned all the way up, she has to be uncertain of the remaining claim in the book. The combination of Evidentialism and Probabilism rules out an appeal to backup reasons to justify having the same maximal or non-maximal degree of confidence in p_1 or p_{123} in the two cases.

If infallibilist reasons perspectivists want to accommodate Standard Mentalism, they might object that I've been too optimistic in ascribing knowledge to Agnes. They might insist that the fact checker's testimony changes the epistemic situation so that Agnes loses some of the knowledge that she had earlier.

This strategy will not give our infallibilist reasons perspectivists what they need. The infallibilist might say that I'm wrong and that the fact checker's testimony necessarily destroys some of Agnes' knowledge. It isn't plausible that this testimony would necessarily destroy *all* of Agnes' knowledge. Most of us know that we each hold a mistaken belief that we cannot identify. This doesn't mean that if we cannot locate that error in our beliefs that none of these beliefs can constitute knowledge.[38] The infallibilist might say that the testimony destroys only some of Agnes' knowledge, but I see two problems with this suggestion. First, it seems bizarre to think that beliefs that had previously been equally good candidates for knowledge *must* not fare equally well after Agnes hears what she does about the accuracy of her book. If each belief was independently supported, it's hard to see why the destructive epistemic forces would target some beliefs rather than others. (Imagine reading the Yellow Pages, committing its contents to memory, and then reading the false claim that it contains an error. Why would this bit of testimony destroy your knowledge of, say, the number of your favourite restaurant instead of your knowledge of the number of your third favourite dry cleaner?) Second, it seems bizarre to think that these destructive epistemic forces would have to target the same beliefs in every case involving epistemic

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[37] This follows from the factivity of evidence and the sufficiency of knowledge for the possession of evidence.

[38] See Christensen (2004: 53).

counterparts. I see no reason to think that if the destructive epistemic forces in Bad Body knocked out some of the knowledge in that case, it would destroy the same knowledge in Bad Beginning. If the destructive forces knocked out different pieces of knowledge, we still get the result that the thinker's evidence differs between the cases, provides maximal support for different sets of propositions, and thus requires the thinkers in these cases to have different credences. Standard Mentalism isn't saved.

To sum up, we've looked at two views, Fallibilist Reasons Perspectivism and Infallibilist Reasons Perspectivism. The fallibilist view ran into trouble because it allowed that an agent's P-table and K-Table could diverge and offer different directives. This version of Reasons Perspectivism ran afoul of Conservatism. Infallibilist Reasons Perspectivism avoids this problem because the infallibilist has a way of ensuring that a rational agent's P-Table and K-Table coincide, but it was incompatible with Standard Mentalism. On neither formulation does Reasons Perspectivism handle uncertainty well.

3. Taking Stock
Throughout this discussion, I've assumed that possessed reasons were facts that an agent was in a position to know. Could reasons perspectivists introduce a different epistemic relation between an agent and features of her situation to avoid the difficulties discussed here? I doubt it. Once we see that problems arise for Fallibilist Reasons Perspectivism and Infallibilist Reasons Perspectivism, we can see why no alternative account of possession will cure what ails Reasons Perspectivism. If we tighten up the epistemic constraint too much, it won't let features of the situation in. (In effect, we would abandon Standard Factualism.) If we let the features of the situation into the set of possessed reasons, we face problem cases like Pond or Diner and Philosopher or Accountant. The problem isn't down to the fact that we're focusing on relations that a philosopher might describe using the word 'knowledge'. The problem is with the theoretical demands being placed on reasons.

Using cases of mistake (Pond or Diner) and of uncertainty (Philosopher or Accountant), I've argued that it's a mistake to try to accommodate Standard Mentalism, Standard Perspectivism, and Equality. The reasons that two epistemic counterparts might each know might favour different responses, so either these counterparts are under different rational requirements (which contradicts Standard Mentalism) or they're under the same rational requirements but ought to respond to their situations differently (in which case Equality is false). Moreover, if the view recognizes the possibility that an agent might be rationally uncertain about whether one of her possessed reasons is a genuine one, Conservatism implies that this agent might be rationally required to act against decisive possessed reasons (in which case Equality is false). Since reasons perspectivists appeal to Standard Factualism and Standard Mentalism to explain Equivalence, readers can now see why I don't think reasons perspectivists have explained how rationality can be normative. If Equivalence is as attractive as reasons perspectivists believe, they need to revise their views about reasons or rationality.

Since most readers probably share the reasons perspectivists' intuitions about three-options cases, we should consider the possibility that these intuitions give us good reason to reject Standard Factualism:

P1. Rationality requires us to follow the guidance of the P-Table. (Conservatism)
P2. If rationality requires Accountant, Agnes ought to choose Accountant. (Equivalence)
C1. Agnes ought to choose Accountant. (P1, P2)
P3. If Standard Factualism is correct, Agnes ought to choose Philosopher. (Weightiest Possessed Wins)
C2. Standard Factualism is incorrect. (C1, P3)

From the perspective of standard decision theory, there is no interesting difference between the mineshaft case and Philosopher or Accountant. They're both covered by the norm that enjoins us

to maximize expected value. This norm seems to say that we sometimes ought to act against the things that standard factualists identify as the strongest possessed reasons. If mineshaft cases truly are counterexamples to pure objectivist views, cases of decision under risk might show us that Standard Factualism is false.

In much of the recent discussion of epistemic constraints on practical reasons, the debate has been concerned with the nature of the epistemic relation between agents and potential reasons. This relation is supposed to select the reasons that determine what the agent ought to do and/or would be rational for her to do. The relation might be knowledge, understood along fallibilist or infallibilist lines. It might be a different epistemic relation between a thinker and the facts entirely. Those who are open to the idea that knowledge has been 'dethroned', as Mueller and Ross (forthcoming) put it, should be open to the idea that the standard factualist's reasons have been dethroned, too. There's a reasonably well established tradition that has been sceptical of the idea that an agent's full beliefs have much role to play in a theory of rational action. If full beliefs are required for the possession of normative reasons and we can tell a decent enough story about what makes rational action rational without these appeal to these beliefs, scepticism about the normative significance of the facts about the situation that the agent knows to obtain might also be warranted. It's hard to tell any interesting story about how lists of such known facts about the situation relate to rationality and obligation if we do not take probabilities into account. Once we take them into account, these full beliefs either add nothing or create messes. Perhaps the same can be said for the standard factualist's reasons. In light of the mess possessed reasons make, those who think they matter need to explain why these reasons should stay in the picture.

If the argument against Standard Factualism is sound, we have a sound argument against Reasons Perspectivism. The distinctive feature of this perspectivist view is that it uses the standard factualist's reasons to ground rational requirements. Perspectivism can be formulated in such a way that it carries no commitment to Standard Factualism.[39] These alternative perspectivist views might represent a more promising approach to obligations and rational requirements.

Let's not forget that Standard Factualism is not the only game in town. If we adopt a view on which normative reasons are understood, say, as facts that figure in explanations of what would be appropriate or required, we can leave it open whether such things have to be the kinds of facts that an agent has in mind when reasoning about whether to ϕ. They might be known facts that move the agent, but they might instead be facts that a theorist thinks explains why people ought to certain things. The facts that figure in the right theoretical explanations of right responses might not run through the minds of agents who act rightly. While Reasons Perspectivism is a theoretical option worth exploring, I worry that it cannot overcome a fundamental tension between the perspectivist orientation concerning rationality and the standard factualists' orientation concerning reasons.

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[39] Gibbons (2013) and Zimmerman (2008) are prominent examples.

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