

The Guise of the Good and the Problem of Over-Intellectualism

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1 Introduction

The guise of the good is often understood as the idea that intentions and actions *aim* at some good (or the good).¹ One way to understand this metaphor is to say that when one performs an action, or intends to perform an action, one is in a practical state the object of which is good. However, there are different ways to understand the object of a practical attitude. We can distinguish, on the one hand, between the *formal* and *material* objects of attitudes, and on the other hand, between *conceptual* and *non-conceptual* objects of attitudes. Accordingly, the guise of the good thesis can be understood in three different ways. On one understanding, the good is the *formal object* of the attitude, in the sense that the function of the attitude is to bring about the good. On this understanding, the concept ‘good’ does not need to be in the content of the attitude. Another way to understand the doctrine is to think that goodness is the *material object* of the attitude, in the sense that some representation of goodness is part of the content of a practical state. However, the content of the practical state includes either a *non-conceptual* representation of goodness (i.e., the

¹ I am interested in this paper in intentional actions, and more generally, voluntary actions, including animal actions. In speaking of actions, I mean voluntary actions. Unintentional and involuntary actions are outside of the scope of this paper.

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good is the *non-conceptual-material* object of the attitude), or a conceptual representation of goodness.

Understanding the thesis as saying that goodness is the material conceptual object of a practical attitude, Joseph Raz, among others, argues for the guise of the good thesis.² This understanding of the thesis, however, as I am going to argue in section III, requires an over-intellectualized account of action.³ In section IV, I will argue that Raz's response to the charge of over-intellectualism is not satisfying. In the last section of the paper, I will explain that Raz's over-intellectualized account of action has its root in his intellectualized and restrictive account of normative explanation. Adopting a broader understanding of normative explanation, I will briefly explain how one can accept the doctrine of the guise of the good while avoiding over-intellectualism. This involves understanding the doctrine as saying that goodness is the formal object of practical states.

Before getting to Raz's argument for his version of the guise of the good, let me explain what the broader upshot of this discussion is. Suppose that you are realist about value and reasons, believing that there are facts about reason and value independent of your beliefs and desires. However, the classic challenge to such a view is to explain why a rational person ought to care about those normative facts, in other words, why our rational capacities must be necessarily connected to those normative facts.⁴ Raz's way of meeting the challenge involves appealing to the doctrine of the guise of the good.⁵ On his view, normative facts figure in rational explanation of action through being recognized as such. The awareness of those facts guides the action. But, this, as I will argue, just means that actions (and beliefs) can have normative status only when individuals have the capacity to be aware of normativity. This picture, I will argue, is over-intellectualized and neglects the fact that there are normative mental and practical capacities in animals and small children. However, the alternative picture that I propose at the end of the paper, *i.e.* the view that goodness is the formal object of practical states, while being a realist view, is not over-intellectualized and can explain why responding to normative facts is internal to psychological capacities, without requiring such capacities to recognize those facts as such.

² This view is defended by many philosophers, including Anscombe, Raz, Davidson and Williams. See Elizabeth Anscombe, *Intention* (Harvard University Press, 1957); Donald Davidson, "How Is Weakness of the Will Possible?," in *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); Bernard Williams, B. "Internal and External Reasons," in *Moral Luck* (Cambridge University Press, 1981) pp. 101–113. Joseph Raz, "On the Guise of the Good," in Tenebaum, ed., *Desire, Practical Reason, and the Good* (Oxford University Press US, 2010).

³ Although I mainly discuss Raz's view, the objections made to his view will equally apply to any understanding of the guise of good which requires goodness to be the material conceptual object of a practical attitude.

⁴ See Christine Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁵ See Ulrike Heuer, "Guided by Reasons: Raz on the Normative-Explanatory Nexus," *Jurisprudence* 2 (2011) pp. 353–365.

2 Raz's View

Raz defends the view that whenever one performs an intentional action one believes that there is some good in it. Here is Raz's argument:

- (i) "Intentional actions are actions performed for reasons, as those are seen by the agent"⁶
- (ii) "Reasons for action are such reasons by being facts that establish that the action has some value"

Therefore,

- (iii) "Intentional actions are actions taken in, and because of, a belief that there is some good in them"⁷

Raz admits that no evaluative belief accompanies arational actions, that is, actions that spontaneously express emotions.⁸ However, he thinks that those actions are cases of reduced intentionality and should not be expected to display all the features of intentional actions. As for actions that are based only on urges and desires, he thinks that the individual should accept that there is some value in satisfying those urges and desires, or at least, in getting rid of them. When the individual does not admit this, insisting that there is no value in the action that she is drawn to, Raz thinks that she is either mistaken about her beliefs, or conceptually ignorant or confused about reasons; in such cases we must attribute the evaluative belief to her anyway to be able to explain her action. In general, Raz thinks we need to attribute an evaluative belief to such agents because "their conduct implies having that belief, it shows it to be one of their beliefs...it is not [occurently] in their mind, but it is part of the explanation of what they do."⁹

At first glance, it might not be clear why the conclusion of Raz's argument is supposed to follow from the premises. In order to understand better, let me state Raz's argument in the following terms:

- (i') (S)(ϕ) if S ϕ 's intentionally then S believes [$(\exists r)$ r is a reason to ϕ]
- (ii') It is a conceptual truth that (r)(ϕ) (r is a reason to ϕ iff r is a fact that ϕ has some value)

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- (iii') (S)(ϕ) if S ϕ 's intentionally then S believes [$(\exists r)$ r is a fact that ϕ has some value]

This reconstruction of Raz's argument, as I shall explain, helps us see better why his account of action is over-intellectualized.

⁶ Raz later modifies his first premise. For simplicity, I keep the first premise in the original form. All my points apply equally to the modified premise.

⁷ Joseph Raz, "On the Guise of the Good," in Tenebaum, ed., *Desire, Practical Reason, and the Good* (Oxford University Press US, 2010), p. 111.

⁸ See Rosalind Hursthouse, "Arational Actions," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 88, No. 2 (1991).

⁹ Ibid. p. 114.

3 The Problem of Over-Intellectualism

The first premise, as I will argue shortly, commits Raz to over-intellectualism. Moreover, the whole argument presupposes an over-intellectualized account of action. Let me take up the second point first.

One might wonder why Raz thinks that the conclusion of the formalized argument follows from the premises. After all, while premise (i') and (iii') are about the content of S's belief, premise (ii') is not about the content of S's belief. 'r is a reason to ϕ ', and 'r is a fact that ϕ has some value' occur in intensional contexts in premise (i') and (iii') respectively; but premise (ii') seems to be an extensional fact. One might wonder how an extensional fact can affect the intensional content of the belief.

The reason that Raz thinks that (iii') follows from (i') and (ii') is this. If one believes that unmarried men are F, then, since it is a conceptual truth that bachelors are unmarried men, we should attribute to one the belief that bachelors are F, even if one does not know or acknowledge that bachelors are unmarried men. Raz *might* be right about the bachelor case, because it seems analytic that bachelors are unmarried men, and 'bachelor' and 'unmarried man' are synonymous. However, I am not sure if in general it is true that when a person believes P and it is a conceptual truth that P iff Q, then we can attribute to that person the belief that Q. One reason for denying this is that conceptual truths are sometimes informative (that is why we have the paradox of analysis). When the analysis that P iff Q is informative, it seems psychologically possible for one to believe P and disbelieve Q. To give just one example, it seems to be a conceptual truth that arthritis can never occur in the thigh. However, as Burge famously argued, one can have a belief involving the concept of arthritis without knowing that arthritis can never occur in the thigh. That reasons for action are facts about values seem to be an informative truth (not all philosophers even accept it). To say that premise (ii') expresses a conceptual truth is not enough, therefore, to get us (iii') from (i') and (ii'). Raz needs to show that premise (ii') is a special case of conceptual analysis that allows one to infer (iii') from (i') and (ii'). Raz shows an awareness of the need for such an argument:

"evidence that the agent does not believe that there is value in the action in spite of there being a reason for it establishes some conceptual confusion on the part of the agent; and given that action with an independent intention involves belief in there being a reason for the action, any serious conceptual confusion about the nature of reasons means that the action is intentional in some deviant way only".¹⁰

However, I think that this shows Raz has an over-intellectualized account of action. Consider an ordinary person or a small child who has only an incomplete understanding of concepts reason, and value. This makes her prone to make conceptual mistakes. For example, she may not acknowledge that she has a reason for an action if and only if that action has some value. On Raz's view, she is conceptually confused, and because of this confusion, her actions are intentional

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 129.

only in some deviant way. But why should we think that a person must not make conceptual mistakes about those concepts to be able to act intentionally? Small children and many people, after all, have only an incomplete understanding of such notions, in the sense that they make conceptual mistakes about them. Yet, they surely can perform intentional actions in a non-deviant way.

Regarding premise (i'), we can see, again, that for Raz, the agent, to be able to perform actions, needs to have the concept of a reason; and so, on the face of it, it is hard to see, on his account of intentional action, how small children can act. Moreover, as Raz acknowledges, his account of action makes human actions "radically" different from animals'.¹¹ However, if we accept, as we should, that animals, especially higher animals, act voluntarily, then we should accept that there are many similarities between their actions and ours. Human perception, for example, might be more complex than animal perception. However, this does not undermine the fact that there is much in common between the perceptual system of humans and animals. In the same way, the practical faculty of human beings should not be fundamentally different from that of animals. They must share at least a basic structure, whereas, on Raz's account, it is essential to human actions that they be accompanied by evaluative beliefs. I think Raz downplays the fact that small children act without having the concept of a reason, and many mundane and everyday human actions are performed without accompanying evaluative beliefs.

4 Responding to Reasons as Reasons

Lavin defends Raz against the charge of over-intellectualism.¹² He thinks that the charge is misplaced. Lavin makes a distinction between more and less demanding standards of concept possession, and states that to be able to respond to reasons as reasons one does not need to have a theory of what reasons are, or to deploy knowledge of general principles constituting the concept of a reason. According to Lavin, "the tendency to over-intellectualise comes from accuser's conception of what it is to recognize and respond to reasons as reasons, not from him."¹³

Raz himself also considers the possible objection of over-intellectualism. He acknowledges that people do not always entertain a belief that they have a reason to act when they act, and small children do not have the concept of a reason. However,

¹¹ He says "I will not consider the conditions under which animals that do not possess concepts act intentionally, or have intentions, as I believe that those differ radically from the conditions under which animals possessing concepts act intentionally and have intentions." Ibid. p. 135.

¹² See Douglas Lavin, "Problems of Intellectualism: Raz on Reason and its Objects," *Jurisprudence* 2 (2011) pp. 367–378. Gert in his review of an earlier work of Raz, brought up the charge of intellectualism. However, he does not discuss it in any detail. See Josua Gert, "Engaging Reason by Joseph Raz: Review," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (2003), pp. 745–748. From a Humean perspective, Frankfurt also criticizes Raz that he "assigns to reason a greater significance in our lives than it actually possess" Harry Frankfurt, "Disengaging Reason," in *Reason and Value: Themes from the Moral Philosophy of Joseph Raz* (Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 119.

¹³ Douglas Lavin, "Problems of Intellectualism: Raz on Reason and its Objects," *Jurisprudence* 2 (2011) p. 372.

he thinks that, in order to explain their behavior, we should attribute such beliefs to them.

“The thesis does not assume that agents capable of intentional action must have the concepts used in stating the Thesis (the concept of the good, intention, reason for action), nor does it claim that they believe that these concepts apply to each of their intentional actions. It assumes that they have a belief about their action that can be truly characterized as a belief that the action has a good-making property, one that constitutes a reason for the action, and that reason or their belief in it, explains why they perform the action”.¹⁴

True, one does not always consciously entertain the beliefs that one holds. Also, one does not need to be able to think about reason in abstract terms to be able to act for reasons. But, as Lavin acknowledges, it is essential to Raz’s conception of action that the agent does not just respond to reasons, but responds to reasons as reasons. On Raz’s view, “[reasons] are reasons because rational creatures can *recognize* and respond to them”.¹⁵ “Ultimately one is motivated by the fact that is the reason, through the mediating belief, *recognizing it as such*”.¹⁶ And this requires some cognition or belief the content of which involves some concept of reason or value.

Raz’s response seems inconsistent. On the one hand, he says that the agent does not need to have the concept of reason or value. On the other hand, he believes that the agent has a belief about his action “that can be truly characterized as a belief that the action has a good-making property”. It is hard to see how we can attribute a belief about value to somebody who lacks value concepts. One way to understand Raz is this: Although the agent does not endorse (or is not aware) that he has the concept of reason or goodness, we should attribute such beliefs to him when “it is part of the explanation of what they do”. For example, consulting with your psychiatrist, you might come to believe that you believe P, even though you have never acknowledged this. Your basis for self-attributing the belief that P is that it can help explain some of your actions.

However, only first-personal beliefs can be used to explain intentional actions of an agent. The first-personal beliefs, as Moore notes, are transparent, in the sense that one treats the question “do I believe P?” in the same way as the question “is P true?”. As Moran put it, one can avow one’s first-personal beliefs, that is, explicitly endorse them.¹⁷ In the example above the belief you come to believe after consulting with your psychiatrist is not first-personal. For you can’t explicitly endorse it from the first-person perspective. That belief is beyond the rational control of the person.

¹⁴ Joseph Raz, “On the Guise of the Good,” in Tenebaum, ed., *Desire, Practical Reason, and the Good* (Oxford University Press US, 2010), p. 114.

¹⁵ Joseph Raz, “Reason, Reasons and Normativity,” in Russ Shafer-Landau, ed. (Oxford Studies in Metaethics, Vol. 5, 2010), p. 7.

¹⁶ Joseph Raz, “Reasons: Explanatory and Normative,” in *From Normativity to Responsibility* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 30.

¹⁷ Richard Moran, *Authority and Estrangement: An Essay on Self-Knowledge* (Princeton University Press, 2001).

The beliefs that are not first-personal cannot provide rational explanation for actions. There are in principle many different kinds of explanations for human actions (e.g. neurological, evolutionary, and so on). However, the celebrated Anscombian “why” question is not aimed at just any kind of explanation.¹⁸ The Anscombian “why” question has a special sense: it asks for agent’s reasons for her actions. Accordingly, the answer to the “why” question should be considerations that rationalize the action, i.e., considerations in light of which the person performs her action. Rational explanation can be given from both the first-person and third-person perspectives. From the first-person perspective, rational explanation of an action concerns the rational guidance of the agent by a consideration that she takes herself to have for the action. From the third-person perspective, her seeing a consideration as justifying the action rationally explains the action. Hence, although we usually appeal to someone’s beliefs in explaining her action from the third-person perspective, those beliefs should be avowable from the first-person perspective and under the rational control of the person. Otherwise, the content of those beliefs cannot provide guidance from the first-person perspective. The beliefs one does not acknowledge to hold are not fully first-personal and cannot be used to explain one’s intentional action, in the sense Anscombe was interested in.

We can demonstrate this further by observing that one has mitigated responsibility for the behavior explained by beliefs that are not fully first-personal. For example, one can justifiably explain my behavior toward such and such a race by mentioning that I have a racist belief toward that race. However, the responsibility that I bear when I truly deny that belief and attempt to explain my action by mentioning some other beliefs of mine is less than the responsibility of someone who endorses the belief and acts in light of that belief.

Moreover, to attribute a belief about a reason for action or value in action to a person who does not acknowledge such a belief is to charge her with irrationality (understanding transparency as a normative requirement). Sometimes, that might be the case. But, the first option to explain someone’s action is not to charge her with irrationality. There should be an argument to show that the only, or at least the best, way to understand an agent’s actions is to attribute such beliefs to her. In the absence of such an argument, it does not seem plausible to explain someone’s action by charging her with irrationality.

5 Normative Explanation

There is a more general problem with Raz’s account of action. As we saw, Raz thinks

(i') (S)(ϕ) if S ϕ 's intentionally then S believes $[(\exists r) r \text{ is a reason for } \phi' \text{ing}]$.

However, one might wonder why the concept of reason should come into the content of the agent’s cognition. In other words, why must the agent respond to

¹⁸ Elizabeth Anscombe, *Intention* (Harvard University Press, 1957).

reasons *as* reason? It seems to me that the following is a better way to characterize the distinctive feature of human intentional actions:

- (iv) $(S)(\phi)$ if S ϕ 's intentionally then $(\exists r)$ S believes r and r is S 's reason for ϕ 'ing.

As opposed to (i'), (iv) does not require one to have the concepts 'reason' or 'good' to be able to perform an intentional action. However, while (iv) is true of most human actions, it is still not general enough to cover actions that express emotions and perhaps intentional animal actions. (iv) is based on the fact that humans' stance toward their practical states involve some kind of *commitment*. Practical states can't be adopted arbitrarily; they require rationalization, which is a subspecies of normative explanation. This fact can be expressed in a more general way as follows:

- (v) $(S)(\phi)$ if S ϕ 's intentionally then there is a consideration r that rationalizes S 's ϕ 'ing (i.e. r purports to warrant S 's ϕ 'ing from S 's perspective).

However, Raz thinks that (iv) and (v) are too weak in the sense that they do not express the essential feature of intentional actions. That is, it is essential for the concept of intentional action that the agent responds to reasons as reason. He has two main reasons for this. First, the relation between belief and intention should not be just a "blind habit" (in Lavin's term). To perform an intentional action, Raz thinks, it is not enough just to respond to reasons, one must have an appreciation of the force of a reason. To illustrate the point, Raz uses the example of the animals eating when they are hungry, and their instinctive avoidance of fires.¹⁹ Neither of these behaviors, according to Raz, are intentional actions. Raz also has a second reason for his claim. He thinks that reasons, in general, are facts that provide explanations. Normative reasons are specified in that they provide explanation for actions and beliefs. But the distinctness of normative reasons is not just that they explain different things. After all, different facts provide different explanations for different things. Rather, normative reasons provide explanation in a particular way. They provide explanation through being recognized as reason. "We can baptise this thought '*normative/explanatory nexus*', namely that regarding every normative reason, it is possible for it to feature in an explanation of the action for which it is a reason as a fact whose recognition motivated the agent to perform it, and guided him in its performance".²⁰

However, Raz is mistaken on both these points. Regarding the second point, I believe that Raz is committed to over-intellectualism through requiring an awareness of reasons for action. Suppose John is lying on the couch watching TV. Suppose that his child in the bedroom is in danger and in need of John's help. Surely, there is a reason for John to go to the bedroom. Yet, one might think he has no reason to go there. For he is not aware of that reason. Admittedly, in cases like

¹⁹ Joseph Raz, "Reason, Reasons and Normativity," in Russ Shafer-Landau, ed. (Oxford Studies in Metaethics, Vol. 5, 2010).

²⁰ Joseph Raz, "Reasons: Explanatory and Normative," in Sandis, ed. *New Essays on the Explanation of Action* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) p. 195.

this, to act for a reason one needs to be aware of the reason. However, it is just a mistake to assimilate all cases of acting for a reason to cases like John's. Consider the case of a belief. A belief is subject to normative explanation, but not because one is always aware of one's reason for one's beliefs. Many philosophers hold that perception provides warrant or justification for one's perceptual beliefs, without one's necessarily recognizing this. We should make a distinction between a consideration's being a justification for an action or a belief, and a consideration's being recognized as a normative reason or justification for an action or a belief. Raz blurs this distinction. To know that one's perception provides justification for one's belief requires certain conceptual capacities. Higher animals and small children certainly lack those capacities. The man on the street might not know his perception provides justification for his perceptual belief. He has justified perceptual beliefs nonetheless. (Note that a consideration's being a normative reason or justification for an action or a belief does not just amount to there being a reason for someone to do or believe something. The perception is not merely a reason for his belief, in the sense that the child being in danger is a reason for John to go to the bedroom even when he does not know it. Rather, the perception justifies his perceptual beliefs.) For a consideration to be a normative reason for a belief, *contra* Raz, one does not need to recognize the consideration as a reason even implicitly.

In general, when we have a teleological entity (i.e. when an entity has a function), it is subject to normative evaluation and requires normative explanation, in the sense that we explain the behavior of the item by explaining how a good instance of that type of things behaves. A heart is the kind of entity the good instances of which pump the blood to provide oxygen and nutrition for the body. The item in question undergoes a failure if it does not behave in that way. Raz is right that normative explanation is a special sort of explanation. But he does not think that the distinctness of normative explanation lies in a difference in the object of explanation. For different facts provide different explanations for different things. However, when the object of explanation is teleological, the distinction of normative explanation lies precisely in the distinction of its object. We can provide a non-normative explanation for a teleological entity. For example, we can provide a neurological explanation for an action. However, a non-normative explanation does not explain a teleological entity *qua* a teleological entity. A neurological explanation does not explain an action *qua* an action.

Note that I don't mean that an object's having a function is sufficient for that object's having the capacity to act for reasons. Artifacts and biological objects have function. But they are not capable of acting for reasons. My point is this: Raz's argument to the effect that an explanation to be normative requires some kind of awareness fails. If action is a functional entity, action explanation would be normative. My account does not provide a sufficient condition for what it is to act for reason. As stated in (iv) and (v), an intentional action is subject to a special form of normative explanation. But it is too strong to think that this special form of normative explanation must necessarily come with an awareness of the content of explanation. Raz's arguments, as I argued, can't establish such a result. Moreover, as explained above, that Raz's claim is too strong can be clearly appreciated in the

case of perceptual beliefs where a conceptual cognitive attitude can be justified without the person's being aware of the content of the justification.

Let me clarify a terminological point. One can use the term 'normative reason' to denote a normative consideration that can rationalize one's actions or beliefs through one's awareness of it as such. When a normative consideration is not recognized as such one can call it a warrant, justification or consideration that makes an action intelligible. This may be a sensible way of using the term 'normative reason'. But this just makes Raz's account of normative reasons trivial. Using the term 'normative reason' in this way, my point would be this: an individual, whether a human or non-human animal, does not need to have a 'normative reason' to warrant his actions or beliefs, or to make them intelligible. Some of his actions can be normatively explained without appealing to 'normative reasons'. However, I think that Raz is right that in many cases there may be evaluative belief accompanying the action. The individual, in such cases, adopts an evaluative belief to justify her actions. But this does not always need to be the case. For example, one might perform something because one promised that one would do so. The latter belief is not a belief about the good. But even here there is a connection to the good. Keeping one's promise is a warrant for one's action because keeping one's promises is in fact a human good, regardless of whether the individual who keeps her promise believes this or not. However, to understand the relation between the good and action, one does not need to understand the guise of the good thesis in the way that Raz understand it. Adopting a teleological account of practical states enables us to understand the doctrine of the guise of the good in a way that is not over-intellectualized.

On a teleological account of practical states, practical attitudes have the function of bringing about the good. A practical attitude that brings about the good is successful, relative to the function of the attitude. On the other hand, a practical attitude that fails to bring about the good is a failure, relative to its function. In this sense, practical attitudes, and by extension actions, aim at the good, even if the individual who acts lacks the concepts of goodness or reason. If one holds such a functional view about actions, then one can understand the guise of the good thesis in a new way. That is, on this view of practical attitudes, which is consistent with (v), we can say that goodness is the *formal object* of practical states, in the sense that a practical attitude that brings about the good is successful, relative to the function of the attitude.²¹ In this sense, practical attitudes aim at the good, even if the individual who acts lacks the concept of good. Similarly, beliefs aim at truth in the sense that a belief, or a representational state in general, represents its content as being true or accurate. True beliefs are successful, and false beliefs are failures, relative to this function. However, this does not mean that the concepts 'true' or 'accurate' are necessarily part of the content of a representational state, or that individuals capable of having beliefs or perceptual states must therefore have the concepts of truth or accuracy. Truth is

²¹ I am not going to argue for this interpretation, here. I argue for this view in a forthcoming paper. We should also note that (v) by itself does not entail this version of the guise of the good thesis. Somebody might accept (v) while holding that the formal object of an attitude is to fulfill a desire.

the formal object of theoretical states.²² Similarly, goodness can be the formal object (as opposed to the material object) of practical states.

This understanding of the doctrine of the guise of the good is also immune to the classic objections to the view that we act under the guise of the good made by Velleman and Stocker.²³ Velleman argues that one can intend to perform an intentional action without taking the object of intention to be valuable in any sense. However, the proposed view is consistent with intending to perform an action without *taking* the object of intention to be good or valuable in any sense. According to the proposed view, an action that does not bring about the good is defective.

Let's get back to Raz's first point. His worry is this: Even if an individual has a reliable causal mechanism to track reasons, this does not mean that the reliable causal mechanism can be used to rationalize his actions or beliefs. For rationalization we need mediation of rational powers, Raz thinks. I take it as plain that a mere reliable causal mechanism (which is not a result of a well-functioning practical faculty) cannot rationalize human or animal actions. However, Raz's requirement of the mediation of rational power makes human actions "radically" different from animal actions. On Raz's view, animal actions do not need awareness of reason, and thus normative explanation. However, on any plausible account of action, a dog's eating food when it is hungry is very different from, say, the motion of a planet. The former is subject to normative explanation, but the latter is not. Desires like hunger can normatively explain the eating of animals. An animal's practical faculty is sound when it forms an intention to eat when it is hungry. Hunger can normatively explain the eating of an animal, and make its action intelligible. Avoidance of fire resulting from pain caused by hot things can rationalize an animal's action and makes it intelligible. Although avoidance of fire might seem like a reflexive behavior (e.g. the plantar reflex), this is not so. Reflexive behaviors cannot be attributed to the whole organism, but the avoidance of fire issues from the individual's central behavioral capacities, and can be attributed to the whole organism.

One might, however, object to the proposed view as follows²⁴: We can grant that Raz's view does not capture every sort of normative explanation that might characterize action (e.g., animals avoiding fire); however, human agency requires a critical distance that allows humans to respond to reasons as reasons. Hence, while there might be some normative responsiveness to goodness in animal action, it differs in kind from the kind of responsiveness found in rational agents. As Foot states in her *Natural Goodness*: "while animals go for the good (thing) *that they see*, human beings go for *what they see as good*".²⁵

²² In the perceptual case, some have argued that perception essentially involves a kind of awareness of the normativity of our perceptual judgment; see, for example, Hannah Ginsborg, "Aesthetic Judgment and Perceptual Normativity," *Inquiry*, Vol. 45 (2006). However, Tyler Burge in his new book, *Origins of Objectivity*, convincingly argued that the views similar to Ginsborg's can't be correct.

²³ David Velleman, "The Guise of the Good," *Nous* (1992): 3–26. S Michael Stocker, Desiring the Bad: An Essay in Moral Psychology," *The Journal of Philosophy* (1979): 738–753.

²⁴ Thanks to John Hacker-Wright for formulating the objection and pressing me to clarify the issue.

²⁵ Philippa Foot, *Natural Goodness* (Oxford University Press, 200), p. 56.

In response to this objection, I must say that I surely think that human agency is different from animal agency. For instance, here are two important respects in which human agency is different from non-human animal agency:

First, if I am right that the function of practical states is to bring about the good, then, when a practical state fails to bring about its intentional object, it undergoes a failure. The failure in question is to fail to make the practical state veridical. So, one kind of success for practical states is to make their contents veridical. Knowing how to make practical states veridical is closely associated with theoretical knowledge. Humans are far more advanced in theoretical reasoning than animals. As a result, instrumental reasoning is far more advanced in humans than in animals.

Second, Human beings are capable of critical reflection. They can reflect about the grounds of their beliefs, asking, for instance, whether their perceptual experience give them reason to believe something. They can rationally revise their beliefs when they come to see that the grounds of their beliefs are not truth-conducive. Similarly, human beings can critically and reflectively think about their goals and actions. From a deliberative standpoint, the agent is concerned with the question ‘what should I do?’ The answer to this question, I think, is ‘do what is the best’. The view according to which truth is the constitutive of goal of belief, in the sense that, the function of belief is to represent the world veridically can explain why the goal of theoretical reasoning is to get at the truth. In the same way, the teleological view I propose explains why the goal of practical reasoning is to know what is the good (and to bring it about).

Regarding Foot’s remark, we should bear in mind that Foot made the remark in a chapter where she was concerned about a moral skeptic asking “But what if I do not care about being a good human being?” The question Foot seeks to answer in the chapter is what a rational and reflective human being should do, *all things considered*, where there are different reasons for and against performing an action, and Foot’s final answer is that rational human beings should, all things considered, do what is the best. The proposed view can explain why Foot is right on this matter. Given the context, I believe we should understand Foot’s remark as saying that human beings should go for what they see as good when they critically and reflectively think about their choices. I surely agree with this. However, this truth should not mislead us in thinking that all human actions are the result of reflective deliberation. There are many different sorts of considerations that can rationalize an action, many of which do not need to be recognized as good by the agent. Here are some examples: Wider descriptions of action (Anscombe, Thompson); motives such as revenge, pity, gratitude, remorse, friendship, love, greed, curiosity, fear, despair etc. (Anscombe); simple responses to requests (Anscombe); promise keeping (Thompson), habit, a tendency to mimic the actions of others, the fact that it is substitutionally representing some other action (Foot).²⁶ Some actions are just expressions of emotions, as Hursthouse noted; some actions are performed because

²⁶ See Elizabeth Anscombe, *Intention* (Harvard University Press, 1957); Michael Thompson, *Life and Action: Elementary Structures of Practice and Practical Thought* (Harvard University Press, 2008); Philippa Foot, *Natural Goodness* (Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 56.

of their badness, according to Velleman and Stocker.²⁷ This is just a mistake to assimilate all those cases to a case where an agent performs an action because it recognizes it as good, or a case where an agent, facing different considerations, reflectively thinks about her choice.

Let me finish the paper by summarizing the broader upshot of the discussion. As I said in the introduction, the guise of the good thesis can be understood in different way. Raz's (as well as Lavin's) way of understating the thesis involves regarding goodness as the conceptual object of the attitude. But the argument presented in the paper suggests that this way of understating the doctrine of the guise of the good has little chance of success. The other two options are to regard the good as either the non-conceptual object of the attitude or formal object of it. I think that if we accept that practical attitudes are teleological, then the thesis that the good is the formal object of the attitude looks more promising. If so, it seems plausible to think that goodness is internal to a practical state, in the same way that truth is internal to a belief. We would be then in a better position to respond to the classical challenge to realism by claiming that practical or theoretical norms are constitutively associated with practical or theoretical state. The elaboration of such a picture, however, should be the topic of a new paper.

²⁷ See Rosalind Hursthouse, "Arational Actions," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 88, No. 2 (1991). David Velleman, "The Guise of the Good," *Nous* (1992): 3–26. S. Michael Stocker, "Desiring the Bad: An Essay in Moral Psychology," *The Journal of Philosophy* (1979): 738–753.