

DISCUSSION

On the Parallels between Theoretical and Practical Rationality: Reply to Setiya

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Central to *Rational Causation* is the idea that there are deep parallels between theoretical and practical rationality. Setiya contends that I overstate them, but it is by reemphasizing them here that I hope to answer his central objections. Our disagreement can be brought into relief by focusing on two basic features of the account:

Causalism: Believing and acting for a reason are causal phenomena in the sense that there is in both domains a causal connection between ground and grounded.

Equivalence: There is a necessary connection between something's being the reason why I believe or act and my taking it to favour the belief or action.

The causation in both domains consists, roughly, in subjects' representing actions or propositions as favoured by other actions or propositions. But Setiya holds that Causalism is false in the theoretical case and that Equivalence is false in the practical case.

Setiya contends, contra theoretical Causalism, that believing for a reason is just a form of belief. He holds that his propositional analysis of believing for a reason can account for the variant of Moore's Paradox that figures prominently in my discussion: 'q, so p; but I don't believe p because I believe q.' I argue, however, that a theory according to which believing for a reason is a species of belief has the resources only to explain the traditional paradox, i.e. why it is absurd to assert the relevant content, but then deny that one believes it. A causal connection between ground and grounded, understood in terms of the inferential activity of the agent, best accounts for the absurdity of the variant.

I argue that many of the same considerations that support theoretical Equivalence, which Setiya accepts, equally well support practical Equivalence. Setiya's argument against the latter fails, and fails for the same reason that it would fail against the former. Finally, I reply to the charge that the way I combine Causalism and Equivalence leaves no room to

account for certain necessary truths, e.g. for the fact that when I perform an action for the reason that p , I must believe p .

1. *Believing for a reason*

Setiya rejects, as I do, a Psychologistic view of believing for a reason, according to which it consists in premise-beliefs' efficiently causing conclusion-beliefs. And he agrees that the prospects are thereby better for explaining the Moorean absurdity of 'q therefore p; but I don't believe p because I believe q'. He identifies 'believing that p because one believes that q , in the relevant sense, with believing that p and that the fact that q establishes that p '. He contends that my argument against this view is weak.

Our disagreement might seem to rest on a difference in intuition. He does whereas I don't think it's a Moorean absurdity to say 'Sam is available and his being unmarried establishes that he is available, but I don't believe that he is available because I believe he's unmarried'. I suspect, however, that our divergent intuitions are more a reflection than a source of the substantive dispute. Perhaps we'll make some progress by considering how to characterize Moorean absurdity. If someone says, to switch to the traditional form, 'The subway is safe, but I don't believe the subway is safe' our reaction is, at first blush, incomprehension. It seems as if the speaker has put something – his belief – forward and at the same time taken it back.¹ Interpretively, we are at sea. Similarly, if someone says 'Sam is unmarried, therefore he is available; but I don't believe that he is married because I believe he is unavailable', it seems as if the speaker has put something forward – his reason for believing – and then taken the very same thing back. There are ways of making these sorts of statements intelligible – by, e.g. interpreting the second conjunct as based on behavioural evidence. For example, we might interpret the first statement as meaning roughly 'The subway is safe, but (it seems) I don't believe the subway is safe – after all, I always avoid taking it'. My point for the moment is that what this evidential interpretation of the second conjunct rescues the whole statement *from* is precisely unintelligibility.

Moore-Paradoxical statements are not statements in which one merely fails to live up to what one recognizes to be one's doxastic obligations. Consider: 'The evidence is decisive that my wife is a Russian spy; still, I don't believe it.' The first conjunct is an acknowledgment of a doxastic obligation to believe a statement; the second conjunct is a confession that one does not live up to this obligation. The statement contains an admission of irrationality, but not a Moorean absurdity. It does not *need* to be rescued from unintelligibility by interpreting the second conjunct as evidence-based. Notwithstanding its being a doxastically bizarre situation, the statement is intelligible as it

1 Cf. Goldstein (2000).

stands. The situation is the same with: ‘Sam is available and his being unmarried establishes that he is available, but I don’t believe that he is available because I believe he’s unmarried.’ In this case, the first conjunct expresses my believing a certain proposition and that a certain premise provides decisive evidence for it. The second is a confession that the evidence is not in fact what moves me. Perhaps, although I recognize the decisiveness of the reason, I cannot take reasons of the relevant sort seriously. Perhaps I know that I only believe such things on the basis of the relevant party’s personal assurances. However weird it might be, we understand what the speaker is saying. Unlike an un-evidentially-reinterpreted instance of Moore’s Paradox, it is intelligible.

The first-blush unintelligibility of genuine Moorean absurdities is connected to the following fact: It is characteristic of Moore’s Paradox that if the assertion in the first conjunct were sincere, the second conjunct would necessarily be false. But it is not impossible that a speaker might sincerely acknowledge the decisiveness of the evidence, while disbelieving the conclusion it establishes. Thus, it is not impossible that a speaker might sincerely assert ‘ q and q entails p ’ despite not believing p because she believes q – she might not believe p at all. Similarly, believing that p and that the fact that q establishes that p is not, I submit, a guarantee of the existence of a causal-explanatory connection between the corresponding beliefs.

Setiya speculates that my intuition of possibility here must be based on giving the ‘because’ in ‘I don’t believe p because I believe q ’ the wrong reading. Setiya says: ‘It is not paradoxical to say ‘Sam’s being unmarried proves that he is available, but I didn’t form the belief that he is available because I came to believe that he is unmarried; nor is my belief that he is available causally sustained by my belief that he’s unmarried, from which it is counterfactually independent’.’ I agree with Setiya, of course, that rational explanations of belief are neither historical nor efficient-causal. But I do not think that the statement in question only seems not-Moore-paradoxical on account of one of those wrong readings.

Perhaps the most instructive feature of this moment in Setiya’s argument is the idea that there is no conflict between saying both ‘Sam is available and his being unmarried establishes that he is available’ and also saying ‘my belief in his being unmarried is counterfactually independent from my belief in his being available’. Setiya and I agree, it seems, that belief in the establishing relation is consistent with this counterfactual independence; we disagree about whether believing for a reason is consistent with such independence. I suspect that this is why he hears a Moorean absurdity in ‘ p and q entails p ; but I don’t believe p because I believe q ’.

Let’s consider the intuitive basis for the view that, by and large, if q is my reason for believing p , then if I didn’t believe q , I wouldn’t believe p . Suppose you say to me ‘my reason for thinking that the butler did it is that everyone else has an alibi’. Suppose I then prove to your satisfaction that an envious

step-brother lacked an alibi. Now, if you continue to insist that the butler did it, it will surely cast some doubt on your original statement – that your reason for thinking the butler did it is that everyone else has an alibi. I would suspect that you had originally misrepresented your reason. You could, of course, have suddenly switched to a new reason, or could just now have begun to believe in the butler’s guilt for no particular reason, or your believing in the butler’s guilt might have been overdetermined by your reasons (or by some combination of reasons and non-rational causes) from the start. If so, then my suspicion would be misplaced. But the fact that sometimes one would continue to hold a belief even if one abandoned one’s reason for holding it does not establish any general thesis of counterfactual independence – any more than the odd case of preemption or overdetermination in a game of 8-ball establishes a general thesis of counterfactual independence among the causes and effects on the pool table. Rational explanations of belief provide at least very good evidence for counterfactuals, just as ordinary causal explanations do. It is because of this explanatory tie that ‘p and q establishes p; but I don’t believe p because I believe q’ is merely an intelligible expression of irrationality, rather than a Moorean absurdity.

For some, to reject a Psychologistic reading of believing for a reason is thereby to cease to think of it causally. If you think that all causation is efficient and recognize that efficient causation does not underlie believing for a reason, then you will be sceptical of the explanatory nexus between premise-beliefs and conclusion-beliefs. But one would thereby have lost track of the basic phenomenon. Better, I think, to recognize that the explanatory nexus characteristic of theoretical rationality consists in the subject’s representing the to-be-believed-ness of p as following from the to-be-believed-ness of q.

The reply to Setiya’s proposal presented so far will likely invite further tinkering. Once we have abandoned Theoretical Psychologism, is there some general reason for thinking that believing for a reason is not just a belief with a special content? Mustn’t there be some proposition-form in the neighbourhood that will do the trick? If it is not a sequential causal process linking beliefs with contents q and p, why not a single belief concerning the relation between q and p – or something in that vicinity?

My answer to these questions will provide an occasion to discuss the thought, central to the book, that rational causation just is agential activity. In saying what this amounts to, I will show how the idea makes possible a resolution of my variant of Moore’s Paradox and why this resolution depends upon rejecting the sort of view Setiya advocates.

I treat ‘q, therefore p’ and ‘q, so p’ as paradigmatic expressions of believing for a reason. I show that I believe tomorrow is Tuesday because I believe that today is Monday when I say: ‘Today is Monday, so tomorrow is Tuesday.’ If, as Setiya advocates, such statements (as a whole) express beliefs, then ‘q, so p’ and ‘q, therefore p’ are objects of propositional attitudes. But that seems

wrong on its face. Ryle makes the intuitive case for what I take to be the natural view with characteristic clarity and snap.

In using ‘if-then’ sentences and in using ‘because’ sentences we are stating or asserting. ‘If today is Monday, tomorrow is Tuesday’ is a true statement; ‘Tomorrow is Tuesday, because today is Monday’ is another statement which may be true. But ‘Today is Monday, so tomorrow is Tuesday’ is not a statement. It is an argument, of which we can ask whether it is valid or fallacious; it is not an assertion or doctrine or announcement of which we can ask whether it is true or false.

We can, indeed, ask whether its premise is true, and whether its conclusion is true; but there is not the third question ‘Is it true that today is Monday so tomorrow is Tuesday?’ An argument is not the expression of a proposition, though it embodies the expressions of two propositions . . .

We may consider whether he is right to draw that conclusion ‘*q*’ from that premise ‘*p*’, but we cannot ask whether he knows, believes, or merely supposes that *p*, so *q*. Indeed ‘*p*, so *q*’ cannot be the filling of any ‘that’ clause. We may rebut his argument, but we cannot contradict it; we can contradict his premise and his conclusion, but we cannot rebut them. We may describe his premise and his conclusion as pieces of information; but his argument from the one to the other is not an extra piece of information. We can examine his evidence for his conclusion, but we cannot ask for evidence for or against his move from his evidence to his conclusion . . .

We might say, provisionally, that an argument is no more a statement than a piece of multiplication is a number. An argument is an operation with statements, somewhat as a pass is an operation with a football (Ryle 2009: 245–47).

Setiya might concede here that Ryle is perfectly right about how we ordinarily think of inference or argument (terms Ryle uses interchangeably in this essay), but argue that his own proposal is intended to be a reductive theory. Perhaps inference or argument is, despite appearances, simply assertion; or, if this is different, perhaps argument, though a different speech act than assertion, nonetheless expresses a propositional attitude towards a truth-evaluable content. But it is precisely because any content-view of inference conflates distinct mental kinds that such views cannot explain the absurdity of my variant of Moore’s Paradox.

To see this, let me begin with the simplest version of this sort of view: to believe *p* for reason *q* is to believe that *q* entails *p*. Knowledge of such an entailment relation, Ryle famously says, is

rather like being in possession of a railway ticket. It is having a license or warrant to make a journey from London to Oxford. . . . As a person

can have a ticket without actually travelling with it and without ever being in London or getting to Oxford, so a person can have an inference warrant without actually making any inferences and even without ever acquiring the premises from which to make them (Ryle 2009: 250).

Suppose we add to the simple theory: to believe p for reason q is to believe q and to believe that q entails p . But, to continue Ryle's metaphor, having a ticket from London to Oxford and being in London is not the same as getting from London to Oxford by using the ticket. Now it might be argued that, owing to a difference between human psychology and railway travel, the objection to the slightly less simple view fails. It's psychologically impossible, it might be argued, to believe q and that q entails p , yet fail to hold the conclusion true on the basis of the premise. Even if that were so – and it doesn't seem to be – it's irrelevant. If we happen to be constituted that way, it does not change the fact that believing the content is one thing, having beliefs that stand in the right sort of causal-explanatory connection is something else. Finally, the fact that one was in London and that one is now in Oxford, and that one possesses a London-Oxford ticket does not show that one used the ticket to get there. And again: even if, as seems wrong in any case, we happen to be so constituted that we cannot believe q and p and that q entails p without believing p because one believes q , it would not make the former the same as the latter.

If believing for a reason were simply a kind of believing, it would give rise to the ordinary version of Moore's Paradox. And of course it *is* Moore-paradoxical to assert that a certain justificatory relation between q and p obtains and then to deny that you believe it. But it is not Moore Paradoxical to assert that the relation obtains and then to deny that q is why you believe p . It is at worst to confess irrationality. The very state expressed by the first conjunct is not the one denied by the second. Hence the conjunction 'qRp, but I don't believe p because I believe q ' will fall short of Moorean absurdity, for any R . The defect doesn't arise from the specific form of proposition that a content-view proposes to identify with believing for a reason. No such view can explain the absurdity of the variant of Moore's Paradox: 'q therefore p ; but I don't believe p because I believe q .'

So what is the alternative? If believing for a reason is not a causal process and it is not just a special belief, what is it? My thought is that we should understand the relation between believing and believing for a reason in terms of the analogous contrast between assertion and argument. This means, first, that just as assertion and argument are distinct speech acts, subject to their own distinctive norms, believing and believing for a reason ought, too, to be treated as categorically different forms of representing, subject to the correspondingly different norms. 'Not true' and the like make sense as objections to belief but not to believing for a reason; 'doesn't follow' and the like make sense as objections to believing for a reason but not to belief. And that's

because, in the case of belief, one is doing something with a single content: one represents the content as to-be-believed; whereas, in the case of believing for a reason, one is doing something (something else) with several: one represents one content as to be believed as a consequence of the to-be-believedness of another (or, typically, more than one other). Importantly, this ‘as a consequence of’ is part of the characterization of a distinctive form of representing, rather than part of the characterization of a special kind of propositional content. The distinction between these forms of representing is as familiar as the distinction between assertion and argument.

Thinking of ‘therefore’ as expressive of something I am doing with contents, as opposed to being a part of a content upon which I act, helps to explain why ‘q therefore p; but I don’t believe p because I believe q’ is Moore-Paradoxical. The ‘therefore’ expresses the very inferential activity that *constitutes* the becausal-connection in ‘S believes p because S believes q’. To treat ‘therefore’ instead as a content-word is to treat it as expressive of part of the passive, abstract component of the relevant mental representing; it’s merely the object of mental representing and thus something that cannot already include agential activity.² And so on any content-view, the justificatory-explanatory connection is merely what the agential activity is directed at, as opposed to *being* agential activity. And this is why such a view cannot furnish a proper explanation of the absurdity of ‘q, so p; but I don’t believe p because I believe q’. One might make the point this way: someone who says ‘q, so p’, shows not just that she believes in a certain justificatory relation, but that she herself, by virtue of her own inferential representing, conforms to that relation.

Behind the process view of inference, there is the thought that the ‘because’ in ‘S believes p because S believes q’ and the ‘because’ in ‘the window broke because it was struck by a ball’ correspond to the same sort of real connection. Setiya thinks the process-view goes wrong in conceiving of the former as an explanation. If one thinks of ‘S believes p because S believes q’ as a description of a causal process, one is on the hook for a story of what efficient-causal combination of causal relata can overcome the theoretical version of the deviant causal chain problem and can, more generally, account for the distinctive features of such explanations. But if one thinks of believing for a reason as believing a special kind of content, one needs to say exactly what this content is and how believing it could account for one’s ability to just say what one’s reasons for belief are, and not merely what we think would justify our beliefs. The process and content approaches both originate with their own specific distortion, the recovery from which is then each view’s chief theoretical burden. In Chapter 1, I sketch a way of thinking of believing for a reason so as to avoid the pseudo-problems engendered by those approaches. My defence of the view and of the corresponding view of action against

2 I owe this way of putting the point to Doug Lavin.

various naturalistic arguments in later chapters serves at the same time as a diagnosis for why philosophers don't simply take appearances at face value. If one thinks of rational explanation as folk science, if one doubts that there is room in a physical world for causation that isn't ultimately physical, if one thinks that there are differences only of degree between human and non-human animal minds, then the sort of view I advocate will seem to be a non-starter – believing and acting for a reason will seem as if they must be efficient-causal processes. I made the mistake of assuming in *Rational Causation* that the content-view could be treated as a minor distraction or perhaps a mere stepping-stone on the path to the right view. I hope to have made up for that error in this essay.

2. *Acting for a reason*

Setiya asks: 'If I express my intention in acting with the words 'I am doing A', why not think of *that* as the content of my intention, the representation involved in doing A intentionally? . . . Why appeal to normative or evaluative concepts, as in the representation of what is to be done, when those concepts figure nowhere in the linguistic expression of intention?'

The normative character of action-explanation is, I think, very close to the surface. If you tell me that you are selling your house, I might ask you why. Suppose you tell me that you're doing it because the wave of foreclosures is finally about to end. I might well object: the fact that the wave of foreclosures is coming to an end is reason *not* to sell, but rather to wait for a couple of years. Now, if my question were asking *merely* for an explanation, as Setiya thinks, it's unclear why your answer opens up space for criticism. The fact, after all, that you are acting for a bad reason does not make it any less a good explanation of what you're doing. And yet the objection is perfectly a propos. If, however, your answer is an explanation that expresses a judgment that the wave's coming to an end supports selling, then it is perfectly clear why it makes sense to object that it doesn't. The same point goes for action itself. If you tell me that you are selling your house, I make objections just as if your action embodies a judgment that selling your house is to be done. You say 'I'm selling my house'; I tell you why you are wrong to do so. I object not by saying, 'You're not selling it', but rather by saying 'You shouldn't sell it'. A simple explanation for this fact is that actions embody and action-statements express judgments about what to do. More elaborate explanations are possible, to be sure, but why go there if one doesn't have to?

I am struck by the analogy to belief. To say 'I believe that p' is not to report a mental state. It is to say, in effect, that you think a certain proposition merits belief – this despite the fact that normative concepts 'figure nowhere in the linguistic expression' of belief. Hence, when you say 'I believe that p', there is space for me to object by citing some piece of evidence that suggests p is not to be believed. I object not by saying 'you don't believe it' but rather by

saying ‘you shouldn’t believe it’, or something to that effect. Similarly, if you tell me that q is why you believe p , then, however good that may be as an explanation of what you believe, if I know that q is not a good reason for thinking that p , I can object, just as if your explanation contained a judgment that q supports p . These similarities in the theoretical and practical spheres provide support for parallel normative theories of belief and action.

We can find additional support elsewhere. Setiya 2007 argues that the self-consciousness of intentional action tells against the essential normativity of action-explanation. In fact, I would argue that the latter provides the most promising sort of account of the former: If ‘I am X-ing’ expresses an evaluative judgment that X-ing is ‘to be done’, there is no mystery – or in any case much less of a mystery – about how it is that I am in a position to say, not on the basis of observation or evidence, that I am X-ing. On this sort of view, such a statement is not offered as a description of what I’m doing – as a stance on whether the proposition that I am X-ing is true. Rather it is a judgment that a certain action is to be done. Similarly, since the statement ‘I am X-ing because I am Y-ing’ expresses the judgment that X-ing is to be done because Y-ing is to be done, there is no mystery as to how I can say, not on the basis of observation or evidence, that *that* is why I am X-ing. My ability to say what I’m doing (and why) is no more mysterious than my ability to assert that p when p is what I believe to be true, or to argue from q to p , when q is why I believe p . This approach strikes me as far more plausible than the other strategies – than, e.g., the view that ‘I am X-ing’ expresses a descriptive (or quasi-descriptive) thought that *causes* its own truth or that such statements are the result of shadowy inferences from one’s own psychological states.

So I think Setiya underestimates the appeal of the thought that an agent who acts for a reason must have at least taken the putative fact to cast the act in a favourable light – *Equivalence*. But he also takes himself to have a fatal objection, which I now address: ‘That I am doing A because p , in that I am acting for that reason, does not entail that the fact that p is a reason to do A In general, however, if one proposition does not entail another, it is possible to believe the first but not the second. So it is possible to believe that one is doing A because p without believing that the fact that p is a reason to do A.’ And Setiya thinks that it follows that one can act intentionally on the ground that p without conforming to *Equivalence*.

Let’s go through the argument carefully. If my view were correct, it would be impossible both to act on the grounds that p and disbelieve that p supported the action, since viewing it as supporting the action is part of what it is, on my view, to act in light of it. But it’s certainly possible for *someone* to act on the ground that p despite p lending the action no support. I might therefore believe that I am precisely such a someone. This way of approaching it brings the following sort of example to mind. Perhaps my evil psychiatrist has convinced me that I am giving a large donation to a certain charity

because it will upset my mother and that I am in denial about my reasons. And yet when I reflect on the issue directly, I do not judge that the donation's upsetting my mother supports giving it. It clearly doesn't follow, however, that I am really giving the donation in light of the fact that it will upset my mother. I might have accepted a false explanation of my behaviour. The issue is not merely whether I could believe I am acting on the grounds that *p* while disbelieving that *p* supports the action, but whether I could actually be acting on the grounds that *p* while disbelieving that *p* supports the action. What reason is there to accept that I might really be giving the donation to the charity because it will upset my mother?

For the argument to work, as of course Setiya knows, the possibility of believing or something like believing that I am acting on the grounds that *p* while disbelieving that *p* supports so acting would have to entail the possibility of actually acting on the grounds that *p* while disbelieving that *p* supports the action. But I know of no reason to accept this inference. It might go through on Setiya's own view of intentional action, but one would only accept his view if one had already given up on Equivalence. In Setiya 2010, presents a version of the argument intended to be independent of his positive view. He invokes the Anscombean idea that I show an action to be intentional by giving application to the reason-seeking 'why?' question. He contends that it is sufficient to give it application that one has a belief of the form, 'I am X-ing because *p*', in the relevant sense of 'because'. Perhaps this is right; perhaps having such a belief does show the action to be intentional. Nonetheless, it doesn't follow that the explanation must be true or that, if it is true, I might at the same time disbelieve that *p* supports X-ing. I would argue, furthermore, that what shows an action to be intentional is a capacity to say, with first-person authority, that I am performing the action. Beliefs about why I am doing what I'm doing based on evidence or on the assurances of my psychiatrist don't show this. And if one holds, as I do, that the relevant first-person authority is explained in part by the evaluative character of practical judgments, one will have positive reason to reject the inference that Setiya needs.

Consider: 'EM believes that *p* on the grounds that *q*' does not entail '*q* supports *p*'. Applying the principle Setiya invokes in the argument above, it must be possible for me to believe the former without believing the latter. Whatever the reasoning is that leads him to infer from the possibility of the analogous situation in the practical case to the possibility of actually X-ing because *p* and disbelieving that *p* supports X-ing – can we use the same reasoning to infer the possibility of actually believing that *p* on the grounds that *q* while disbelieving that *q* supports *p*? Setiya thinks not. But why can't I use whatever blocks the conclusion in the theoretical case to block the conclusion in the practical case? His answer turns crucially on the fact that he accepts the theoretical version of Equivalence; that is, he has an analysis of believing for a reason according to which one must view one's reasons for

belief as supporting the belief.³ But surely someone who believes Equivalence does so as part of an analysis of what it is to act for a reason. So I think that one will only accept Setiya's argument against the practical version of Equivalence if one already believes the conclusion.

Setiya objects that I do not answer the question of why it is that X-ing on the grounds that p entails (a) believing that p and (b) X-ing because one believes that p. In fact, I do give as much of an answer as I think there is to be given. I suspect that his not seeing it is in part a consequence of there turning out to be less to it than he expects. But there is no less than is required.

I'll begin by briefly answering the analogous questions in the case of believing for a reason. Firstly, why is it impossible to believe p because q, in the sense that implies believing on the ground that q, without believing q? Recall, on my account, to believe p on the grounds that q is to represent p as inheriting a normative status – to-be-believed-ness – from q; it is to view the to-be-believed-ness of q as conferring to-be-believed-ness on p. And to view q as to be believed, on my view, just is to believe it. But if this is what believing p on the grounds that q is then of course it necessitates believing that q.

Secondly, why is it impossible to believe p because q, in the sense that implies believing on the ground that q, without believing p because one believes q? Simple: it's because there is no difference – at least no difference that's relevant to the present question – between saying that S believes p 'because q' and saying she does so 'because she believes that q'. In both cases (barring very unusual interpretations) one is saying that she represents q's to-be-believed-ness as conferring to-be-believed-ness on p. Here is the irrelevant difference: One may only say 'because q' if S knows that q, whereas one may say 'because S believes that q' regardless of whether S knows or not. Hence it's impossible for the non-psychological form to be true and yet the psychological form false. That's just another way of saying that it's impossible to believe p 'because q' without believing p 'because one believes that q'. Both explanations appeal to the very same exercise of theoretical rationality.

In *Rational Causation*, my focus is solely on instrumental action-explanations, so my reply in the practical sphere will be confined to cases in which the relevant p that serves as the ground of action is an instrumental fact. Recall, to be X-ing because one is Y-ing is to represent the to-be-done-ness of Y-ing as conferring to-be-done-ness on X-ing. An agent reasons practically from a specific goal to actions that would bring her closer to achieving it, thereby taking means to ends. To say, e.g., that Dara is tasting all of the desserts because she's reviewing the restaurant is to say that she represents the to-be-done-ness of tasting all the desserts as derived from the to-be-done-ness of reviewing the restaurant. This is what 'in order to' comes to in the

3 This is explicit in Setiya, *forthcoming*.

rational explanation of (instrumental) action – the causal connection just is the inferential connection. But if Dara doesn't *believe* that tasting all the desserts brings reviewing the restaurant closer to completion, then she couldn't possibly represent tasting the desserts as to be done as a consequence of the to-be-done-ness of reviewing the restaurant. Since the instrumental belief is part what it is to *infer* the means from the end, it is also part of what it is to take the means to the end.

So far I have explained why it is that someone who is X-ing because she's Y-ing must believe the relevant instrumental fact p. Now we come to the further question of why someone who is X-ing on the grounds that p must be X-ing because she believes that p. My explanation is, again, pretty simple. 'Dara is tasting all of the desserts because tasting all of the desserts is part of reviewing a restaurant' and 'Dara is tasting all of the desserts because she believes that tasting all of the desserts is part of reviewing the restaurant' are just variations of the same explanation, the very explanation given by: 'Dara is tasting all of the desserts because she's reviewing the restaurant.' To explain an action by citing an instrumental fact is just to say that the means are being employed in order to achieve the end. 'S is X-ing because p' and 'S is X-ing because S believes that p', where p is the instrumental fact connecting X-ing and Y-ing, say more or less the same as 'S is X-ing because S is Y-ing'. As in the theoretical case, there is a not-very-interesting difference in the circumstances under which it is permissible to use these explanations. One may say 'because p' only if the agent knows p, whereas, again, one may say 'because she believes that p' whether or not she knows p. And so it's impossible for the non-psychological form to be true and yet the psychological form false. This is another way of saying that it's impossible to act 'because p' unless one acts 'because one believes that p'. Both explanations attribute the same practical inference to the agent: X is to be done because Y is to be done.

Finally, a few remarks concerning some minor themes that run through 'Causality in Action'. Setiya points out quite rightly that many of the theses that I've herded together in my discussions can come apart. One can, e.g. be non-Psychologistic about theoretical reason, but Psychologistic about practical reason; one can hold that reasons are causes without holding that intentions are causes, etc. In the book, I tend to discuss under one heading the views that I think intuitively go together and tend historically to have gone together. Often the positions that mix and match, while occupying real positions in logical space, have lost some of the appeal that made their forbears popular to begin with – an appeal that consisted at least partly in their simplicity. My strategy in *Rational Causation* is to argue that the basic Psychologistic conception of rationality is poorly motivated, and is based on a misconception of its topic and unwarranted metaphysical prejudices. This of course does not refute every subsequent iteration of Psychologism.

But my hope is that the critical arguments, when presented alongside a compelling alternative, undermine the motivation for those iterations.

Setiya insists that, ‘Psychologistic theories of acting for a reason are not the product only of reductive science-worship or a crass imperialism of efficient causes. They emerge from a plausible conception of necessary truths as truths that follow from the natures of things’, e.g. the necessary truth that acting in light of *p* entails acting ‘because one believes that *p*’. As a historical claim about the emergence of Psychologism, this is dubious. As far as I know this defence of Psychologism appears quite recently, long after the view had achieved world domination and chiefly as a bulwark against a resurgent anti-causalism about reasons-explanation. Be that as it may, I would agree that such theories are not *solely* the product of an attachment to efficient causation as the sole sort of causation or to scientific reductionism. As I try to emphasize, Psychologism has its own sources of appeal. I’m happy to count Setiya’s argument as one such source. But it defies credulity to think that it’s merely a coincidence that the by-far-most-dominant view in the philosophy of action fits like hand to glove with the by-far-most-dominant view in the metaphysics of mind. Scientistic naturalism shapes the space of perceived possibilities and deeply affects philosophers’ judgments of the comparative plausibility and worthwhileness of various approaches in the philosophy of mind and action even when it is not explicitly represented by a premise in an argument.⁴

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