
Should Motivational Humeans be Humeans About Rationality?¹

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For many years, the received view was that the Humean Theory of Motivation, concisely captured in the slogan that reason alone cannot motivate actions, is inconsistent with any very robust non-instrumental theory of rationality. This in turn meant that the Humean Theory was also incompatible with robust versions of moral rationalism.² Recently various authors have advocated positions which challenge the prevailing orthodoxy in various ways. Michael Smith, for example, advocates both the Humean Theory of Motivation and an Anti-Humean theory of rationality.³ And Christine Korsgaard, herself a rationalist, in at least one paper has seemed to argue that robust rationalism about moral judgements is compatible with Bernard Williams, Humean motivational assumptions in his well-known paper, "Internal and External Reasons." The trick, she suggests, is to think of rationality as requiring a certain sort of disposition, broadly classifiable as a desire whose content is such that rational individuals will always possess the desire that the Humean Theory requires for motivation.⁴

In this paper I will argue that the orthodox view has a lot going for it. Its strength can be easy to miss if we focus on idealized, fully rational and fully informed agents. The availability of information or the lack thereof can influence what we have reason to do, and I will argue that certain versions of rationalism have trouble taking account of this if they also want to remain consistent with a Humean theory of motivation. Furthermore, such rationalists often are not able to say what they should want to say about the reasons had by those who are somewhat irrational.

My exposition will be somewhat dialectical. I begin by sketching some of the motivations for the orthodox position resting on motivational internalism about reasons for action. I will then outline a tempting strategy for making the Humean Theory of Motivation compatible with an anti-Humean theory of rationality.

I go on to argue that the limits of that strategy become apparent when we think both about what reasons less than fully rational or fully informed people have, and about what motives they can have. I do not claim that my argument is conclusive, but I believe it highlights some of the difficulties inherent in combining a robust theory of rationality with the Humean theory of motivation.

1. The orthodox position motivated

Let me begin by stating more precisely what the Humean Theory of Motivation (often abbreviated 'HTM' hereafter) claims. We begin with Hume's slogan, that reason (that is belief) alone cannot motivate action. This is not the reasonably uncontroversial claim that desire must be involved in motivation. Insofar as acting involves intending to do what one does, and insofar as intentions can be counted as desires, motivation sufficient for action will involve desires. This sort of involvement of desire in motivation is compatible with that motivation being generated by beliefs alone without the aid of independent desires. The Humean idea is that all motivation must have its *source* partly in desire, as opposed to solely in belief. Desires which could be rationally generated by beliefs without the aid of any additional desire should themselves be counted as motivated by these beliefs alone. Thus the possibility of such motivation would falsify Hume's claim that "Reason alone cannot motivate action." Humeans, therefore, must deny that the desires involved in intending can themselves be motivated solely by beliefs.⁵ At the same time, Humeans need not and do not deny that beliefs play a role in motivation. They merely deny that the role of beliefs can be that of generating desires without the help of some pre-existing desire. A belief can serve to connect up a desire to the particular action motivated,



but some desire over and above that belief and independent of it is required for motivation.

This idea still need to be made more precise. A view which said that a person must have some pre-existing desire to be motivated but went on to say that *any* desire would do, would not really count as Humean. This view would put no restriction on what a person could be motivated to do, since any person will have some desire or other. The easiest way to make the Humean view precise is to specify an appropriate relation between the desire required for motivation and the action for which the motivation is needed. Generally Humeans do this by specifying that the action in question must be instrumentally related to a goal given as the object of the desire in question. The idea is captured nicely by Michael Smith:

R at *t* constitutes a motivating reason of agent A to Φ iff there is Ψ such that R at *t* constitutes a desire of A to Ψ and a belief that were he to Φ he would Ψ .⁶

So formulated, the Humean Theory of Motivation entails that the motives a person has depend on the desires that person has.⁷

Suppose the Humean Theory of Motivation were true. It might then be plausible to think that a Humean Theory of Practical Rationality must also be correct. For to say that it is rational for an agent to do some particular action seems to entail that there should be some process of correct deliberation which would lead the agent to choose to do the action in question.⁸ But according to the Humean Theory of Motivation, no process of correct deliberation that did not itself initiate from a desire could generate the required motivation to act. Deliberation can only generate motivation to do actions that are means to our desired ends. So, it appears the Humean Theory of Motivation entails a Humean or instrumental theory of rationality.

It will help my later exposition to set the argument out in several steps:

1. Motives to do a particular action are constituted by a desire for some end together with a belief that shows that the action is a means to that end. (HTM)
2. Different people can and do have radically different desires, so that no desires are necessarily shared. (Plausible empirical premise.)
3. For an agent to have a reason to do a particular action it must be the case that rational deliberation by that agent will yield motivation to act. (Internalist principle connecting reasons and possible motives.)
4. Rational deliberation is deliberation which (among other things) tracks the empirical facts.⁹ (Partial definition of term in premise 3.)
5. There are no actions such that they are a means to fulfilling any end whatever. (Plausible empirical premise.)
6. Thus, for any action there will be some agents for whom it is not a means to satisfy their desires. (From 2 and 5)
7. Therefore, rational deliberation will lead to radically different motives in people with radically different desires. (From 1, 4, and 6)
8. Different people can have radically different reasons for action. (From 7 and 3)

For rationalists, who think that the demands of morality just are the demands of rationality or a subset thereof, the argument seems to entail relativism. Starting with the conclusion of the previous argument we proceed:

8. Different people can have radically different reasons for action.
9. Moral demands are demands of practical rationality, meaning they are facts about which actions people have reason to do. (Rationalism)
10. People with radically different reasons for action will have different moral demands applicable to them.

2. Orthodoxy resisted – desire rationalism

There is a way to resist this conclusion. One might think that part of being a rational agent is having the right desires, and that correct deliberation from these desires would yield motivation to act in certain ways. Correct deliberation by rational agents, that is by those with the rationally required desires, would invariably lead to motivation to perform certain actions, those actions which serve the desires we rationally should have. This would entail that the scope of *rational* deliberation would not be limited by the motives we actually have.¹⁰

We might, for example, think that rationality required us to be concerned with the well being of other people. We could then defend categorical rational norms requiring consideration for others while accepting both the HTM and the internalist idea that our reasons must be able to motivate us when we deliberate rationally from the considerations that ground.¹¹ Since rationality would require desiring other people's well

being, rational people would have the sort of desire needed to generate a motive to act to help others. Rational deliberation would then be able to generate a motive to act in an other-regarding way. A norm to act in such a way could be vindicated even under the constraints imposed by the HTM and the internalist constraint on reasons for action employed in defending the orthodox position.

This would be good news for the moral rationalist who wants to vindicate substantive and categorical moral norms such as moral norms requiring benevolent actions. Moral rationalism simply is the view that the norms of morality are the norms of practical rationality. If benevolence were required as a matter of practical rationality because benevolent desires are themselves required by rationality, then morality would also categorically require benevolence. Absolutist rationalism would be vindicated even in the face of the Humean Theory of Motivation and the internalist constraint employed in the orthodox argument. Following Michael Smith, let me call this position desire-rationalism.¹²

3. Orthodoxy defended

There is, however, a problem with this desire-rationalist strategy of defense. The problem manifests itself in the way the HTM acting together with the internalist constraint limits the way our reasons for action can change depending on our circumstances, even if we allow that rationality may require certain desires. For the strategy sketched above employed desires which were themselves categorically required by rationality itself without regard for the other elements of an agent's history and psychology.¹³ The problem is that practical rationality requires that our desires change as our relevant beliefs change. But it does not require that our desires change in the way they would if they had to remain related in a means-ends way to plausibly rationally required unmotivated desires.

I hope it is clear why the conjunction of the HTM with the internalist requirement used in the argument above would require that changes in an agent's reasons be a function only of changes in means-ends beliefs concerning how the objects of desires relate to the objects of the rationally required desires so postulated. The internalist requirement employed in the orthodox argument limited our reasons to act to recommending only those actions we would be motivated to do by

rational deliberation. If certain desires are required as a condition of rationality, then even given the HTM we could be motivated to do any action which was the object of such desires, as well as any action which we thought served those desires. But the HTM plus the requirement that we only have reason to do what we would be motivated to do after rational deliberation will still place limits on what we can have reason to do. For following the HTM, rational agents – like all agents – will only be motivated to do what they believe is a means to their existing desires. The rationally mandatory desires will ensure that among the actions that rational agents will be motivated to do are actions they believe will serve those required desires. But the mandatory desires don't help generate motivation for actions which do not serve desires already possessed by the rational agents in question. Thus adding beliefs won't increase the scope of rational motivation if those beliefs don't in turn serve to connect up a desire of the agent (rationally required or optional) with an action not believed by the agent to serve her desires.

Call desires which are rationally required no matter what else we believe and desire and no matter what evidence we might have about various matters 'independently required desires'. The desire-rationalist strategy postulates such independently required desires. It may well be that there are such independently required desires and they may well ground certain categorical requirements of rationality. But many rationally required desires are dependently required, meaning that we are required to have them only because we believe or desire certain other things, or because we possess certain sorts of evidence. It will be difficult to generate all of the plausible principles that govern dependently required desires in a means-ends way from plausible independently required desires. Some examples should make this clearer.

If I think I have sufficient reason to do some particular action, and if I am in a position to easily do it, then I rationally should do it. Doing it requires an intention to do the action. This intention will thus be dependently required by rationality; given my belief it is rationally required. But it would not be rationally required of me to do the action in question, nor to desire to do the action in question if I did not have that belief. What resources does someone who accepts both the Humean Theory of Motivation and the sort of internalism employed in the orthodox argument have to handle such examples?

One resource would be to claim that one could only be justified in believing that one was rationally required to do some action, if one believed that it served one of one's desires. If that were so, perhaps the rational requirement that I desire to do what I think I rationally should do could be motivated by the desire in question plus this belief. The desire and the belief would seem to make up a belief-desire pair of the sort that Humeans think must constitute motivating reasons. But there is a problem. I need not have the requisite desire to rationally come to the belief that I am required to do an action. This will be true even if I think that the only reasons I could have to act are means-ends reasons.

Suppose I have an honest friend who is also a partisan of such an instrumental theory of rationality, and who has come to know me very well so that she knows what my desires tend to be. If I know all of this about her, and she tells me that I have overriding reason to skip work today, I have reason to believe that it is true. After all, she is in a good position to know what I have instrumental reason to do, and by my own lights as well as hers the only practical reasons I have are instrumental. I still have a reason to believe her even if she goes on to tell me that she will not tell me what her grounds for thinking this are. I should regard her say-so as a sufficient reason to believe that it is true, at least if other things are equal.

Even so, she could be wrong. That might well mean I would have no desire that might be served by skipping work. If a motive to skip work can only be constituted by a desire plus a means-ends belief that this same desire would be served by my skipping work, it is hard to see how accepting my friend's advice could ever lead to such a motive. I may not know which of my desires my friend believes will be served by my skipping work. And there is no rational requirement that I form any hypothesis about the matter. Consistent even with our both accepting an instrumental theory of rationality, I can reasonably think that my friend knows what I desire so that my skipping work is apt to serve at least one or another of my desires. So I don't seem to have the right sort of belief-desire pair to constitute a motive according to the Humean theory. And yet it seems I have reason to stay home, given what I believe.

This may seem to be taking the letter of the Humean Theory as formulated by Smith too seriously, while not sufficiently considering ways to preserve its spirit. Perhaps you might think we should amend the formulation to allow a set of desires, plus the belief that an

action satisfies one of the desires in that set to constitute motivation. This version of the Humean theory does not rule out our being motivated in the example above.

But we can change the example. Suppose I (rightly or wrongly) do not accept an instrumental theory of rationality, that my friend knows this, that my friend accepts the same general theory of rationality and value as I do, and that I know this about my friend. Once again she tells me I have a reason to skip work. Once again it seems I have a reason to believe she is right about this. And once again, given that belief it seems I have a reason to stay home, or if you prefer, practical rationality requires that I stay home.¹⁴ But in this case I should not have the belief that my staying home will satisfy one of my desires. It may or it may not, given that my friend and I both think that I can have a reason to do things that do not satisfy any of my desires. Thus we have a situation where I should rationally act in a way that the Humean Theory of Motivation says I could not be motivated to act. The fact that I have a reason to stay home depends on my belief based on my friend's testimony that I have a reason to stay home. If I did not have the belief I would not have this reason to stay home. This belief does not interact with plausible background desires that might be rationally required to constitute a motive as the Humean understands motives. So acceptance of the HTM seems to show I would not have a motive for staying home in this case. And by the internalist premise of the original argument, I then would not then after all have a reason. Something has to give, and I think it is the Humean Theory of Motivation.¹⁵

I have claimed that the belief in question does not interact in the correct way with any background desire that a desire rationalist might plausibly claim to be required as a matter of full rationality. But a defender of the theory might think that it does. She might say it is a requirement of rationality that we desire to do what we have reason to do. If so, the belief that I have a reason to do an action will in turn justify the belief that it is a means to satisfy one of my desires and hence all rational agents will have a motive to do what they believe they have a reason to do. What's wrong with this?

The problem is partly that this desire does not seem to be a requirement of rationality. So long as one is in fact disposed to form the desire to act whenever one believes one has sufficient reason to act, one is rational. Not every disposition to form an intentional state is itself an intentional state. Thus having that disposition

to desire need not be the same thing as desiring to do what one has sufficient reason to do.¹⁶ Some analogies reinforce the point that these dispositions are not themselves desires. We can imagine a hypnotist inducing a disposition to act in a certain way in the presence of a certain stimulus. Perhaps I am instructed while under hypnosis to insult anyone I see wearing a red hat, so that I end up with a disposition to intend to insult people if I believe they are wearing a red hat. I don't think that the right way to describe me is as having a desire to insult people in red hats. If asked, I would perhaps deny having that desire. And I think I could deny it sincerely. I don't think that we are always right about what we desire, but in this sort of case I'm inclined to take the denial seriously. We might have other evidence that I do not have this general desire from non-verbal behavior. If told that there is some way to insult a large number of people who will be wearing red hats the following evening, I might take steps to avoid that course of action.¹⁷

A simpler example is actually quite commonplace. I am disposed to want meringues when they are placed in front of me, but I rarely think about them in other circumstances. I do not appear to have a standing desire for meringues, nor does it seem that my desires for particular meringues on particular occasions is motivated by any general desire for meringues. Examples like these lead me to conclude that there is no reason to think that the rational disposition to act as we think we have reason to do is itself a desire.

You may agree that the distinction can be made, but may also insist that it is a requirement of rationality that I desire to do what I think I have most reason to do. You might think that rationality requires such a standing desire. But if this desire is required by rationality it seems fair to ask why it is required. I can think of no very good answer to this question, but I can canvass a couple that might seem promising.

One sort of answer would be instrumental: Doing what one has reason to do is itself rationally required and this desire ensures that we will do what we have most reason to do. For the most part it would ensure this, but having such a desire is not a necessary condition for doing what one has reason to do. The previous argument showed that we can in fact distinguish a disposition to desire particular ends in particular circumstances from a standing desire for ends of that sort in those circumstances. Absent further argument, it should be possible to have a disposition to desire to do what

one in fact believes one has reason to do without having a standing desire to do what one has reason to do. If I have that disposition and if I tend to be right in my beliefs about what I have reason to do, I'll most often do what I have reason to do. Thus, even though rationality certainly requires doing what we have most reason to do, we can do it without having a standing desire of the postulated sort to do what we have most reason to do. We might even be able to invent (probably fantastic) cases in which having such a standing desire makes it less likely that we will do what we have reason to do.

It seems that any argument that this desire is required by rationality must proceed not by showing that it is required in order to bring about certain other rationally required actions or outcomes, but by showing that the desire is required without reference to its effects. Such arguments are of course difficult to make, and I can't think of a promising strategy to construct one. In fairness I should not say that I can show that such an argument could not be constructed. But it is fair to register my doubts and suggest that the possibility that any such arguments will be forthcoming is no more likely than that persuasive arguments will be discovered to suggest that such a standing desire is irrational.¹⁸

You may think that the prospects for an answer to the question of why rationality should be thought to require a desire to do what we have reason to do are better than I think they are. The issue underlying the next argument arises whether there is such a requirement or not. Even if rationality requires a standing desire to do what one believes one has reason to do, we can ask what would be rational for someone *lacking* this desire to do. I submit that it would still be rational for her to do what she thought she had most reason to do, even absent the general desire.

If this is so, an internalist principle like the third premise in the argument for orthodoxy will cause trouble. Recall that that principle said: For an agent to have a reason to do a particular action it must be the case that rational deliberation by that agent will yield motivation to act. We should not read the principle in such a way that rational deliberation requires an agent to be free from all irrationalities if only because many of our reasons to act are themselves grounded in ways that are less than fully rational. I can have a reason to keep my mouth entirely shut because I am so angry that I know that if I do open it I'll say something I'll regret.¹⁹ What we want is that the agent deliberate as rationally

as possible once we have fixed the grounds for the reason in question, where the presence or absence of irrationality that are irrelevant to the reason in question does not matter to the issue of whether we count the deliberation as rational.

If we understand the internalist principle in this way we immediately run into problems applying it consistently with Humean constraints on motivation. For such constraints will not allow us to say, as I think we ought, that even absent the general *desire* to do what one has most reason to do one has a *reason* to do what one thinks one has most reason to do. If the presence or absence of the desire is not relevant to the rationality of doing what one thinks one has most reason to do, then we should be able to be motivated to do what we believe we have most reason to do even absent that desire. But as we argued above, a motivational Humean will need to rely on some such desire to constitute our motive for doing what we believe we have reason to do. Even if that desire is rationally required, the only way to satisfy both the Humean Theory of Motivation and the internalist constraint is to deny that we have non-instrumental reasons to do what we think we have most reason to do. But that is just to accept a thoroughly Humean Theory of rationality.

There's another problem for the view that the general desire to do what we have most reason to do is a categorical demand of rationality – that demand might itself give me a reason to try and form the desire to do what I think I have reason to do if I find that I lack the desire. But now the very *absence* of the desire is a ground for my having reason to try and get it. Our internalist principle requires that holding the grounds of the reason fixed but otherwise deliberating rationally (in ways relevant to the reason in question) we would come to be motivated to try and form the desire. But what desire could constitute the motive in the way motivational Humeans require? It can't be the desire to do what is rationally required, because the absence of that desire is a ground which we are holding fixed. The motivational Humean cannot be sure that an otherwise rational agent will have any other desire which can play the right role to constitute motivation.²⁰ So the internalist constraint cannot be met and motivational Humeans are best off denying that this is a categorical demand of rationality.

There are probably ways that desire-rationalist motivational Humeans can respond to these arguments. They might canvass other candidate desires that could do the

work of the desire to do what one has most reason to do. Obviously I think that these other candidates will probably not be up to the task. If that's right, it is reason to accept the orthodox position that a Humean Theory of Motivation together with other plausible premises leads quickly to an instrumental theory of rationality. For rationalists about morality this would leave a choice between the Humean Theory of Motivation and substantive absolutism about morality. Non-relativist rationalists should be careful before they think that they can have both.

Notes

¹ This paper is inspired in part by having the opportunity to comment at conferences on two unpublished papers, one by Ralf Wedgwood and the other by Peter Ross. I owe each of the authors my thanks for allowing me to read their papers and for the discussion afterwards. The papers I commented on have since undergone enough change that neither one can be considered the target of my arguments in this paper. Probably the closest thing to my target now in print is a view put forth in a paper by Michael Smith, "Reason and Desire", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1987–1988), pp. 243–258. Smith's views too have gone through much development since that paper, and my argument in this paper may not have much application to his current position. As always I have benefited from discussion of the Humean Theory of Motivation and related topics with him. Finally, I owe sincere thanks to Robert Audi, Jennifer Haley and Joseph Mendola for extremely helpful comments on earlier drafts, and to Clayton Littlejohn for helpful conversation.

² A metaethical theory is rationalist in my sense if it holds that the norms of morality are identical to, or a subset of, the norms of practical rationality, and I consider these theories robust if they postulate a significant number of universally applicable substantive normative requirements.

³ Most famously in *The Moral Problem* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1994).

⁴ See "Skepticism About Practical Reason", *Journal of Philosophy* (1986), pp. 5–25.

⁵ The classical formulation of this possibility as a counter to Humeanism is found in Thomas Nagel's *The Possibility of Altruism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

⁶ Michael Smith, "The Humean Theory of Motivation", *Mind* (1987), p. 36. The formulation in the text is somewhat too strong in requiring that the agent believe she *will* succeed in achieving goal, when probably significantly raising the probability would be good enough to suggest the right instrumental relation to capture the Humean view. But for expository purposes the somewhat simplified claim of Smith's official statement will do well enough. Smith recognizes the point as well.

⁷ You might wonder here about the form of the argument in this paragraph and the one preceding. Am I interpreting Hume or doing something else? Roughly I am describing what theory I take the name 'Humean Theory of Motivation' to apply to, given its current usage in metaethics. The reasons I have for favoring this interpretation are

(1) that it best makes sense of the disputes between people who call themselves Humeans and those who call themselves anti-Humeans and (2) that so formulated it does have some genuine bite in arguing for further metaethical claims (as I will go on to argue below). For a nice discussion of this latter point, see Philip Pettit, "Humeans, Anti-Humeans, and Motivation", *Mind* (1987), pp. 530–531. It is, however, also true that I think that this was Hume's theory for the very reason that he used the theory in arguments that make the most sense if the theory is so understood.

⁸ Bernard Williams employs just this sort of principle in arguing for a Humean Theory of Reasons in his classic "Internal and External Reasons", in *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 101–113.

Some readers will find internalist constraints such as this one implausible and hence have the reaction that the way out for motivational Humeans who want to reject instrumentalism about rationality is clearly just to reject this assumption. To this I have two brief replies. (1) Even if externalism about morality can be made to seem attractive, it is much harder to hold the analogous view with respect to reasons to act, and that is the view that is doing the work here. What could a reason to act be if it would not motivate after a process of correct deliberation? (2) Most rationalists, such as Korsgaard, Smith and Wedgwood, accept something like this sort of internalism about reasons. Since my argument is aimed primarily at them, it is not question begging to use this principle.

⁹ This claim is probably too strong since we can sometimes rationally form false beliefs. But a weakened version would probably be sufficient to get the argument off the ground, and I will not trouble myself to figure out just how to weaken it to make it plausible since the issue is complicated and would distract from the explication. We could, I suppose, in effect do what Williams does and simply stipulate that what we mean by rational deliberation is as strong as this. It may well be the case that there is an "objective" sense of reasons for which this is the case. But it probably would be better to allow the point that rationality need not require infallibility and that there is a good sense of reason that is best captured by formulating the internalist premise using rationality in that sense.

¹⁰ This is in effect to deny that step 7 follows from 1, 4 and 6 in the argument above because, in addition to tracking true empirical claims about means to ends, rational deliberation must also be done by agents who have the rationally required desires. For such agents tracking truths about means to ends will generate overlap in their means-ends beliefs in similar circumstances which together with their shared rationally required beliefs will constitute shared motivations.

¹¹ This is in fact the strategy defended by Michael Smith in "Reason and Desire", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1987–1988), pp. 243–258. I'm not sure that he would continue to defend all of what he says there, but this is the strategy I am most concerned to explore in this paper.

¹² This is the term he coins for the position in "Reason and Desire," though he has not come back to explicitly discuss or defend this sort of view in subsequent work.

¹³ This is not an accident. Within the constraints of a Humean Theory of Motivation and the internalist idea that we can have a reason for action only if rational deliberation would generate motivation to act in that way there is no other way to vindicate categorical requirements of rationality. The Humean Theory constrains us

to think that all motivation must stem from some unmotivated desire. If all reasons must be such that we would be motivated to act on them if we deliberated rationally, a categorical reason must be such that the unmotivated desire on which it depends is categorically required by rationality itself.

¹⁴ John Broome doesn't think we can talk of the belief that I have a reason as itself constituting a reason, but he does allow that such beliefs can generate practical requirements of rationality. See "Normative Requirements", *Ratio* (1999), pp. 398–419. I don't think there is any fact of the matter before we stipulate how the word 'reason' connects up with practical requirements, but we can speak as he suggests and perhaps speak more clearly overall if we do so. On the other hand I find the exposition here easier if I ignore his advice some of the time.

¹⁵ It might be the internalist principle employed in the argument. I don't have room here to argue that this isn't so. In any case, the position I'm criticizing accepts both that principle and the HTM.

¹⁶ In his paper, "Dispositional Beliefs and Dispositions to Believe", *Nous* 28 (1994), pp. 419–434, Robert Audi argues for a distinction between dispositional beliefs and dispositions to believe. He also suggests that the same distinction can be made with respect to the other propositional attitudes such as desires.

¹⁷ The example is a bit artificial, and the fact that the insult is prospective adds some complication, but it may be parallel to being offered an opportunity to do something that ensures that I will always do what I believe to be the rational thing in the future. So I'm not sure that the prospective nature of the insult makes the example irrelevant.

¹⁸ It is worth pointing out that a parallel issue will arise for rationalists who think that truths of morality, that is truths about what is right and what is wrong, just are truths of practical reason. For, they will have to think that we are rationally required to do what is right. But some rationalists are inclined to doubt that we ought rationally (or morally) to have the standing desire to do what is right. See especially Michael Smith, "The Argument for Internalism: A Reply to Miller" in *Analysis* (July 1996), pp. 175–184.

¹⁹ For some papers discussing these sorts of examples, and their ramifications for plausible interpretations for internalism see, Michael Smith, 'Internal Reasons', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 55 (1995), pp. 109–131, Robert Johnson, 'Internal Reasons and the Conditional Fallacy', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 49 (January 1999), pp. 53–71, and Mark van Roojen, "Motivational Internalism: A Somewhat Less Idealized Account," *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 50 (April 2000), pp. 53–71.

²⁰ Actually, this is a bit quick. To show that this is true I would need to canvass among other things various second and third order desires that might do the requisite work and which someone might argue are themselves categorical demands of rationality. However, I suspect that we could generate similar arguments against them.

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