Ratio (new series) XXXI Supplementary Issue April 2018 0034-0006

WHY INTENTIONS?

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Abstract

There is an influential conception of intentional agency in terms of just beliefs and desires. And there is an equally influential conception that adds intentions as separate ingredients. It remains disputed whether (1) adding intentions is really necessary, and (2) what difference that addition exactly makes. I argue that (1) adding intentions is required, but only because and insofar as (2) it makes room for a distinctively practical kind of reasoning. I critically consider Bratman's main considerations in support of adding intentions, viz., conduct-control, inertia, and input for practical reasoning, and argue that a desire-belief theorist can easily accommodate those. I then reconsider all three Bratmanian considerations in order to establish a more fundamental difference in terms of a robust notion of practical reasoning. Such a difference can be found if we place Bratman's considerations in the light of Sebastian Rödl's idea of a measure or order of practical reasoning.

In his 'Actions, Reasons and Causes,' Donald Davidson formulated an account of intentional action that has inspired many: I call it the *desire-belief account*, since it accounts for intentional action purely in terms of beliefs and desires (or, as Davidson says, pro-attitudes).[1] Since then, influential arguments have been presented for the claim that we need *intentions* as an additional element for a satisfactory understanding of human agency – not in the least by Davidson himself,[2] but also, famously, by Michael Bratman.[3] It remains disputed, however, both (1) whether adding intentions is really required, and if so, (2) what difference that addition exactly makes to the overall understanding of intentional agency. This paper contributes to clarifying both of these issues in a qualified way: I argue that (1) adding intentions is really required, but only

[1] Davidson, 'Actions, Reasons, and Causes,' *Journal of Philosophy* 60 (1963), pp.685–700.

[2] See 'How is Weakness of the Will Possible?' in Joel Feinberg (ed.), *Moral Concepts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), and 'Intending' in Yirmiahu Yovel (ed.), *Philosophy of History and Action* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1978).

[3] Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reasoning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

because and insofar as (2) it makes a fundamental difference to our understanding of intentional agency. I will argue that we need to go beyond both Davidson's and Bratman's considerations in favour of intentions in order to satisfy (2).

Focusing on Bratman's considerations for adding intentions, I first side with Neil Sinhababu's recent claim that these can be satisfactorily captured on an orthodox desire-belief picture.[4] Then, I move on to argue that in the background of Bratman's ideas, more fundamental considerations can be discerned that speak in favour of adding intentions – considerations concerning practical reasoning that make for a more fundamental departure from the orthodox desire-belief view.

For reasons of scope, I restrict myself to three of the reasons formulated by Bratman in support of his influential 'plan-theoretic' account of intention and intentional action, which correspond to three allegedly distinctive features of intention: conduct-control, inertia, and input for practical reasoning.[5] Throughout, my discussion keeps an eye on the idea of a distinctively practical kind of reasoning, which also motivates Bratman.

After introducing the idea of such practical reasoning in a preliminary vein (§1), I first consider how the mentioned three distinctive features of intention can be accounted for on the basis of the orthodox desire-belief view (§2). Such a view has the resources to account for the kinds of phenomena Bratman highlights – but it fails to make room for a distinctively practical mode of reasoning. Then I reconsider Bratman's three features of intention, now with an eye to finding out whether they can be so interpreted as to provide a more fundamental difference with the desire-belief view, such that it does make room for a distinctively practical kind of reasoning after all. Such a more fundamental difference can indeed be found; I capture it in terms of the idea of a *measure* or *order of practical reasoning* (which I borrow from Sebastian Rödl, whose original approach to intentional action is the main inspiration for this paper).[6] That idea turns out to entail the three Bratmanian features of intention in a natural way. Although it is not the aim of this paper to develop a full account of such an

[4] Sinhababu, 'The Desire-Belief Account of Intention Explains Everything,' *Noûs*, 47 (2013), pp.680–96.

[5] *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reasoning*, Chapter 2.

[6] Rödl, *Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

order of practical reasoning, I conclude by collecting a few preliminary thoughts on that topic (§4).

1. Practical Reasoning

To start, we need a brief, sufficiently non-committal characterization of a distinctively practical sort of reasoning. Practical reasoning is a mode of reasoning that does not issue in a belief about what is the case, but in a *practical judgment* about what is to be done.[7] *Prima facie*, such judgments simply are intentions, and an intention thus differs from a desire, which one could frame as a *prima facie* judgment speaking in favour of actions that can contribute to realising its object. Desires do not attach one to an action in the unconditional way in which practical judgments (intentions) do.[8]

Practical as well as theoretical reasoning may occur without explicit formulation of the relevant steps in one's mind, but nevertheless typically delivers knowledge not only of its outputs but also of the relevant grounds – one knows why one believes something arrived at through theoretical reasoning, and one knows why one intends something as a result of practical reasoning. In typical cases, practical reasoning issues in intentions that are mutually supportive or at least consistent – just like, in typical cases, theoretical reasoning results in beliefs that are consistent.[9]

The desire-belief view holds that the role here described for intentions can be cashed out entirely in terms of desires. The described *prima facie* difference between desires and intentions is merely *prima facie*, not real. Sinhababu explicitly defends this view.[10] By contrast, Bratman famously defends a picture on which intentions *do* form a genuine addition.[11] Let us see how these two opposites compare.

[7] Some say the conclusion of practical reasoning is an *action*. If so, our theory of action should explain how an action can be identical with a judgment about what is to be done. I will not explore this issue here.

[8] See Davidson, 'How is weakness of the will possible?,' and Rödl, *Self-Consciousness*, Chapter 2.

[9] I restrict myself to 'typical cases' because I do not want to discuss phenomena like confabulation and forgetting, in which one does not know one's grounds for believing or intending something. Even if such cases are the rule rather than the exception, understanding them *as* cases in which such knowledge is *missing* presupposes the idea of 'typical' cases in my sense.

[10] 'The Desire-Belief Account of Intention Explains Everything.'

[11] *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reasoning*, Chapter 2.

2. Belief-Desire Versus Intentions

According to the belief-desire picture, intentional action occurs when there is the right combination of desires, providing motivational force, and beliefs, covering the required means-end relations and background conditions. It is the job of practical reasoning to appropriately combine such beliefs and desires, resulting in a definite, performable action. There is no need for an additional category of intentions, on the desire-belief view, because intentions can be understood to be nothing over and above the relevant desires and beliefs. Put roughly, the view is that an agent A intends to φ iff A desires, all things considered, φ.[12] And A's subsequent φ-ing (or ψ-ing, where ψ is a means for or part of φ) is then an intentional action just when it is caused (in the right way) by the relevant intention.[13] The intention can be either viewed as identical with the underlying desire, properly situated, or as composed of that desire together with its proper situation (i.e., all the relevant beliefs) – either way, intentions do not make for a genuine addition to the desire-belief picture.[14]

By contrast, Bratman finds this notion of intention to be lacking. According to him, intentions are special in that they 'are conduct-controlling …, have inertia, and serve as inputs into further practical reasoning.'[15] He claims that the belief-desire model does not live up to these three features; Sinhababu claims that it does. Let us consider these features in turn.

2.1. Control of Conduct

This point concerns the *prima facie* difference between desires and intentions mentioned in §1: at best, desires influence our practical capacities in some way, by speaking in favour of certain actions over others. But they do not entail the kind of unconditional attachment to an action that intentions express. Bratman writes: 'If my future-directed intention manages to survive until the time of action, and I see that that time has arrived and nothing interferes, it will control my action then.'[16] By contrast, if my future-

[12] For simplicity's sake, I leave open what types of things φ and ψ stand for. And I will assume that they can be objects of both desires and intentions.

[13] See Davidson, 'Actions, Reasons, and Causes.'

[14] Sinhababu, 'The Desire-Belief Account of Intention Explains Everything,' §1.

[15] Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reasoning*, p.27.

[16] *Ibid.*, p.16.

directed 'predominant desire' manages to survive until the time of action, and I see that that time has arrived and nothing interferes, it does not follow that it will directly control my action then – for 'I might still not see the issue as settled.'[17] Thus, intentions are not desires.

Sinhababu, by contrast, takes an intention to be simply a properly situated desire. And a desire together with an appropriate means-end belief is 'sufficient for motivation, and thus for conduct-controlling.'[18] He succinctly denies the need for a procedure that takes one from (possibly inconsistent) desires to 'settling on' a certain course of action. Instead, he takes it that the desire-belief complex that is *as a matter of fact* strongest will simply issue in the relevant behaviour. Being settled on something *just is* having a predominant desire for it. Analogously, not being settled on anything *just is* not having a predominant desire.

In §1, I said that practical reasoning issues in an intention conceived of as a practical judgment to the effect that φ is to be done. On Sinhababu's picture, there are no such judgments. There is simply the desire for (say) ψ, and a belief to the effect that φ-ing is a (or the only, or the most suitable) way to achieve ψ (where φ and ψ need not be different). *As it happens*, these constitute the predominant desire-belief complex, and the predominant desire-belief complex simply 'produces motivational force causing [the agent] A to produce [φ]-ing.'[19] On this basis, the phenomena Bratman portrays as distinctive of intention can be explained. However, if there are no practical judgments in the described sense, it looks like there is no room for a distinctively practical sort of reasoning at all. For such reasoning is supposed to be practical precisely because of its issuing in the sort of practical judgments that Sinhababu rejects. So, what does practical reasoning look like for Sinhababu? I will return to this below.

2.2. Inertia

Desires come and go, but actions typically take time. If the totality of my desires *now* points towards φ, and I start undertaking steps towards φ, it may well happen that, in a moment, my desires change, now pointing to ψ. That will frustrate my initial steps towards φ (unless, of course, what I did so far was conducive to

[17] *Ibid.*, p.18.
[18] Sinhababu, 'The Desire-Belief Account of Intention Explains Everything,' p.689.
[19] *Ibid.*, p.680.

both φ and ψ, which would then be a happy accident). Thus, Bratman thinks, a second distinctive feature of intentions is their *inertia*. Intentions are not only momentarily conduct-controlling, they control conduct over time, and may persist even through relevant changes of desire. They do so by being resistant to reconsideration: reconsideration takes time and tends to frustrate long-term projects, so it makes sense, within bounds, *not* to reconsider. As Bratman sees it, our habit of developing such diachronically stable commitments to courses of action 'has a deep pragmatic rationale': 'we need to coordinate our activities both within our own lives and socially,' and 'we need to do this in ways compatible with our limited capacities to deliberate and process information.' Furthermore, 'given these same limitations we need a way to allow prior deliberation to shape later conduct.'[20]

In his defence of the desire-belief model, Sinhababu turns this line of reasoning upside-down. He writes: 'The desire-belief view explains why intentions made of different desires differ in their stability. It's unclear how Bratman's view can do so.'[21] The (more or less) fleeting nature of desires is here no longer viewed as a problem for practical stability, but rather put to use in order to explain why some of our intentions are more stable than others. That we display the kind of stable attachment to present and future courses of action is thus founded on the *empirical* fact that we happen to have stable desires, not on a *conceptually* distinctive feature of intentions.[22]

The desire-belief view again seems to provide materials adequate to comprehending the sorts of phenomena Bratman adduces in support of adding intentions. Of course, on Bratman's view, the distinctive inertia of intention is more than just *de facto*: it is associated with a corresponding norm of rationality. Once

[20] Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reasoning*, p.29.

[21] Sinhababu, 'The Desire-Belief Account of Intention Explains Everything,' p.693.

[22] Sinhababu thinks that our having beliefs about our own future actions stability further supports stability: given such a belief, I will not form competing alternative intentions. 'Beliefs constrain intentions by telling us that we won't be in the situations we'd need to be in to act on them, and beliefs about our future actions are no different' (*ibid.*, p.691). However, as he himself notes, 'fluctuations in the force of our desires' may 'cause us to abandon old intentions and the beliefs about future actions that we had, allowing to form new intentions, and with them, new beliefs' (*ibid.*, p.692). Beliefs about our future actions thus come and go as our desires' forces change. Therefore, they do not *add* any stability to the relevant desires' stability. In that respect, such beliefs contrast with practical judgments of the kind described in §1: a judgment that φ is to be done expresses a kind of attachment to φ-ing which a mere belief that one will φ does not.

one is settled on φ, one *should not* reconsider, except in the light of relevant new information or new aims. The desire-belief theorist will have to challenge that norm. (And there are good grounds for challenging it: why would it be rational *not* to reconsider if the balance of desires has changed?) I will get back to this in §3.2 below.

Bratman thinks he is moving away from the desire-belief picture by adding inert intentions to the mix. Sinhababu is able to account for the kinds of considerations Bratman adduces in support of that addition precisely because those considerations are 'deeply pragmatic': pragmatic considerations generally do not mark any fundamental differences and thus cannot elevate mere *de facto* characteristics to principled ones. Sinhababu simply claims that our desires in fact have the *de facto* characteristics Bratman highlights.

2.3. Input for Practical Reasoning

Having arrived at an intention to φ, it may be necessary to identify suitable means and preliminary steps, resulting in further sub-intentions. Such instrumental reasoning extends the 'to-be-done' status imposed on φ by the initial practical judgment to whatever it determines to be a suitable means for φ. It thus makes sense to follow Bratman in thinking of intentions as (specifications of) 'plan states' that are 'partial' and 'hierarchical': my overarching plan to φ may well need lots of filling-in as I go about executing it.[23] On Bratman's picture, practical reasoning settles on an intention, a plan, and then works out the details of that plan, partly in advance, partly on the fly. Desires, however, are not plans; they are not 'partial' or 'hierarchical.' Thus, intentions are not desires.

Sinhababu aims to capture these Bratmanian observations by alluding to the 'attention-directing' role of desires. He alludes to Hume: 'desire causes us to cast our view on every side of its object, comprehending whatever else is associated with it by cause and effect.'[24] So, my strong desire to go swimming in the lake may cause me to consider 'what is associated with' swimming 'by cause and effect': that one can only go swimming in the lake if one first goes there; that one can go by bike, or by bus; that one might catch a cold if staying out too long; etc. Some of the resulting

[23] Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reasoning*, p.29.

[24] The quote is Sinhababu's; he does not provide a source. But see Hume's *A Treatise on Human Nature*, 2.3.3.3.

beliefs will then combine with the attention-directing desire to produce relevant motivational force, moving me to fetch my swimsuit, bike to the lake, and jump in.

These remarks reinforce our emerging diagnosis that the desire-belief view fails to make room for practical reasoning. What Sinhababu describes cannot be deliberation (which I take to be synonymous with practical reasoning): deliberation results in a judgment about what to do, while the procedure he describes results in beliefs about 'whatever else is associated' with the objects of my desires 'by cause and effect.' It is the mere formation of beliefs *occasioned by* a desire.[25] It results, say, in a belief that biking to the lake will get me some way towards swimming there. At best, it will result in a piece of *theoretical* reasoning starting from such beliefs.[26] Given the existence of a predominant desire for swimming, beliefs I thereby arrive at may enable the desire's motivational powers to cause me to produce appropriate behaviour – say, to start biking towards the lake. But I could, of course, have arrived at the same beliefs 'just so,' without my attention having been directed by any desire. E.g., a glimpse of my bike leaning against the shed could have occasioned the relevant beliefs. If, in that scenario, I happened to host a predominant desire for swimming in the lake, the end-result would be the same: that desire would cause me to start biking. The nature of a given piece of reasoning does not depend on how it is occasioned, but on the form of its contents.[27] If a piece of reasoning is occasioned by something that is not itself a piece of reasoning, we usually speak of *association*; at best, then, theoretical reasoning can, on the desire-belief view, be practically relevant *by association*. But association is not reasoning.

Still, the procedure Sinhababu describes results in a form of planning. Yet, as before, it is mere *de facto* planning: as a matter of

[25] One of those beliefs 'occasioned by' the predominant desire is the belief that one will do whatever the desire says one will do – that is, a belief about one's future action. See note 22 above.

[26] In fact, what Sinhababu describes, following Hume, does not look much like theoretical reasoning at all – it's a series of associations occasioned by the relevant desire, not a reasoning from given premises to conclusions. Tracing out this thought would lead to doubting whether the belief/desire theorist has any room for reasoning *at all*. Here, however, I stick to my more modest aim of questioning whether she has room for *practical* reasoning, and thus pretend that, as far as theoretical reasoning is concerned, all is fine.

[27] Compare: if my reasoning about my plans for starting a string quartet is occasioned by my hearing my neighbor practicing on his viola, that does not make my reasoning 'musical' or 'auditive' *in form*.

fact, the (desire-caused) reasoning leads to a filling-in of the necessary steps towards satisfaction of the predominant desire(s). But the reasoning itself is not planning (here meant as a verb): the activity of 'planning,' as Bratman intends it, is of course identical to reasoning *practically*. By contrast, on the desire-belief picture, reasoning that is practically relevant turns out to be mere theoretical reasoning that, as a by-product, funnels the 'motivational force' of desire.

I have now surveyed the three Bratmanian ingredients of intention, and contrasted them with the way in which a desire-belief theorist like Sinhababu attempts to incorporate them. The most significant difference between these two rival views lies in the way they treat practical reasoning: Bratman appears to be after a substantive notion of practical reasoning, as a mode or reasoning resulting in a distinctive sort of conclusion: an intention. On Sinhababu's view, on the other hand, practical reasoning turns out to be mere theoretical reasoning that just happens to be practically relevant. Let us now see what is required in order to keep practical reasoning on board.

3. Intention and Practical Reason

We have seen that Bratman's considerations do not suffice to create significant distance between his views and the desire-belief theorist's. Still, Bratman finds practical reasoning to be of crucial importance for our understanding of intentional agency. As we will now see, his considerations can indeed be interpreted such as to make room for a distinctively practical mode of reasoning.

3.1. Control of Conduct Reconsidered

With respect to conduct-control, the difference between intentions and desires lies in the way in which one thereby attaches oneself to a prospective action. The desire-belief theorist knows of only one way of attaching oneself to an action: desire. Bratman insists that intention is another way of attaching oneself to an action (intentions involve 'a special commitment to action that ordinary desires do not'[28]). He claims that even a 'predominant desire' may fail to control my conduct: 'I might still be disposed to deliberate about what to do; for I might still not see the issue as

[28] Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reasoning*, p.16.

settled.'[29] The desire-belief theorist has an easy answer: if it so happens that one continues 'deliberating' rather than doing a given possible action φ for which one harbours a predominant desire, this will be due to some desire for ψ which, together with the belief that ψ is a live option, is stronger than one's desire to φ together with the belief that it is in one's power to do φ now. If *de facto* initiation of behaviour can be understood as originating in desire, and there are explanations like this available for cases such as the one Bratman adduces, then why insist on intentions?

Bratman must have more in mind than mere *de facto* behaviour initiation. Here is my suggestion as to what that is. If there is to be a difference between how a desire attaches one to a possible action and how an intention does, there has to be a *measure* or *order* of some kind to which intentions aim to conform, but desires not. That order would govern practical reasoning in the following way: practical reasoning results in a judgment that φ is to be done *in the light of that order*, and it extends that status instrumentally to further judgments concerning means towards φ-ing.

There is a way of spelling out this suggestion that stays close to the desire-belief view. It can be found in Davidson, whose later view on action does make room for intentions as a separate ingredient.[30] On this sophisticated Davidsonian account, it takes two steps to get from one's (possibly conflicting) plurality of desires to an intention. First, one weighs all the different desires, yielding an 'all-things-considered' judgment in favour of φ: the balance of all desires tips towards φ. This is still a conditional judgment: just as one may judge that ψ is to be done conditional on *just one* desire for ψ, the all-things-considered judgment in favour of φ is conditional on the *totality* of one's desires. So, secondly, a step is required to the 'all-out' or *un*conditional judgment that φ is to be done. Such a judgment is an intention. The step to an all-out judgment is guided by what Davidson calls the *Principle of Continence*: do whatever your totality of desires suggests.[31] That principle makes practical reasoning possible: it facilitates the formation of a practical judgment, to which suitable means can then be found by further practical reasoning. We thus arrive at genuine control of conduct, instead of mere influence thereupon, as in the case of desires. On this sophisticated Davidsonian picture, the

[29] *Ibid.*, p.19.
[30] Davidson, 'How is Weakness of the Will Possible?,' and 'Intending.'
[31] Davidson, 'How is Weakness of the Will Possible?'

Principle of Continence determines the order of practical reasoning. That principle in effect declares the predominant desire to *be* the measure for deciding what is to be done.[32]

The difference may appear to be subtle: on the desire-belief view, the strongest desire-belief complex *de facto* initiates corresponding behaviour. On the Davidsonian view under consideration, the strongest desire-belief complex leads to corresponding behaviour *by providing practical reason with an order*. Yet the implications are considerable: on the first view, there is no room for such a thing as practical reasoning; on the second view there is. The question remains, of course, whether predominant desire can indeed function as an order for practical. By reconsidering the supposed inertia of intentions, we will see that it is not.

3.2. Inertia Reconsidered

Bratman makes inertia into a defining feature of intention by formulating distinctive *norms* governing intentions, norms that determine when one is or is not practically rational in intending as one does. In particular, according to Bratman, one *should not* reconsider an intention without good reason (i.e., without new information or new aims). As we saw, this norm is justified by 'deeply pragmatic' considerations regarding the costs of reconsideration, and by reflection on the fact that success in longer-term plans (and in cooperation) would be rare without such non-reconsideration. But, again, the desire-belief theorist can readily explain all the relevant phenomena in terms of *de facto* stability of desires: apparently, our desires to pursue such longer-term goals (possibly including higher-order desires) are strong enough to actually facilitate their execution, even over longer stretches of time. And if we did not have such desires, then why should we bother with longer-term plans anyway? Moreover, why would it be *irrational* if one abandons a given intention without being given any new information or any change in aims, but merely because one no longer *desires* whatever it is one intended? Would it not rather be irrational to stick to one's intention even in the light of a sudden drop in the relevant desire's strength?

Again, it is clear that Bratman seeks to put intentions on a different conceptual footing than desires: intentions should be insensitive to fluctuations in desire. Yet in justifying his norms of

[32] I borrow the idea of such an order from Rödl's *Self-Consciousness*, Chapter 2, who also discusses the Davidsonian construal.

intention, he sticks to the kinds of desire-based considerations that he was trying to distance himself from. In order to arrive at a genuine difference, we should, again, introduce our notion of an *order* of practical reasoning. One's intention ought to conform to *that* order, irrespective of what one's desires may be doing. Now, if the idea of such an order is to be of help on *this* score, the relevant order cannot be grounded in Davidson's Principle of Continence, for that principle fails to create the required distance between intention and desire. It will fluctuate along with desires.

Thus, in order to capture the sort of difference I have discerned in the background of Bratman's attempt, we would need a different kind of order for practical reasoning. However, we first need to revisit intention's role as input for practical reasoning.

3.3. Input for Practical Reasoning Reconsidered

According to Bratman, intentions are 'plan states' that ought to give rise to relevant instrumental reasoning. They also constrain the formation of further intentions: these are to be compatible with the standing ones. As Bratman sees it, neither of these two norms apply to desires: desires do not by themselves give rise to instrumental practical reasoning aimed at their satisfaction, nor do they constrain the formation of further desires.

The desire-belief theorist objects, as we saw: desires do *in fact* 'focus our attention' on possible means towards their satisfaction, and beliefs about the mutual consistency of desires may *in fact* affect desire-formation. And if one really wants to charge a given action with irrationality, that can always be spelled out in terms of a failure of the agent to act on her strongest desire-belief complex (or in terms of theoretical irrationality). Again, what Bratman tries to capture in terms of norms governing rational intention formation is here explained with relative ease, and largely in '*de facto*' terms. Bratman seeks to construe intentions differently from desires, but still in terms that are, by and large, available also to the desire-belief theorist.

Our idea of an order that is internal to practical reasoning provides what Bratman needs. If an intention is a practical judgment, that is, the result of a piece of practical reasoning in the light of that order, then it has the right *form* to function as input to further practical reasoning. By 'form,' I here mean the way in which such a judgment attaches the agent to the action it recommends: as to be done *in the light of that order*. For, as I mentioned earlier,

instrumental practical reasoning extends the status of its input as 'to be done' to its output – if φ is to be done, and ψ is a suitable way of reaching (a part of) φ, then ψ is *on that account* to be done. That is characteristic for the kind of 'planning agency' Bratman advocates. Furthermore, if φ is to be done in the light of the order of practical reasoning, then any other practical judgment I may end up with will be compatible with φ, since it obeys the very same order (recall that we rejected the unstable order based on the Principle of Continence in the previous subsection).

It is not *de facto* planning-like behaviour that we should focus on when thinking about the role of intentions – that can be captured in pure desire-belief terms. Rather, the distinctive role of intention comes out only if we understand planning-like behaviour as an exercise of practical reasoning, governed by its own order. On such a view, practical reasoning is not reduced to mere theoretical reasoning that happens to be of practical relevance by association (see §2.3), but constitutes a kind of reasoning that is distinguished from theoretical reasoning by the form of its contents.[33]

4. The Order of Practical Reasoning

Bratman's 'struggle for intention' is best understood as an attempt to account for a distinctively practical kind of reasoning, along the lines sketched in §1. The desire-belief view in fact makes no room for such practical reasoning, since it rejects the possibility of a distinctively practical judgment that φ is to be done. On Bratman's view, intentions are introduced to play just that role, yet he fails to provide them with the form that would indeed make them appropriate start- and end-points of practical reasoning. He stresses important characteristics of intention thus understood, but only in ways that the desire-belief theorist can rightly endorse or challenge.

On a more sympathetic reading, Bratman is attempting to capture aspects of the order of practical reasoning. As we saw, that order cannot be based on predominant desire, as Davidson's Principle of Continence-based version of it suggests, for it would then fail to display the required stability – desires are *as such* not subject to any order; they may come and go randomly. So, what then *is*

[33] Recall that we are pretending theoretical reasoning to be unproblematic, on a desire-belief picture like Sinhababu's. See footnote 26 above.

the order of practical reasoning? Perhaps it is, in a Kantian spirit, the idea of practical reasoning as such; perhaps it constitutes, in an Aristotelian vein, our specifically *human* capacity for practical reasoning. I will not attempt to settle that question here. It is clear, however, that for it to play the role I have sketched, the order of practical reasoning has to be *objective*, in the sense of not being constituted by what we take it to be. For otherwise, it would again lack the required stability – our views as to what the order is would be as susceptible to change as desires are.

Introducing intentions as a *genuine* addition to the desire-belief view requires taking seriously the idea of distinctively practical reasoning as issuing in judgments about what is to be done in the light of the order governing it. Such judgments display exactly those features Bratman is concerned with: control of conduct, inertia, and input for further practical reasoning. All three features follow straightforwardly from the form of practical judgments: they express an unconditional attachment to a course of action and thus control conduct independently of one's further state of mind and over time, and they are available for further, instrumental practical reasoning, which extends their status as to be done in the light of the order of practical reason to relevant means and preliminary steps. The reason why Bratman fails in his attempt to secure these features for intentions as he conceives of them is that he takes them to be grounded in a 'deeply pragmatic' rationale: pragmatic considerations do not make fundamental differences, yet it is a fundamental difference – a difference in form – that sets practical reasoning apart from the theoretical.[34]

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[34] Special thanks go to Jan Broersen, Hein Duijf, Niels van Miltenburg, Dawa Ometto, and Allard Tamminga. I also gratefully acknowledge financial support from the European Research Council, ERC Grant agreement number 616512 (under FP7/2007–2013).