

PREFACE

Many academic authors incur debts in the production of their work, many of which are intellectual. I am no exception. One of my intellectual debts is to three remarkable books, which formed the starting point for my thinking about norms. The first of these books is well known among philosophers: David Lewis' *Convention*. In vintage Lewisian prose, the book gives a lucid and convincing conventionalist analysis of semantic norms. The second book is Govert den Hartogh's 1985 dissertation *Wederkerige Verwachtingen (Mutual Expectations)*. Partly because it was written in Dutch – my native tongue – partly because of the occasionally impenetrable style, it never got the attention it deserves. In that book, Den Hartogh extends Lewis' analysis of semantic norms to moral norms. Den Hartogh introduced the notion of *cooperative virtues* that is the focus of much of this book. The third book is a book on economics, largely ignored by economists, which only lately has started to receive some recognition among philosophers: Robert Sugden's *The Economics of Rights, Co-operation and Welfare*. Sugden's book explains the emergence and stability of norms in terms of social evolution. Though all three books develop a conventionalist account of norms, their arguments and constructions are very different. Lewis and Den Hartogh take the picture of rational man deliberating about his course of action very serious; Sugden rejects this picture as unrealistic and unnecessary. Lewis and Sugden argue the *salience* is primitive and necessary for the emergence of norms; Den Hartogh rejects the importance of salience. Sugden and Den Hartogh develop a conventionalist account of rules in games other than coordination games; Lewis believed this was not possible. These agreements and differences formed the fertile soil for the gestation of this book.

In addition to books, I have debts to people. I owe Govert den Hartogh. This book is based on my 1998 dissertation and Den Hartogh was my supervisor. In the course of my studies with him, it became clear we disagree fundamentally about some of the basic ideas in this work. However, he has always been fair and sympathetic to my arguments. He was quick to point out their weaknesses as well as possible ways to

strengthen the conclusions. His unwavering support for me until this day is a constant source of gratitude, respect, inspiration, and – indeed – debt.

I have had numerous discussions with several people about the themes in this dissertation. Without exception, these exchanges have proven to be illuminating and helpful. My friend and mentor Ned McClennen needs special mentioning, as do Robert Sugden and the late Jean Hampton. In addition, I need to acknowledge Don Bruckner, Eric Cave, Maarten Franssen, Maarten Janssen, the late Gregory Kavka, Bill Kline, Tom May, Christopher Morris, and Michael Robins. Gijs van Donselaar and Peter Rijpkema have been constant companions at the University of Amsterdam. Over many cups of coffee, glasses of beer, and bottles of wine, we have discussed each other's research in detail. One could not wish for a better "philosophical laboratory" than *Café De Jaren* and these two.

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My most formidable debt, however, is not to these books or these people. Instead, I have to declare my gratitude to two people who have been very important at various stages of this project: Cecilia Nalagon and Nico Verbeek. Cecilia corrected my limp English, copy-edited the entire manuscript, advised me on the lay out, gave me important critique, cooked me dinner – even at times I was supposed to prepare it –, and supported me throughout. Nico has been a constant source of joy and a true blessing. This book is dedicated to them.

Like all insolvent debtors, I cannot repay these debts. However, I hope to avoid the sin of ingratitude as well as the greater sin of conceit by acknowledging my many creditors. I would be but a poor pauper without them.

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