

## INTENTION

*Paul's Strategy for Responding to Setiya and Byrne*

### I. Raise problems for transparency of intending to doing:

1. We are most likely to self-ascribe intentions precisely when we would not affirm "I am doing F"/"I am going to do F."
  - Saying "I believe ..." is often a way of asserting a worldly proposition less confidently. But saying "I intended to help, though maybe I'm not actually helping" or "I intend to get gas on my way home, although I might forget" doesn't seem to involve asserting that the action is occurring/will occur. It's a retreat from world to mind.
2. It's not clear that foreseen side effects will be excluded on either KS or AB's picture. Suppose the agent would affirm 'I am going to F and G,' where F is intended and G is a side effect:
  - On AB's view, we are to refrain from employing the schema if we take ourselves to have *evidence* that we will do G. But the relevant evidence just is the intention to do F (and not G), together with the evidence that F will cause G. Therefore, refraining from self-ascribing side effects requires that one already know that one intends F and not G.
  - On KS's view, it might be that the appearance of reasons in the content is meant to help. But it's not clear how, since I do take myself to have a reason to G – I have a reason to F, and F-ing involves G-ing.
3. AB's view risks including paranoid predictions like 'I'm going to trip and fall' that are not based on evidence but are also not intentions.
  - KS's view may avoid this by appeal having 'made up one's mind', but it's not obvious how this is transparently accessible.

### II. Deny that distinctively *first-personal* knowledge of intention → *groundless* knowledge of intention.

- Some grounds, or some inferences drawn from those grounds, are normally available only first-personally or are especially significant first-personally.

### III. Defend the "Presupposition Approach."

- Any creature who is basically rational, has the capacity for inference, the capacity to intend, and can ascribe intentions to other people has the capacity for first-personal knowledge of intention, but agency is not the source of that knowledge.

*Paul's Theory-Theoretic, "Decision-Based Self-Ascription" View*

1. Intentions do not correlate well enough with any worldly fact for the Transparency View to succeed. They can be akratic or normatively underdetermined, and they are compatible with lacking the belief that you will do/are doing as you intend. They depend heavily on *what you decide to do*.

- Intentions are functional states: dispositional, (normally) temporally extended, causes of action.
- Decisions are singular, dated events: the conclusion of practical deliberation, but not necessarily preceded by deliberation.

2. The Rylean Theory Theory is the best, most economical alternative to the Transparency View. This kind of view can take decisions to be part of the *evidential basis* for self-ascriptions of intention.

- Making a decision is *not necessary* for having or self-ascribing an intention. Normative facts, habits, scripts, etc. can all serve as grounds for self-ascription.
- I do think they occur commonly (choice and deliberation are not required), and they are a kind of evidence that is generally only available to the thinker herself (and have more evidential import for the thinker herself).

3. Self-interpretation takes (at least) inner speech and imagery as inputs. On my view, these can be vehicles for a decision because decisions can be *performatives*: we can express to ourselves a practical commitment to F-ing, thereby bringing that commitment into existence.

- Unlike mere wishes or desires, decisions are events that we take to engage the requirements of practical rationality: minimal stability, consistency, means-end coherence.
- It is plausible that we are generally disposed to try to do what we decide to do, and inhibited from performing (high-level) actions until we've made a decision.
- Taking oneself to have formed an intention reinforces the disposition to reason and act congruently with that intention.

4. Having made a decision to F does not ensure that one intends to F; decisions can fail to put one into the state of intending. But normally, they are a sufficient basis for a self-ascription.

- There are fewer conditions under which decision and intention come apart in a rational agent than with judgment and belief. When decisions fail to have the normal downstream consequences, this is often because the agent *changed her mind*, in a way that is usually rationally impermissible in the case of belief.
- However, the evidence constituted by a decision can be outweighed – by a history of incontinence with one's decisions, or by other behavioral evidence.

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