1: Practical Reason and the Structure of Actions (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

The connection of practical reason with intentional action raises large questions about its credentials as a capacity for genuine reasoning. As noted above, intentional action is not mere bodily movement, but reflects a distinctive attitude of the agent's, viz., intention.

Practical and Theoretical Reason Practical reason defines a distinctive standpoint of reflection. When agents deliberate about action, they think about themselves and their situation in characteristic ways. What are some of the salient features of the practical point of view? A natural way to interpret this point of view is to contrast it with the standpoint of theoretical reason. The latter standpoint is occupied when we engage in reasoning that is directed at the resolution of questions that are in some sense theoretical rather than practical; but how are we to understand this opposition between the theoretical and the practical? One possibility is to understand theoretical reflection as reasoning about questions of explanation and prediction. Looking backward to events that have already taken place, it asks why they have occurred; looking forward, it attempts to determine what is going to happen in the future. In these ways, theoretical reflection is concerned with matters of fact and their explanation. Furthermore it treats these issues in impersonal terms that are accessible in principle to anyone. Theoretical reasoning, understood along these lines, finds paradigmatic expression in the natural and social sciences. Practical reason, by contrast, takes a distinctively normative question as its starting point. It typically asks, of a set of alternatives for action none of which has yet been performed, what one ought to do, or what it would be best to do. It is thus concerned not with matters of fact and their explanation, but with matters of value, of what it would be desirable to do. In practical reasoning agents attempt to assess and weigh their reasons for action, the considerations that speak for and against alternative courses of action that are open to them. Moreover they do this from a distinctively first-personal point of view, one that is defined in terms of a practical predicament in which they find themselves either individually or collectively—people sometimes reason jointly about what they should do together. There is, however, a different way of understanding the contrast between practical and theoretical reason, stressing the parallels rather than the differences between the two forms of reflection. According to this interpretation, theoretical reflection too is concerned with a normative rather than a factual question, namely with the question of what one ought to believe. It attempts to answer this normative question by assessing and weighing reasons for belief, the considerations that speak for and against the particular conclusions one might draw about the way the world is. Furthermore, it does this from a standpoint of first-personal reflection: Seen in this way, the contrast between practical and theoretical reason is essentially a contrast between two different systems of norms: Theoretical reason, interpreted along these lines, addresses the considerations that recommend accepting particular claims as to what is or is not the case. Practical reason, by contrast, is concerned not with the truth of propositions but with the desirability or value of actions. The reasons in which it deals are considerations that speak in favor of particular actions being good, or worthy of performance in some way. This difference in subject matter corresponds to a further difference between the two forms of reason, in respect of their consequences. Two observations should be made about this way of understanding practical reason. First, the contrast just drawn might suggest that there is a categorial difference in the consequences of theoretical and practical reason, insofar as the former produces changes in our mental states, whereas the latter gives rise to bodily movements. But it would be misleading to contrast the two kinds of rational capacity in these terms. Practical reasoning gives rise not to bodily movements per se, but to intentional actions, and these are intelligible as such only to the extent they reflect our mental states. It would thus be more accurate to characterize the issue of both theoretical and practical reason as attitudes; the difference is that theoretical reasoning leads to modifications of our beliefs, whereas practical reasoning leads to modifications of our intentions Harman , Bratman Second, it is important to be clear that in neither case do the characteristic modifications of attitude occur infallibly. There is room for irrationality both in the theoretical and the practical domain, which in its strongest form involves a failure to form the attitudes that one acknowledges to be called for by the considerations one has reflected on. Thus a person might end up reading a mystery novel for another hour, while at the same time judging that it would be

better on the whole to go back to work on their paper for the upcoming conference. Practical irrationality of this latter kind is known as akrasia, incontinence, or weakness of will, and its nature and even possibility are traditional subjects of philosophical speculation in their own right. If we assume that this strong kind of practical irrationality is possible, however, then we must grant that practical reason is not automatically practical in its issue. A more accurate way to represent the consequences of practical reason would be to say that deliberation about action generates appropriate intentions insofar as an agent is rational Korsgaard a. Naturalism and Normativity The connection of practical reason with intentional action raises large questions about its credentials as a capacity for genuine reasoning. Intention seems in this respect to be strikingly unlike belief. With intentions however things seem crucially different in this respect Smith The intention to go shopping on Wednesday, for instance, is not a state that would or should be abandoned upon ascertaining or confirming that one has not yet gone shopping on Wednesday; rather a person with such an intention will ordinarily try to bring the world into alignment with the intention, by going shopping when Wednesday comes around. Reflection on this contrast between belief and intention has led some philosophers to ask whether practical reason might not be something of a misnomer. The difficulty, in a nutshell, is to make sense of the suggestion that a genuinely rational process could by itself generate states with the peculiar function of intentions. Reason seems a capacity for cognitive operations, whereas intentions are distinctively noncognitive states, insofar as they do not aim to reflect independent facts of the matter about the way things happen to be in the world. Expressivism gives voice to this skeptical attitude about practical reason. Accounts of this kind offer interpretations of the normative and evaluative language that distinctively figures in practical reflection. According to the expressivist, however, evaluative and normative claims of these kinds do not represent genuine cognitive achievements, judgments that are literally capable of being true or false. Rather they give expression to desires, sentiments, plans, and other pro-attitudes, the sorts of goal-directed noncognitive state that move people to action. The expressivist contends that we can make sense of the capacity of practical reason to generate states with the peculiar structure and function of intentions only if evaluative and normative assertions are understood along these lines. Expressivism in this form suggests a naturalistic interpretation of practical reason, one that may seem appropriate to the enlightened commitments of the modern scientific world view. It is naturalistic metaphysically, insofar as it makes no commitment to the objective existence in the world of such allegedly questionable entities as values, norms, or reasons for action. If normative and evaluative claims do not represent genuine cognitive achievements, then their legitimacy does not depend on our postulating a realm of normative or evaluative facts to which those claims must be capable of corresponding. It is also naturalistic psychologically, insofar as it yields explanations of intentional human behavior that are basically continuous with explanations of the behavior of non-rational animals. The special sophistication of human agency may be traced to the fact that humans have much more sophisticated linguistic methods for giving voice to their motivating noncognitive attitudes. Indeed, many contemporary expressivists would contend that these expressive resources are sufficiently powerful that we can explain by means of them the features of practical deliberation that initially give it the appearance of a genuine form of reasoning Blackburn , Gibbard , Gibbard Other philosophers remain unimpressed with this naturalistic approach to practical reason. One ground for dissatisfaction with it is the following. The expressivist strategy relies on an initial contrast between practical reflection on the one hand, and the genuine forms of cognitive activity characteristic of theoretical reasoning on the other. There has to be some important sense in which practical discourse does not satisfy the standards of rationality that distinguish authentic cognitive discourse in the literal sense; otherwise the contention that normative discourse is expressive rather than cognitive will lack any significant content. But the contrast between theoretical and practical reflection required for this purpose seems elusive. As we saw in section 1 above, theoretical reasoning appears to be no less a normative enterprise than practical reasoning. It is plausibly understood to concern itself with reasons for belief, the evidence and other considerations that speak for and against particular conclusions about the way things are in the world. To the extent this is the case, theoretical and practical reasoning would both seem equally problematic from the naturalistic perspectiveâ€"assuming, that is, that it leaves no place for such normative considerations as reasons. But if naturalism calls into question the credentials of theoretical reason, it thereby

undermines the contrast between genuine reasoning and noncognitive forms of normative and evaluative discourse on which expressivists themselves rely. Many of those who reject expressivist accounts would endorse some variety of realism about the subject matter of practical reason. The basic commitment of realism in this domain is the idea that there are facts of the matter about what we have reason to do that are prior to and independent of our deliberations, to which those deliberations are ultimately answerable. Realists picture practical reason as a capacity for reflection about an objective body of normative truths regarding action Parfit , Scanlon An alternative approachâ€"different both from realism and from the kind of expressivism sketched aboveâ€"is constructivism Korsgaard , Street , Street According to the constructivist, practical reason is governed by genuine normative constraints, but what makes these constraints normative is precisely their relation to the will of the agents whose decisions they govern. The principles of practical reason are constitutive principles of rational agency, binding on us insofar as we necessarily commit ourselves to complying with them in willing anything at all. Reasons and Motivation The capacity of practical reason to give rise to intentional action divides even those philosophers who agree in rejecting the expressivist strategy discussed above. Such philosophers are prepared to grant that there are normative and evaluative facts and truths, and to accept the cognitive credentials of discourse about this distinctive domain of facts and truths. But they differ in their accounts of the truth conditions of the normative and evaluative claims that figure in such discourse. We may distinguish the following two approaches. Behind this internalist position lies the idea that practical reason is practical in its issue. Internalists contend that we can make sense of the generation of new intentions through reasoning only if we assume that such reasoning is conditioned by motivational resources that are already to hand. They typically agree that practical reasoning is capable of generating new motivations and actions. They agree, in other words, that if agent s has reason to do x, it must be possible for s to acquire the motivation to x through reflection on the relevant reasons. This disagreement is conventionally understood to be driven by diverging approaches to the explanation of intentional action. Internalists are impressed by the differences between intentions and the cognitive states that figure in paradigmatic examples of theoretical reasoning. Pointing to these differences, they ask how practical reason can succeed in producing new intentions if it is not based in something of the same basic psychological type: Many externalists find this contrast between intentions and cognitive states overdrawn. They observe that we need to postulate basic dispositions of normative responsiveness to account for the capacity of theoretical reflection about reasons to affect our beliefs, and question why these same dispositions cannot explain the fact that practical reasoning is practical in its consequences. Cognitive or not, intentions belong to the broad class of attitudes that are sensitive to judgments, and this may account for the capacity of practical reflection to generate new intentions Scanlon , chap. A third possibility is that intentions result from dispositions or capacities distinct from the psychic mechanisms that render theoretical rationality possible. Some people like to dance, others detest this activity, and this difference in their "desires" appears to determine a corresponding difference in their reasons. Instrumental and Structural Rationality Among the substantive norms of practical reason, those of instrumental rationality have seemed least controversial to philosophers. Instrumental rationality, in its most basic form, instructs agents to take those means that are necessary in relation to their given ends. In the modern era, this form of rationality has widely been viewed as the single unproblematic requirement of practical reason. Rational criticism of this kind apparently presupposes that there are objective reasons and values, providing standards for assessment of ends that are independent from psychological facts about what people happen to be motivated to pursue. In line with the naturalistic attitude sketched in section 2, however, it may be doubted whether such independent standards can be reconciled with the metaphysical commitments of contemporary scientific practice. Those attracted to the Humean approach should bear in mind, however, that instrumental rationality is itself the expression of an objective normative commitment. The instrumental principle says that we are rationally required to take the means that are necessary to achieve our ends; if the principle represents a binding norm of practical reason, then we are open to rational criticism to the extent we fail to exhibit this kind of instrumental consistency, regardless of whether we want to comply with the principle or not. If naturalism really entails that there can be no objective norms or values, it may be wondered how an exception can possibly be made for the instrumental requirement. Further questions can be raised

about the plausibility of the suggestion that the instrumental norm exhausts the requirements of practical reason. But how can the fact that a given means exhibits this kind of necessity give a person reason to choose the means, if the end is not itself something it would be valuable to achieve in some way? The instrumental principle seems to function as a binding norm of practical reason only if it is taken for granted that there are additional, independent standards for the assessment of our ends Korsgaard ; Quinn Many proponents of the instrumental principle would agree that it does not generate reasons for action. Thus, suppose one intends end E, and believes truly that E can be achieved only if one intends to do M. The instrumental principle, considered in itself, is indifferent as between these two possibilities; it should be understood as a wide-scope requirement, governing combinations of attitudes, rather than a source of detachable normative conclusions about what one has reason to do. Modus ponens represents a similar rational requirement in the domain of theoretical reason, governing combinations of beliefs.

Practical reasoning and intentional action Tadros, Victor In the criminal law it is common to distinguish between motive and intention. One of the main reasons for so doing is that in criminal law we are concerned with the wrongfulness of an action in itself and not the agent's own moral evaluation of that action.

The relation between intentions to act and belief and desire. The relation between intentions to act and intentional action. The relation between belief and intentional action. It is worth noting that any true principle like the following that we can find will play a role in testing a theory of intentional action. After all, we want a theory of the nature of intentional action not only to single out the right class of actions, but also to explain necessary truths involving intentional action. Inasmuch as any theory of intentional action will have to say something about the relations between intentional action, intention, and belief, the following proposed necessary truths will, if true, need some explanation. Argument from the priority of belief and desire. Many philosophers of mind find it attractive to think of the mind as a kind of information processing machine, which receives information as input from the world, and causes actions as output. On this picture, it is very natural to think of belief and desire as the two most fundamental kinds of mental states: On this view, it is natural to try to explain other states as certain kinds of combinations of, or constructions out of, belief and desire. So on this view, it will be natural to think of intentions to act as reducible to constellations of beliefs and desires. Arguments against the reducibility thesis typically turn on differences between intention and belief and intention and desire. But it is not obvious how such objections generalize to views which take intentions to be certain, perhaps complex, combinations of beliefs and desires. Arguments against the reducibility thesis: Davidson on reasons for intending. But they also seem different from reasons for desiring; in many cases we might say that we have no reason for desiring something, but that we just do; this reply is less apt in the case of intention. No version seems to work. Reply to functionalist objection. It is wrong to link functionalist views of the mind with the idea that belief and desire are the most fundamental mental states. Intention-Belief Principle , then A believes that she will. This is a very strong instance of the general idea that there is some kind of belief constraint on intentions to act. He advocates both of the following: Strong Consistency Principle If A intends to , then, if A is not criticizably irrational, this intention must be able to be put together with the rest of my intentions into a plan which is consistent with my beliefs. Weak Consistency Principle If A intends to , then, if A is not criticizably irrational, this intention must be consistent with the rest of my intentions. Arguments for their being some belief constraint on intention 1. Argument from rational criticizability. Desires do not have this property; as Bratman notes, there is nothing criticizable in my wanting two incompatible things. It is natural to try to explain this difference in terms of the claim that intention, but not desire, involves belief, and that it having intentions which are not jointly satisfiable is criticizable for just the same reasons that having inconsistent beliefs is criticizable. Argument from oddness of cases of avowing intention but not belief. Argument from the role of intentions in means-end reasoning. Once we form the intention to , we often make further plans for action using the fact that we will as a premise in deciding what to do. Arguments against belief constraints on intentions to act 1. The Intention-Belief principle is too strong. Bratman himself offers an argument against the strongest belief constraint. He considers a case in which an agent has the intention to stop by the store on the way home, but does not believe that he will or will not , knowing his own absent-mindedness. In both cases it seems plausible to say that the agent has the intention that would be ruled out by Intention-Belief the intention to stop at the store, and the intention to provide for his children. Contradictory beliefs and rational criticizability. One problem with this is that it seems possible in at least some cases to have contradictory beliefs without being rationally criticizable. In other cases, like the paradox of the preface, one does realize that the belief are contradictory, but is arguably still not rationally criticizable. But this means that the inference from 1 the claim that A is not rationally criticizable to 2 A does not have contradictory beliefs is a very questionable one. This is enough to call into question both the Strong and Weak Consistency Principles. Anna and Noah raised in seminar the possibility of futile actions: In i , it seems plausible to me to say that to the extent that you believe that your attending the demonstration will have

no effect on public opinion, you do not really intend to affect public opinion. In ii , I wonder whether there is a kind of pretense involved. In one frame of mind, you may believe that your partner will get out of the way, and not really intend to hit him. It is clearly not true that hope involves belief, in the sense that hoping for p entails that one also believe p. This fact cannnot be explained in terms of the fact that hope implies belief; so why should we think that parallel facts about intention should be explained in terms of intention implying belief? Two replies to this point: It may be irrational to hope for two things which are inconsistent, but it is not irrational to hope for something which you believe will not happen. This is a contrast with intention where, as Bratman argues, the Strong Consistency Constraint does have some plausibility.

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Overview[edit] Practical reason is understood by most philosophers as determining a plan of action. Thomistic ethics defines the first principle of practical reason as "good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided. Utilitarians tend to see reason as an instrument for the satisfactions of wants and needs. In classical philosophical terms, it is very important to distinguish three domains of human activity: Aristotle viewed philosophical activity as the highest activity of the human being and gave pride of place to metaphysics or wisdom. Since Descartes, practical judgment and reasoning have been treated with less respect because of the demand for greater certainty and an infallible method to justify beliefs. In cognitive research, practical reason is the process of ignoring unproductive possibilities in favor of productive possibilities. The agent can be a person or a technical device, such as a robot or a software device for multi-agent communications. It is a type of reasoning used all the time in everyday life and all kinds of technology where autonomous reasoning is required. Argumentation theorists have identified two kinds of practical reasoning: The pronoun I represents an autonomous agent. I have a goal G. Carrying out this action A is a means to realize G. Therefore, I ought practically speaking to carry out this action A. What other goals do I have that should be considered that might conflict with G? What alternative actions to my bringing about A that would also bring about G should be considered? Among bringing about A and these alternative actions, which is arguably the most efficient? What grounds are there for arguing that it is practically possible for me to bring about A? What consequences of my bringing about A should also be taken into account? It can be seen from CQ5 that argumentation from consequences is closely related to the scheme for practical reasoning. It has often been disputed in philosophy whether practical reasoning is purely instrumental or whether it needs to be based on values. Argument from values is combined with practical reasoning in the type of argumentation called value-based practical reasoning. Argumentation scheme for value-based practical reasoning[edit] In the current circumstances R we should perform action A to achieve New Circumstances S which will realize some goal G which will promote some value V. Practical reasoning is centrally important in artificial intelligence, and also vitally important in many other fields such as law, medicine and engineering. It has been known as a distinctive type of argumentation as far back as Aristotle.

PRACTICAL REASONING AND INTENTIONAL ACTION pdf

4: Intention, Plans and Practical Reason, Bratman

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Patricia Benner;1 Ronda G. Clinical reasoning and judgment are examined in relation to other modes of thinking used by clinical nurses in providing quality health care to patients that avoids adverse events and patient harm. The expert performance of nurses is dependent upon continual learning and evaluation of performance. Critical Thinking Nursing education has emphasized critical thinking as an essential nursing skill for more than 50 years. There are several key definitions for critical thinking to consider. The American Philosophical Association APA defined critical thinking as purposeful, self-regulatory judgment that uses cognitive tools such as interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, and explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations on which judgment is based. It presupposes assent to rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem solving abilities and a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism. Every clinician must develop rigorous habits of critical thinking, but they cannot escape completely the situatedness and structures of the clinical traditions and practices in which they must make decisions and act quickly in specific clinical situations. Scheffer and Rubenfeld 5 expanded on the APA definition for nurses through a consensus process, resulting in the following definition: Critical thinking in nursing is an essential component of professional accountability and quality nursing care. Critical thinkers in nursing exhibit these habits of the mind: This is demonstrated in nursing by clinical judgment, which includes ethical, diagnostic, and therapeutic dimensions and research 7 p. Critical thinking underlies independent and interdependent decision making. Critical thinking includes questioning, analysis, synthesis, interpretation, inference, inductive and deductive reasoning, intuition, application, and creativity 8 p. Course work or ethical experiences should provide the graduate with the knowledge and skills to: Use nursing and other appropriate theories and models, and an appropriate ethical framework; Apply research-based knowledge from nursing and the sciences as the basis for practice; Use clinical judgment and decision-making skills; Engage in self-reflective and collegial dialogue about professional practice; Evaluate nursing care outcomes through the acquisition of data and the questioning of inconsistencies, allowing for the revision of actions and goals; Engage in creative problem solving 8 p. Taken together, these definitions of critical thinking set forth the scope and key elements of thought processes involved in providing clinical care. Exactly how critical thinking is defined will influence how it is taught and to what standard of care nurses will be held accountable. Professional and regulatory bodies in nursing education have required that critical thinking be central to all nursing curricula, but they have not adequately distinguished critical reflection from ethical, clinical, or even creative thinking for decisionmaking or actions required by the clinician. Other essential modes of thought such as clinical reasoning, evaluation of evidence, creative thinking, or the application of well-established standards of practice—all distinct from critical reflection—have been subsumed under the rubric of critical thinking. In the nursing education literature, clinical reasoning and judgment are often conflated with critical thinking. The accrediting bodies and nursing scholars have included decisionmaking and action-oriented, practical, ethical, and clinical reasoning in the rubric of critical reflection and thinking. One might say that this harmless semantic confusion is corrected by actual practices, except that students need to understand the distinctions between critical reflection and clinical reasoning, and they need to learn to discern when each is better suited, just as students need to also engage in applying standards, evidence-based practices, and creative thinking. The growing body of research, patient acuity, and complexity of care demand higher-order thinking skills. Critical thinking involves the application of knowledge and experience to identify patient problems and to direct clinical judgments and actions that result in positive patient outcomes. These skills can be cultivated by educators who display the virtues of critical thinking, including independence of thought, intellectual curiosity, courage, humility, empathy, integrity, perseverance, and fair-mindedness. The emerging paradigm

for clinical thinking and cognition is that it is social and dialogical rather than monological and individual. Early warnings of problematic situations are made possible by clinicians comparing their observations to that of other providers. Clinicians form practice communities that create styles of practice, including ways of doing things, communication styles and mechanisms, and shared expectations about performance and expertise of team members. By holding up critical thinking as a large umbrella for different modes of thinking, students can easily misconstrue the logic and purposes of different modes of thinking. Clinicians and scientists alike need multiple thinking strategies, such as critical thinking, clinical judgment, diagnostic reasoning, deliberative rationality, scientific reasoning, dialogue, argument, creative thinking, and so on. Critical Reflection, Critical Reasoning, and Judgment Critical reflection requires that the thinker examine the underlying assumptions and radically question or doubt the validity of arguments, assertions, and even facts of the case. Critical reflective skills are essential for clinicians; however, these skills are not sufficient for the clinician who must decide how to act in particular situations and avoid patient injury. Available research is based upon multiple, taken-for-granted starting points about the general nature of the circulatory system. As such, critical reflection may not provide what is needed for a clinician to act in a situation. This idea can be considered reasonable since critical reflective thinking is not sufficient for good clinical reasoning and judgment. The powers of noticing or perceptual grasp depend upon noticing what is salient and the capacity to respond to the situation. Critical reflection is a crucial professional skill, but it is not the only reasoning skill or logic clinicians require. The ability to think critically uses reflection, induction, deduction, analysis, challenging assumptions, and evaluation of data and information to guide decisionmaking. Critical thinking is inherent in making sound clinical reasoning. The clinician must act in the particular situation and time with the best clinical and scientific knowledge available. The clinician cannot afford to indulge in either ritualistic unexamined knowledge or diagnostic or therapeutic nihilism caused by radical doubt, as in critical reflection, because they must find an intelligent and effective way to think and act in particular clinical situations. Critical reflection skills are essential to assist practitioners to rethink outmoded or even wrong-headed approaches to health care, health promotion, and prevention of illness and complications, especially when new evidence is available. Breakdowns in practice, high failure rates in particular therapies, new diseases, new scientific discoveries, and societal changes call for critical reflection about past assumptions and no-longer-tenable beliefs. Clinical reasoning stands out as a situated, practice-based form of reasoning that requires a background of scientific and technological research-based knowledge about general cases, more so than any particular instance. It also requires practical ability to discern the relevance of the evidence behind general scientific and technical knowledge and how it applies to a particular patient. Situated in a practice setting, clinical reasoning occurs within social relationships or situations involving patient, family, community, and a team of health care providers. The expert clinician situates themselves within a nexus of relationships, with concerns that are bounded by the situation. Expert clinical reasoning is socially engaged with the relationships and concerns of those who are affected by the caregiving situation, and when certain circumstances are present, the adverse event. Expert clinicians also seek an optimal perceptual grasp, one based on understanding and as undistorted as possible, based on an attuned emotional engagement and expert clinical knowledge. However, the practice and practitioners will not be self-improving and vital if they cannot engage in critical reflection on what is not of value, what is outmoded, and what does not work. As evidence evolves and expands, so too must clinical thought. Clinical judgment requires clinical reasoning across time about the particular, and because of the relevance of this immediate historical unfolding, clinical reasoning can be very different from the scientific reasoning used to formulate, conduct, and assess clinical experiments. While scientific reasoning is also socially embedded in a nexus of social relationships and concerns, the goal of detached, critical objectivity used to conduct scientific experiments minimizes the interactive influence of the research on the experiment once it has begun. The scientist is always situated in past and immediate scientific history, preferring to evaluate static and predetermined points in time e. For example, was the refusal based upon catastrophic thinking, unrealistic fears, misunderstanding, or even clinical depression? Techne, as defined by Aristotle, encompasses the notion of formation of character and habitus 28 as embodied beings. While some aspects of medical and nursing practice fall into the category of techne, much of nursing and

medical practice falls outside means-ends rationality and must be governed by concern for doing good or what is best for the patient in particular circumstances, where being in a relationship and discerning particular human concerns at stake guide action. Such a particular clinical situation is necessarily particular, even though many commonalities and similarities with other disease syndromes can be recognized through signs and symptoms and laboratory tests. Phronesis is also dependent on ongoing experiential learning of the practitioner, where knowledge is refined, corrected, or refuted. The Western tradition, with the notable exception of Aristotle, valued knowledge that could be made universal and devalued practical know-how and experiential learning. Descartes codified this preference for formal logic and rational calculation. Aristotle recognized that when knowledge is underdetermined, changeable, and particular, it cannot be turned into the universal or standardized. It must be perceived, discerned, and judged, all of which require experiential learning. In nursing and medicine, perceptual acuity in physical assessment and clinical judgment i. Dewey 32 sought to rescue knowledge gained by practical activity in the world. He identified three flaws in the understanding of experience in Greek philosophy: In practice, nursing and medicine require both techne and phronesis. Aggregated evidence from clinical trials and ongoing working knowledge of pathophysiology, biochemistry, and genomics are essential. Thinking Critically Being able to think critically enables nurses to meet the needs of patients within their context and considering their preferences; meet the needs of patients within the context of uncertainty; consider alternatives, resulting in higher-quality care; 33 and think reflectively, rather than simply accepting statements and performing tasks without significant understanding and evaluation. Clinical decisionmaking is particularly influenced by interpersonal relationships with colleagues, 39 patient conditions, availability of resources, 40 knowledge, and experience. This requires accurate interpretation of patient data that is relevant to the specific patient and situation. As Dunne notes, A practice is not just a surface on which one can display instant virtuosity. It grounds one in a tradition that has been formed through an elaborate development and that exists at any juncture only in the dispositions slowly and perhaps painfully acquired of its recognized practitioners. Clearly Dunne is engaging in critical reflection about the conditions for developing character, skills, and habits for skillful and ethical comportment of practitioners, as well as to act as moral agents for patients so that they and their families receive safe, effective, and compassionate care. Professional socialization or professional values, while necessary, do not adequately address character and skill formation that transform the way the practitioner exists in his or her world, what the practitioner is capable of noticing and responding to, based upon well-established patterns of emotional responses, skills, dispositions to act, and the skills to respond, decide, and act. MacIntyre points out the links between the ongoing development and improvement of practice traditions and the institutions that house them: Lack of justice, lack of truthfulness, lack of courage, lack of the relevant intellectual virtuesâ€"these corrupt traditions, just as they do those institutions and practices which derive their life from the traditions of which they are the contemporary embodiments. To recognize this is of course also to recognize the existence of an additional virtue, one whose importance is perhaps most obvious when it is least present, the virtue of having an adequate sense of the traditions to which one belongs or which confront one. This virtue is not to be confused with any form of conservative antiquarianism; I am not praising those who choose the conventional conservative role of laudator temporis acti. It is rather the case that an adequate sense of tradition manifests itself in a grasp of those future possibilities which the past has made available to the present. Living traditions, just because they continue a not-yet-completed narrative, confront a future whose determinate and determinable character, so far as it possesses any, derives from the past 30 p. It would be impossible to capture all the situated and distributed knowledge outside of actual practice situations and particular patients. However, students can be limited in their inability to convey underdetermined situations where much of the information is based on perceptions of many aspects of the patient and changes that have occurred over time. Simulations cannot have the sub-cultures formed in practice settings that set the social mood of trust, distrust, competency, limited resources, or other forms of situated possibilities. Experience One of the hallmark studies in nursing providing keen insight into understanding the influence of experience was a qualitative study of adult, pediatric, and neonatal intensive care unit ICU nurses, where the nurses were clustered into advanced beginner, intermediate, and expert level of practice categories. The advanced beginner

having up to 6 months of work experience used procedures and protocols to determine which clinical actions were needed. When confronted with a complex patient situation, the advanced beginner felt their practice was unsafe because of a knowledge deficit or because of a knowledge application confusion. The transition from advanced beginners to competent practitioners began when they first had experience with actual clinical situations and could benefit from the knowledge gained from the mistakes of their colleagues. Competent nurses continuously questioned what they saw and heard, feeling an obligation to know more about clinical situations. Beyond that, the proficient nurse acknowledged the changing relevance of clinical situations requiring action beyond what was planned or anticipated. Both competent and proficient nurses that is, intermediate level of practice had at least two years of ICU experience. As Gadamer 29 points out, experience involves a turning around of preconceived notions, preunderstandings, and extends or adds nuances to understanding. Experiential learning requires time and nurturing, but time alone does not ensure experiential learning. Aristotle linked experiential learning to the development of character and moral sensitivities of a person learning a practice. Gadamer, in a late life interview, highlighted the open-endedness and ongoing nature of experiential learning in the following interview response: Being experienced does not mean that one now knows something once and for all and becomes rigid in this knowledge; rather, one becomes more open to new experiences. A person who is experienced is undogmatic.

*Practical Reasoning, Rationality and the Explanation of Intentional Action * Practical Reasoning, Rationality and the Explanation of Intentional Action * FAY, BRIAN Roughly speaking, intentional actions are explained by giving the agentÃ¢ s reasons for doing what he did.*

Call psychologism the claim that the right way to do logic and theory of rationality more generally is first to figure out how the mind works. She takes herself to be following G. Anscombe Anscombe , Vogler , who was in turn following Aquinas. Vogler notices that instrumentalism â€" the view that all reasons for action are means-end reasons â€" is the default view in contemporary philosophy. There must, she infers, be a compelling insight at the bottom of it; but instrumentalism has been much-refuted over the past few decades. What the many refutations of instrumentalism really show, Vogler believes, is that formulating the underlying insight psychologistically as a thesis about mental operations and the mental states involved in them results in weak and unsustainable renditions of it. She concludes that in order to articulate what instrumentalism is getting right, you have to strip away the psychologism. The point being emphasized just now is that the motivation for this instance of the turn to action theory is anti-psychologism about practical rationality. In the practical analog of this move, when you look outward, away from the beliefs and desires that preoccupy psychologistic theorists, what you find are actions, the external products of any successful deployment of practical reasons. So the logic of practical reasons is to be read off the structure of actions in something like the way that, say, truth-functional logic is to be read off the truth-functional relations between propositions. This form of anti-psychologism preempts a worry one might have had about what was described at the outset as the organizing argument of the action-oriented approach. The proposal, recall, was to read the inference patterns off the structure of actions; if one were to construe this as reconstructing the process of practical reasoning from its product, how far would the reconstruction be likely to get? A step can be shown to be rational by showing it to be a step on the way to the termination point of the action that you are in the course of performing. Vogler allows that there may be atomic actions, actions that do not have further actions as their parts; perhaps blinking is such an action. But just about any action we care about will be a complex action i. Vogler distinguishes two subclasses: It is not that she is insisting that there are no other sorts of practical consideration. In fact, she provides what she takes to be an exhaustive list of the logical forms the remaining sorts of considerations can have. See Millgram for a brief overview. Rather, the claim is that when you have a reason of one of these further sorts, you must also have a calculative reason. The connection only runs one way, however. Since considerations of other sorts organize, modulate and generally control actions, they presuppose calculative reasons. But calculative structures and the reasons they give you do not presuppose these other sorts of consideration: This asymmetry is what Vogler takes to be the deep insight underlying instrumentalism. Calculative reasons are thus nonoptional, or binding. Williams , which gives a still-psychologistic example: So Vogler is claiming her view to be internalist in this newer sense: Different people have different ends at different times; and since other sorts of reasons, she has argued, are optional, they vary from person to person as well. So it is an account of action that is being read off the inference patterns rather than the other way around , in something like the way that Fregeans of this stripe take us to read the logical form of propositions off our command of truth-functional and quantificational inference. The direction of argument notwithstanding, Thompson belongs to the group of theorists we are considering, in that the objective of the argument is to exploit an account of action in order to establish a thesis about calculative practical reasons, namely, that those reasons are not psychological states such as desires or intentions. The argumentative strategy is adapted from Sellars , pp. The explanation is supposed to demonstrate that these locutions do not really name anything on the order of desires or intentions, but are rather a roundabout way of conveying information about the progress of an ongoing course of action. We will first describe the way Thompson sets up the core practice, and then briefly reconstruct his argument for non-psychologistic renderings of apparently psychologically oriented reason locutions. He then draws our attention to the way that grammatical aspect figures into their answers. Notice that these grammatical forms are not merely

ornamental; they carry different implications. We can imagine a society call it the action-theoretic state of nature getting by with only naive rationalization. But such parts of actions often come in sequence, one after another. So such an agent can, at a particular time, be executing a containing action, i. We can suppose that such agents will adopt devices to obviate the confusion. Briefly, the function of these locutions is to preempt confusion by placing the actions that make up a naive rationalization in their temporal sequence. But once we see that that is their function, the temptation to construe them as invoking psychological states intentions, desires and so on is evidently misguided. Unlike Vogler, however, he is not arguing for restricting the mandatory part of practical rationality to calculative reasons; other parts of Life and Action discuss very different but evidently nonoptional forms of practical inference. Vogler, we saw, was concessive about the possibility of atomic actions; Thompson gives a surprising argument to the effect that all actions have further actions as their proper parts. See Millgram , sec. So although the two views are closely related, they also differ on many points. The Authorship View of Action A second approach takes the essential feature of action to be, not its stepwise structure, but that it is authored; there is no such thing as an action without an owner, in something like the way that there is no such thing as a belief without an owner. The two most developed positions of this kind are due to Christine M. Whole-person attributions require a constitution, a form of psychic organization and regulation that is the smaller-scale analog of the political constitution of a state. Constitutions are made up of the procedures by which actions are to be produced; actions are owned, and so are full-fledged actions, only when they are so produced Korsgaard , ch. The principles of practical rationality are the procedures, at a suitably abstract level of description, of a satisfactory constitution. And that psychology in turn determines what the correct forms of practical inference must be. More importantly, however, the account is meant to explain why your reasons are binding: Here is a first-pass thumbnail sketch of that explanation: We have to act, because anything we do will be an action. Likewise, there are constitutive standards for actions, in just that way; a would-be action that did not conform to them would also be defective. So if she can show that deploying reasons satisfying one or another requirement is a constitutive standard for action â€" and the requirements she is going to argue for are Kantian â€" that will amount to showing why you should act on reasons that satisfy those Kantian requirements. Before we proceed to that argument, notice that we are starting to see how the philosophical motivations of the work we are surveying differ from program to program; the contrast between psychologistic and anti-psychologistic agendas is not the only, or even the most important, dimension of variation. Korsgaard contrasts acts such as setting the table with actions such as setting the table to be ready before the guests arrive. Her view is that acts and the ends for which they are performed make up an action when they are bound together by a principle, which must be formally universal e. For attribution to be contentful, there must be a real distinction between your actions, on the one hand, and events that resemble actions but are produced by your psychic parts, on the other; we can make out such a distinction only if you identify with a principle of choice, where that is universal in form. Consequently, reasons for action must be universal in form, and this entails, or so Korsgaard argues, the substantive correctness of Kantian moral theory, at any rate that part of it which imposes a universalizability requirement on practical reasons: Allow for the moment that actions, understood as Korsgaard proposes, involve constitutive standards. Still, why must we produce actions? Why should the slacker be held to the standards for agency as opposed to those of slackerhood? For the back and forth, see Enoch , Ferrero , Tubert , Katsafanas , ch. First, she inherits from Wittgenstein the thought that normativity involves the possibility of correction, and she infers that if there is to be any normativity, it must be possible to be in violation of a standard. Imagine a theorist of chairs arguing that the constitutive standards for being a chair must be met by the chair as a whole, and thus the essential feature of chairs, and the key to understanding them, is that they hold themselves together. But people, Korsgaard claims, are not just like chairs. Imagine that Invasion of the Body Snatchers had it almost right: Instead of being as large as a person, each pod is roughly the size of a peapod, and so it takes a great many pod creatures working together to impersonate a single Earthling. The illustration adapts the argument of Korsgaard , ch. If a colony of pod creatures is going to succeed in fooling the remaining Earthlings, it will have to behave as a single person, and to do that, the activities of the different pod creatures must be closely coordinated; after all, if the pod creatures making up the feet go off in one

direction, and the pod creatures making up the torso go off in a different direction, no one will be fooled. When the pod creatures act together, and pull off the deception, they make themselves into a collective agent. And that means producing actions, not mere acts; you act because there are things you have to get done, and so when you act, you normally have an end in view; to act with an end in view is to perform an action. Acting is constituting yourself as an agent out of your desires and other psychological elements, in much the way that the pod creatures constitute themselves as a group agent. The necessity of agency is not metaphysical but practical. This amounts to a reply to the objection that the argument for the ineluctability of action involved a sleight of hand: Now we can further see â€" although this is a shortcut rather than the argument â€" why constituting oneself as an agent involves endorsing a principle. First of all, Kantian maxims â€" the structured intentions on which the universalizability requirement is imposed â€" have means-end or calculative structure: But because Vogler regards noncalculative reasons as optional, Korsgaard and Vogler differ over whether the universalizability of maxims is mandatory. However, a handful of canonical dicta are usually thought of as constituting its core: An important contrast between these views has to do with how the attributability of action is understood. If the noncalculative reasons are what it takes to have action that is authored, then the ownership of actions must be demonstrably nonoptional. We generally take arguments built around practical necessity to be responsible to and modulated by the urgency and force of the necessity. A state that aspires to having all activity within its jurisdiction be its own actions is totalitarian. Democratic states as we are familiar with them sometimes do mobilize themselves in a way that approximates this extreme: For instance, during WWII, the American government imposed rationing, managed a great deal of industrial production directly, and so on. But when there is no such occasion, liberals regard totalitarianism as an unreasonable and immoral mode of political organization, and prefer a state in which most activity within the state is not attributable to it. Markets are a familiar instance of an alternative form of coordination: Recall that the argument for action attribution turned on the need to avoid mutually frustrating activities, as when the pod creatures pull in different directions. A market economy, however, pits competitors against each other; in this approach, coordination of activities does not consist in forestalling competition, but in creating a regulatory framework for it. So the final worry is that we do not yet understand the ongoing practical demands warranting forms of coordination that underwrite the full attributability of action, making the latter a demand always to be met. That argument is too opaque to permit an uncontroversial reconstruction, and instead I will conclude the exposition of her position by describing the challenge the argument is meant to meet. However, in our ordinary ways of thinking, practical necessities are substantive and contingent pressures in our earlier example, the demands of wartime, as experienced by a state. When ersatz Uncle Milton is out of sight, it looks like the pod creatures get to relax; but you are never allowed to take breaks from being an agent. That commmitment is supposed to be what makes action, rather than a more loosely organized alternative to it, always our plight. We turn now to the second of the positions that takes authorship to be the essential feature of action. There is by now an extensive literature on agency built up of rounds of this back-and-forth, and here is a very quick taste of it. But the rejoinder was of course to ask what makes a set of values full-fledgedly your own Benson , and the problem seemed to take on the shape of a hard-to-halt regress.

6: Practical reason - Wikipedia

The first part of the book is a detailed critical overview of the influential theories of practical reasoning found in Aristotle, Hume and Kant, whilst the second part examines practical reasoning in the light of important topics in moral psychology - weakness of will, self-deception, rationalization and others.

7: Intentional Action - Oxford Scholarship

Bratman on belief, intention, and intentional action 'Practical Reasoning') that one of the key roles played by intentions is as premises in practical.

PRACTICAL REASONING AND INTENTIONAL ACTION pdf

8: Practical Reason (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

If all goes well, the intentional action is a fully rational action - it fully satisfies the standards of rationality - and the consideration that the agent endorses as a reason is a normative practical reason proper.

9: Belief, Intention, Intentional Action, and the Simple View

In providing an intentional explanation of action, we cite the reasons for actions. Since Davidson's seminal "Action, Reasons, and Causes" (Davidson) the relation between these reasons for action and the explanation of intentional action has been at the forefront of philosophy of action.

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