

Reasoning's relation to bodily action

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Abstract

Recent philosophical work on the relation between reasoning and bodily action is dominated by two views. It is orthodox to have it that bodily actions can be at most *causally* involved in reasoning. Others have it that reasoning can *constitutively* involve bodily actions, where this is understood as a matter of *non-mental* bodily events featuring as constituents of *practical* reasoning. Reflection on cases of reasoning out-loud suggests a neglected alternative on which both practical and theoretical reasoning can have bodily actions as constituents, where such bodily actions themselves amount to contentful mental events. Furthermore, the natural lines of resistance to this view trade on type-token errors, or on a questionable common-factor assumption.

KEYWORDS

action, disjunctivism, Gilbert Ryle, practical reasoning, reasoning, thinking out-loud

1. Causalism and Aristotelianism

Reasoning is a distinctive kind of aim-directed process with constituent events. In particular, reasoning is a kind of aim-directed thinking (McHugh & Way, 2018). Suppose that one is reasoning about whether *p*, for instance. To do so is to engage in thinking in order to work out/figure out/determine whether *p*. If one works out/figures out/determines whether *p* by engaging in such reasoning then one has achieved one's aim, otherwise not. Such reasoning will have constituent events such as judgments, inferences and acts of supposition. One might reason about whether *p* by first supposing that *p*, then by inferring *q*, for instance, such that the latter events qualify as constituents of the aim-directed process which is one's reasoning.

Everyone should agree that our bodily actions can affect the course of our reasoning. It is a familiar fact that taking a stroll can affect what occurs to you as you work through a problem, for example. Everyone should likewise agree that there is a sense in which reasoning can issue in bodily action. Reasoning about what to do might bring to light what the best course of action is, for instance, and lead to one's acting accordingly. But can the relation between reasoning and bodily action be more intimate than it is revealed to be by

such platitudes? In particular, is the relation between reasoning and bodily action *merely causal*, or can reasoning *constitutively involve* bodily action?

Recent philosophical work on the relation between reasoning and bodily action is dominated by two views on the above matter. On the orthodox view, which I will label ‘causalism’, reasoning is at most causally related to bodily action (e.g. Broome, 2013; Paul, 2013; Raz, 2011). On this view, any given bodily action can at most be caused by or have a causal impact upon reasoning of one’s. Bodily actions thus cannot feature as constituents of reasoning and the sense in which reasoning can issue in bodily action must be understood causally. This view is often taken to be a consequence of the fact that we can reason and even complete reasoning without performing bodily actions (e.g. Broome, 2013; Paul, 2013; Raz, 2011, 131–132). Broome (2013, 250), for instance, notes that one might conclude practical reasoning about whether to φ , forming an intention to φ , without in fact φ -ing (perhaps because the time to act has not yet come, or due to unexpected paralysis). Broome concludes that a bodily action of φ -ing could never feature as a constituent of reasoning. At most, he claims, bodily actions can be causally related to reasoning. Some of the intuitive pull of causalism stems from the natural thought that there is a sense in which our reasoning is *private*. Our reasoning is not witnessable by others, the thought is. This certainly seems to be true of what is naturally seen as paradigmatic reasoning, such as that carried out by *le Penseur* whilst sat motionless on his rock. Causalism accommodates that reasoning is private in the relevant sense, conceiving of it as a mental process which is at most causally related to one’s bodily actions.¹

On the leading alternative to causalism, which I will label ‘Aristotelianism’ in light of its alleged source, practical reasoning can constitutively involve bodily action (e.g. Tenenbaum, 2007; Thompson, 2008; Wiland, 2013). This is understood as a matter of *non-mental* events featuring as constituents of such reasoning.² As Wiland puts it, on this view practical reasoning is a process which can have bodily actions as constituents ‘*rather than*’ mental events such as judgments, inferences and acts of supposition (2013, p. 304). Practical reasoning is in this way only a ‘partially’ mental process (2013, p. 318). Or as Tenenbaum puts it, the Aristotelian

does not merely present a contrast between what is represented in the conclusion of theoretical and practical reasoning ... but states that the latter is not a matter of representing, but of doing something. (2007, p. 326)

¹ I refine and ultimately reject the claim that reasoning is never witnessable below (see sec. 4).

² Not all of those who label themselves Aristotelians accept this thought. The term does not have a single uniform use. Here I use the label ‘Aristotelianism’ narrowly to refer to the view that reasoning can constitutively involve bodily actions where such bodily actions are *non-mental* events. The latter view is embraced by Tenenbaum, Thompson and others who self-identify as Aristotelians. Were I operating with a broader use of the term, my suggestion could be put by saying that it is the Rylean picture offered below which is the form that an Aristotelian view should take.

As indicated by this remark of Tenenbaum's, the Aristotelian's claim is usually restricted to the *conclusion* of practical reasoning.³ Practical reasoning can constitutively involve bodily action, that is, because bodily action can constitute concluding practical reasoning. The non-mental bodily event which is one's taking a piece of cake, for instance, might constitute one's concluding practical reasoning about whether to have cake or a healthier alternative.

Aristotelianism is typically motivated by its aptness to accommodate the supposed *directness* of the relation between practical reasoning and the actions it issues in (see Fernandez, 2016, pp. 869–871). When practical reasoning issues in action, the thought is, the reasoning yields action *directly*. This is seen as requiring that one's concluding one's reasoning as one does and one's acting as one does are not two independent matters (Fernandez, 2016, p. 870). That is in turn seen as needed to capture the *practicality* of practical reasoning (see Mylonaki, 2018, pp. 30–31). The thought is that if all that our reasoning could do is lead causally to action then there would be nothing properly deserving of the label 'practical reasoning'. Furthermore, that some of our reasoning is properly deserving of that label is taken to be evident. The Aristotelian captures the practicality of practical reasoning, thus understood, by having it that when practical reasoning issues in action one's acting as one does and one's concluding one's reasoning as one does are one and the same event.

The main parties to the current dispute over the relation between reasoning and bodily action are thus those who maintain that bodily actions can at most be causally involved in reasoning, on the one hand, and those who maintain that non-mental bodily actions can constitute the concluding of practical reasoning on the other. Dancy (2014, pp. 1–3) doubts that the question of whether actions can be the conclusions of practical reasoning is in good order. However, the question is unobjectionable so long as it is assigned a precise meaning. The question is simply whether performing a bodily action can constitute *completing* practical reasoning. To give an affirmative answer, as the Aristotelian does, is to claim that the performance of bodily action can constitute the completion of a process of practical reasoning.

Dancy instead recommends that we ask the following:

[C]an an action stand to practical reasoning in the same relation that a belief can stand to theoretical reasoning? (2014, p. 3)

The Aristotelian does have it that there is a respect in which bodily action can be related to practical reasoning as belief can be related to theoretical reasoning. There is thus a reading of Dancy's preferred question on which Aristotelianism amounts to a positive answer. Judging/coming to believe can constitute completing theoretical reasoning, and potentially successfully so such that one is achieving the aim of one's reasoning in judging/coming to believe as one does (Jenkins, 2018). Similarly, for the Aristotelian, performing a bodily action can constitute completing practical reasoning, and potentially successfully so such

³ An exception being Wiland (2013).

that one is achieving the aim of one's reasoning in so acting. In such a case one's bodily action is not merely an effect of one's reasoning. Nor is it something which merely causes one's reasoning to stop, as a distraction or death might (Dancy, 2014, p. 4). For the Aristotelian, performing a bodily action can rather itself constitute completing practical reasoning, just as judging/coming to believe can constitute completing theoretical reasoning. In this way, the relation between reasoning and bodily action (when the former issues in the latter) is parallel to that between reasoning and belief (when the former issues in the latter).

Dancy, however, unpacks the question that he recommends we ask as follows:

[C]an an action stand to the *considerations rehearsed* in the deliberation that leads to it, and to which it is a response, in the same relation as that in which a belief can stand to the considerations rehearsed in the reasoning that leads to it, and to which it is a response? (2014, p. 3, my emphasis)

He then observes that just as considerations rehearsed in theoretical reasoning can *favour* believing some conclusion, considerations rehearsed in practical reasoning can favour performing a bodily action of some sort. In unpacking his preferred question this way, Dancy concerns himself with a distinct matter to that which is at issue here. Dancy's concern is not the relation between *reasoning* and *bodily action*. It is instead the relation between actions and considerations rehearsed in practical reasoning, where the latter are certain *facts* or *states of affairs* (Dancy, 2014, p. 4). We should surely agree with Dancy that facts or states of affairs can favour performing actions just as they can favour believing. But this leaves unsettled the matter of the metaphysical relation between reasoning and bodily action. It is the latter which is the present concern, and a matter on which the Aristotelian takes a stand. In particular, the Aristotelian has it that the relation between reasoning and bodily action can be *constitutive* and not merely causal. And the Aristotelian maintains that this is a matter bodily actions conceived of as *non-mental* events constituting the *concluding* of practical reasoning.

With the disagreement between the causalist and Aristotelian clear, it should likewise be clear that the dispute is not merely terminological. For the Aristotelian, when one completes practical reasoning of one's by performing some bodily action there need be no prior judgment, decision, event of intention formation, or event of belief formation which is apt to be conceived of as one's concluding one's reasoning. For the causalist, meanwhile, when practical reasoning issues in bodily action there must be some such prior event which is apt to be conceived of as constituting one's concluding one's reasoning and as a cause of one's bodily action. The dispute in question would only be terminological if both parties to it accepted the latter and were simply disagreeing about when to stop calling what is unfolding 'reasoning'.

With the dispute of concern clear, I will proceed as follows. First, I will bring out how reflection on cases of reasoning out-loud suggests an alternative to both causalism and Aristotelianism (sec. 2). On the proposed alternative, bodily actions can themselves amount to constituents of both practical and theoretical reasoning. Furthermore, such bodily actions themselves amount to contentful mental events. I will then turn to how the natural lines of

resistance to this suggestion trade on type-token errors, or on a questionable common-factor assumption (sec. 3). With this done it can be seen how causalism and Aristotelianism share a problematic structure (sec. 4). Both amount to contemporary commitment to what Ryle called the ‘mythical bifurcation’ of what we do into ‘unwitnessable mental causes and their witnessable physical effects’ (2009a, p. 22).

2. A Rylean alternative

Following Ryle (1979, 2009a, 2009b), reflection on cases of thinking ‘out-loud’ suggests a neglected alternative to both causalism and Aristotelianism. Suppose, for instance, that one is reasoning about whether p and thus is reasoning in order to work out/figure out/determine whether p . This is something which one might do without moving one’s body at all. One might reason as Rodin’s *le Penseur*, for instance, whilst sat motionless on a rock. But it is also something which one might do ‘out-loud’, either wholly or in part. When one does so it is in turn natural to understand one as reasoning *by* saying what one does. One might begin by supposing that p , for instance, and then infer q from p . And one might do so *by* first saying ‘ p ’ out-loud and then *by* saying ‘ q ’ out-loud. In this way, one can perform judgments, inferences and acts of supposition *by* saying things out-loud and engage in reasoning in doing so.

An alternative is to maintain that when one engages in such reasoning ‘out-loud’ one does not really judge/infer/suppose *by* saying things out-loud. Instead, it could be maintained that such out-loud utterances are merely the verbal expressions of prior judgments/inferences/acts of supposition. When one supposes that p above, for example, one first supposes that p and then says ‘ p ’ out-loud as a result, such that the latter amounts to the expression of the former and might in turn affect the course of one’s reasoning. But this suggestion is problematic when it comes to accounting for the purposiveness of the relevant out-loud utterances. Consider again when one says ‘ p ’ out-loud above. We can ask what the *reason with which* one says ‘ p ’ is. For what reason does one say ‘ p ’? It seems clear that one’s reason for saying ‘ p ’ need not be to express a prior act—one need not say ‘ p ’ in order to express one’s prior act of supposing of that p . Nor need one’s reason be to aid one’s future reasoning, or to reveal how one’s reasoning is unfolding to others. When one says ‘ p ’ it may be that one’s sole reason for doing so is to engage in reasoning about whether p . One’s purpose, that is, may simply be to figure out whether p . It need not be that when one reasons ‘out-loud’ rather than motionlessly one must thereby have some further purpose with which one expresses how one’s reasoning unfolds.

It could be maintained, in light of the above, that when one reasons ‘out-loud’ one’s out-loud utterances are mere expressions of one’s prior acts, but that this does not entail that one must say what one does out-loud for some reason other than to engage in reasoning. An alternative possibility is that one says what one does for *no reason at all*. When one says ‘ p ’ out-loud above, on this view, it may be that this is something which one

does *for no reason*.⁴ It does seem to be the case that we can perform actions for no reason, after all. One might doodle for no reason during a talk, for instance, or kick a door which refuses to shut for no reason (Heuer, 2014, pp. 293–294). However, it seems equally clear that when one reasons ‘out-loud’ it need not be that one must say what one does for no reason at all, if not for some reason other than to engage in reasoning itself. When we reason ‘out-loud’ we do not conceive of our out-loud utterances as such that they must serve no purpose at all if they are not performed for some reason other than to engage in reasoning itself. In saying ‘*p*’ above, for instance, one can do so simply in order to engage in reasoning about whether *p*. One need not do so for some further reason, or for no reason whatsoever.

The result of the above is that someone who denies that we can reason by saying out-loud will face a dilemma when it comes to the purposiveness of the relevant out-loud utterances. They must either say that the relevant utterances are performed for reasons other than to engage in reasoning, or that they are performed for no reason at all. Accordingly, they will either commit to an over-intellectualised account of ‘out-loud’ reasoning (in maintaining that when one reasons ‘out-loud’ one must make the relevant out-loud utterances for some reason other than to simply engage in reasoning) or they will fail to capture the purposiveness of the utterances involved in such reasoning (in having it they are performed for no reason whatsoever). When one says ‘*p*’ and then ‘*q*’ whilst reasoning above, for instance, one’s reason for doing so can simply be to engage in reasoning about whether *p*. One can thus judge/infer/suppose *by* making such out-loud utterances, engaging in reasoning in doing so. Furthermore, it follows from that one can judge/infer/suppose *by* saying things out-loud, and reason in doing so, that such out-loud utterances can amount to constituents of reasoning. When one reasons out-loud one’s out-loud utterances can themselves feature as constituents of the continuously unfolding process which is one’s reasoning. One’s saying of ‘*p*’, for instance, can itself amount to the act by which one judges/infers/supposes that *p* such that when one does so one’s saying of ‘*p*’ is to be identified with one’s judgment/inference/act of supposition. In this way, reasoning can constitutively involve bodily action—we can literally reason out-loud.

Compare a case in which someone signals conspiratorially to an accomplice by winking (Ryle, 2009b, pp. 494–495). On the natural way of understanding such a case, the person does not perform two distinct actions, winking and signalling, such that we might ask about whether and in what way the winking and signalling are causally related. Given that the person in question signals *by* winking, the winking in question *just is* the signalling. The winking, that is, is *identical to* the signalling. Or consider a statesman who signs a peace treaty by scribbling on a piece of paper (Ryle, 2009b, p. 510). Again, on the natural way of understanding the case the person does not perform two distinct actions, scribbling and signing, such that we might ask of their causal relation. The person’s scribbling *just is* their

⁴ Which is not to say that the utterance may be uncaused. The suggestion would instead be that one’s saying of ‘*p*’ has a cause, but this does not suffice for one’s saying ‘*p*’ *for some reason* in the relevant sense. There may be no *reason with which* one says ‘*p*’ out-loud.

signing, and in turn might *just be* their bringing war to close. The natural event individuation principle in the background here is that if one ψ -s *by* φ -ing then the event which is one's φ -ing is identical to the event which is one's ψ -ing (Anscombe, 1957; Davidson, 2001a). This same event individuation principle tells us that since one might judge/infer/suppose that p *by* saying ' p ' whilst reasoning out-loud, such bodily actions can *just be* judgments/inferences/acts of supposition and thereby feature as constituents of reasoning.

The suggestion here does not need restricting to the concluding of practical reasoning. When one reasons out-loud the bodily actions which are one's utterances can *just be* acts by which one *carries out* one's reasoning, where the reasoning in question may be *practical or theoretical*. Once accepted, this picture of the relation between reasoning and bodily action can also be extended well beyond the case of reasoning out-loud. One might reason about what route to take *by* drawing on a map, for instance, or solve a puzzle about the motion of cogs *by* rotating one's hands. Given the above natural event-individuation principle, when one does so one's bodily actions amount to constituents of one's reasoning and to actions by which one carries out the reasoning in question. In line with Aristotelians, this picture can also be extended to vindicate the suggestion that acting as one decides to can constitute concluding practical reasoning. One might conclude practical reasoning about whether to have cake or a healthier alternative *by* reaching for cake, for instance, and one's reaching thereby constitute one's concluding one's reasoning. That said, there is no need to follow the Aristotelian in having it that reasoning is a process with *non-mental* constituents. On the view suggested, reasoning can rather constitutively involve bodily actions which are *themselves contentful mental events* (c.f. Maher, 2017; McDowell 2010). One's saying of ' p ' out-loud can be identical to the contentful mental event which is one's *judgment* that p , for instance, and one's reaching for cake can be identical the contentful mental event which is one's *decision* to have cake. In this way, following Ryle, our bodily actions can themselves amount to the 'workings of our minds' (2009a, p. 22).

3. Objections to Ryleanism

Reflection on cases of reasoning out-loud suggests that we can perform judgments, inferences and acts of supposition *by* saying things out-loud and engage in reasoning in doing so. Given the above natural event-individuation principle, it follows that such out-loud utterances can amount to constituents of reasoning. One's saying of ' p ' out-loud, for instance, can be taken identical to a judgment/inference/act of supposition and to a constituent of an unfolding process of reasoning. In general, bodily actions can feature as mental constituents of reasoning. Some have taken this same conclusion to be suggested by recent work in embodied cognition (e.g. Levy, 2019; Wilson & Clark, 2009). Proponents of the latter line of thought appeal to the extent to which bodily actions can be *functionally similar* to paradigmatic non-bodily constituents of reasoning and to the extent to which bodily actions can be *functionally integrated* with reasoning in support of the

conclusion that bodily actions can feature as mental constituents of reasoning.⁵ I am not taking a stand on these arguments here. Instead, I have offered a further argument for the same conclusion. The view that the likes of bodily actions can themselves amount to mental constituents of reasoning falls out of the natural way to understand our out-loud reasoning. Furthermore, as I will draw out presently, the natural lines of resistance to this suggestion trade on type-token errors, or on a questionable common-factor assumption.

A natural causalist line of resistance, in line with causalism's motivation (see sec. 1), would trade on the observation that we can reason without performing bodily actions. When one judges that p 'out-loud' and reasons in doing so, for instance, one could equally have judged that p without saying anything out-loud. The causalist may conclude that an out-loud utterance thus cannot itself be a judgment of that p —at most out-loud utterances can express prior judgments. In general, the thought is, for any constituent of reasoning of mental kind ϕ (e.g. judgment, inference, supposition, decision, ...) and bodily action of bodily action kind ψ one can ϕ without ψ -ing. The causalist conclusion is that no bodily action can ever itself be identical to a mental event. As noted (sec. 1), however, reasoning is a kind of aim-directed thinking. Reasoning is thereby a kind of mental process (Broome, 2013, p. 250). Accordingly, any given constituent event of a process of reasoning must itself be a mental event. Bodily actions thus cannot feature as constituents of reasoning. Only mental events can, according to the line of thinking in question, and bodily actions can never themselves be mental events.

A natural Aristotelian line of resistance runs parallel to the above. According to the Aristotelian we need to accommodate that bodily actions can constitute concluding practical reasoning (sec. 1). One's reaching for cake, for instance, might constitute one's concluding reasoning about whether to have cake. However, one could reach for cake without *deciding* to have cake. One could instead be moving the cake away so that it is no longer tempting or be pretending to want cake to be polite. When one does conclude by reaching for cake, the objection then goes, one must thereby be concluding reasoning about whether to have cake without *deciding* to do so. In general, the thought is, for any bodily action of bodily action kind ϕ and any mental constituent of reasoning of mental kind ψ one can ϕ without ψ -ing. Again, this may be taken to reveal that no bodily action can ever itself be identical to a mental constituent of reasoning. With this accepted, the Aristotelian must accommodate their claim that bodily actions can constitute concluding practical reasoning by denying the apparent platitude that all constituent events of reasoning are themselves mental events, and thus by denying that reasoning is a wholly mental process. As noted (sec. 1), the point in question is conceded by Wiland (2013, p. 318), who rests content with capturing that reasoning is a 'partially' mental process. As the Aristotelian sees it, we must accept that when reasoning issues in bodily action it is only a partially

⁵ For elaboration and defence of these arguments see Levy (2019). For resistance see Adams and Aizawa (2009).

mental process in order to capture that bodily actions can constitute concluding practical reasoning.

On reflection, the above objections can be seen to trade on type-token errors. The causalist objection trades on an inference from that we *can* reason without performing bodily actions to the conclusion that bodily actions can *never* be constituents of reasoning. But that we *can* reason without doing so by performing bodily actions does not entail that bodily actions can never also amount to mental events which are constituents of reasoning. The Aristotelian objection, meanwhile, trades on an inference from that we *can* perform bodily actions without making corresponding decisions to the conclusion that bodily actions can *never* themselves amount to decisions (and thus to mental constituents of reasoning). But that we *can* perform bodily actions without making corresponding decisions does not entail that bodily actions can never also amount to decisions (and thus to mental constituents of reasoning). In general, that φ -ing can occur without ψ -ing does not entail that one's φ -ing can never be identified with one's ψ -ing. Of course, for instance, one can judge that p without saying ' p ' out-loud. The type *judgment that p* thus cannot be identified with the type *saying of ' p ' out-loud*. But that does not mean that a token judgment of that p cannot be identical to a token saying out-loud of ' p '. Similarly, one can reach for cake without deciding to have cake. The type *reaching for cake* thus cannot be identified with the type *deciding to have cake*. But that does not mean that a token reaching cannot be identical to a token deciding. Compare how one might wink without signalling to anyone. That does not mean that a token wink cannot be identical to a token act of signalling. What this makes clear is that the above lines of resistance to the Rylean suggestion that bodily actions can amount to mental constituents of reasoning trade on type-token errors. The causalist line does so in taking it that the fact that we can reason without performing bodily actions reveals that no token bodily action can be identical to a constituent of reasoning. The Aristotelian line does so in taking it that the fact that we can perform bodily actions without making corresponding decisions reveals that no token bodily action can be identical to a decision. This in turn reveals that the Aristotelian's denial of the apparent platitude that reasoning is a mental process is unmotivated. Capturing the Aristotelian suggestion that bodily actions can constitute concluding practical reasoning does not require denying that the relevant concluding acts are themselves mental constituents of reasoning.

As noted (sec. 2), the positive case for the proposed Rylean view traded on a natural event individuation principle according to which if one ψ -s by φ -ing then the event which is one's φ -ing is identical to the event which is one's ψ -ing. Some reject this principle and embrace an alternative on which if φ -ing can occur without ψ -ing then a token φ -ing can never be identical to a token ψ -ing. Kim (1966, pp. 231–232), for instance, insists that Brutus' stabbing of Caesar cannot be identified with Brutus' killing of Caesar, because Brutus could have stabbed Caesar without killing him. The Morning Star's emitting of yellow light, meanwhile, can be identified with its emitting of light the colour of a sunflower, since it could not do the former without doing the latter. Those who embrace

this alternative will likewise reject the Rylean's move from the natural thought that we can reason by saying things out-loud to the conclusion that reasoning can constitutively involve bodily action. In doing so, however, they can be seen to be trading on a type-token error of the kind warned against. As Davidson (2001b, p. 171) puts it, for instance, Kim's claim that Brutus' stabbing of Caesar cannot be identified with Brutus' killing of Caesar gains its plausibility from the fact that not all stabbings are killings. But that Brutus could have stabbed Caesar without killing him does not entail that the token stabbing of Caesar by Brutus was not also the killing of Caesar. In general, the rejection of the natural principle that if one ψ -s by ϕ -ing then the event which is one's ϕ -ing is identical to the event which is one's ψ -ing gains its plausibility from the observation that for many ϕ -s and ψ -s one can ϕ without ψ -ing. But that one can ϕ without ψ -ing does not entail that a token ϕ -ing cannot be identified with a token ψ -ing and only tells us that the type ϕ cannot be identified with the type ψ .

Yet another line of objection to the above Rylean proposal might come in the form of a kind of common-factor objection.⁶ Compare a case in which one judges that p 'out-loud' (however that is to be understood) to a case in which one says ' p ' out-loud where this is mere noise-making. In the latter case one may seem to be judging that p , from a third-person perspective, but one is doing no such thing. We can ask what accounts for the difference between these two cases. The best account, it might be claimed, is as follows. In both cases there is an event which is a saying of ' p ' out-loud. But only in the former case is this event caused by a prior judgment of that p . The thought is that the difference between the cases is best accounted for by saying that it is only in the former case that one's out-loud utterance of ' p ' is the product of a prior judgment of that p .

A parallel case has been offered in favour of a causal theory of *seeing* (c.f. Grice, 1961). We can compare a case in which one sees that p to one in which one merely seems to see that p . When it comes to accounting for the difference it might be thought that the best way to go is to have it that in both cases there is an experience which is a seeming to see of that p . The difference can then be seen as a matter of whether this experience is appropriately caused by appropriate elements of one's external environment.

In response to the above argument for a causal theory of seeing it can be pointed out that both of the cases in question's involving one's having experiences of the kind *seeming to see* does not entail that this is not so in virtue of one's having token experiences of distinct more fundamental kinds in the two cases (e.g. Snowdon, 1980, Martin, 2002). A disjunctivist alternative is to have it that seeming to see that p is either a matter of *in fact seeing that p* or *merely seeming to see that p*, where the latter are experiences of fundamentally difference kinds, the former and not the latter constitutively involving the

⁶ I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for bringing this line of objection to my attention, along with the implications of my response.

worldly objects of perception.⁷ This make way for a different account of the difference between the two cases. Rather than seeing the difference between seeing that *p* and merely seeming to see that *p* as a matter of the external cause of one's experience, we can have it that such experiences are distinguished by their having distinct fundamental natures.

An analogous response can be made to the above common-factor objection to the proposed Rylean view.⁸ That both of the relevant cases involve events of saying '*p*' out-loud does not entail that this is not so in virtue of the occurrence of token events of distinct more fundamental kinds (such that the cases must be distinguished in terms of whether the events have appropriate mental causes). A disjunctivist alternative is to have it that one's saying that '*p*' in the two cases is either a matter of one's *judging out-loud that p* or a matter of one's *merely saying 'p' out-loud where this is mere noise-making*, the latter being events of fundamentally different kinds. Again, this make way for a different account of the difference between the cases. Rather than seeing the difference between judging that *p* 'out-loud' and merely saying '*p*' out-loud as a matter of whether one's utterance has an appropriate prior mental cause, we can have it that such events are distinguished by their being events with different fundamental natures, the former and not the latter's being a kind of mental event as well as a kind of bodily action.

The need to respond to the above common-factor objection in this way brings out how the proposed Rylean view amounts to a form of disjunctivism. On the proposed Rylean view a token saying out-loud of '*p*' can potentially amount to *mere noise-making* or to *out-loud judging/infering/supposing*, where the latter are more fundamental kinds than *saying out-loud*. This mirrors how the disjunctivist about seeing has it that *seeing that p* and *merely seeming to see that p* are more fundamental kinds than *seeming to see that p*. Taking this line allows us to capture natural thought that we can literally judge out-loud and allows us to avoid the problematic commitments of instead seeing judging 'out-loud' as a matter of expressing inner judgment (sec. 2).

4. Causalism and Aristotelianism from the Rylean perspective

With the above Rylean picture of the relation between reasoning and bodily action on the table it can be seen what is wrong with its alternatives from the Rylean perspective. Ryle complained of his contemporaries that they committed themselves to what he saw as a 'mythical bifurcation' of what we do into 'unwitnessable mental causes and their witnessable physical effects' (2009a, p. 22). We find contemporary commitment to such a bifurcation in both causalism and Aristotelianism. Both leave us with a picture on which what we do when we reason is divided into the mental and unwitnessable on the one hand and the witnessable bodily effects thereof on the other. As seen (sec. 1), the thought that

⁷ In articulating disjunctivism in terms of fundamental kinds I am opting for the formulation favoured by Martin. For discussion of other ways to formulate disjunctivism see Soteriou (2016, sec. 2.1). I am also glossing over further complications concerning how to understand *illusion* (see Soteriou, 2016, sec. 5.2).

⁸ For further disjunctivist moves in the context of philosophy of action see Hornsby (2008) and McDowell (2010).

reasoning is itself unwitnessable gains plausibility from its being natural to see reasoning such as that carried out by *le Penseur*, motionless on his rock, as paradigmatic. Reflection on the likes of reasoning ‘out-loud’, however, suggests the above Rylean picture of reasoning’s relation to bodily action. And given that picture, the bifurcation in question is indeed mythical. We need not divide up what one does when one reasons into the mental and unwitnessable on the one hand and the bodily and observable on the other, any more than we should divide what one does when one runs in such a way. One can see reasoning itself unfold as one watches someone reasoning out-loud, just as one can see running itself unfold as one watches someone run.

To see how they commit to the bifurcation in question, consider causalism and Aristotelianism in turn. According to the causalist, reasoning is a mental process which is at most causally related to bodily actions. Causalism is thus a view on which reasoning is never itself observable as such. Granted, it seems clear that we often can observe *that* someone is reasoning (Levy, 2019, p. 985; Soteriou, 2013, p. 228). One might see that someone is reasoning by seeing them staring motionlessly at a puzzle written on a blackboard, for instance. But on the causalist’s view when one reasons the process which is one’s *reasoning itself* and its *constituent events* cannot be observable *as such* (Levy, 2019, p. 985; Soteriou, 2013, pp. 228–229). As Soteriou (2013, p. 229) notes, this claim need not be in tension with the claim that the relevant processes and events are to be identified with in principle observable physical (perhaps neural) processes and events. Even supposing such an identification holds, to perceive the relevant physical processes or events would not be to perceive them *as* reasoning or *as* constituents thereof. To bring this out we can compare reasoning to an agential process which does seem to be observable as such. Suppose that one sees someone running, for instance. One might see the running itself unfold, having direct perceptual knowledge of the process in question *as running*, such that one has direct perceptual knowledge that running is occurring and might then inquire into the intention with which it is being performed. Suppose, on the other hand, that one has the means to observe some neural process which is to be identified with someone’s reasoning (e.g. by using functional MRI). It seems clear that one will nonetheless not have direct perceptual knowledge of the process *as reasoning*, such that one has direct perceptual knowledge that reasoning is occurring and might then inquire into the intention with which it is being performed.

Causalists thus commit to the bifurcation which Ryle warns against in dividing up what one does when one reasons into the unobservable as such mental process which is one’s reasoning and the observable as such bodily actions which might themselves be the products of or affect the course of one’s reasoning. From the Rylean perspective, the causalist is led astray here by the fact that when we describe a process as reasoning we thereby operate at a level of description on which we abstract away from its constituents’ potential bodily nature.

According to Aristotelians, practical reasoning can constitutively involve bodily actions. Aristotelians also commit to the bifurcation warned against by Ryle. They do so in dividing up reasoning itself into unobservable as such mental acts on the one hand (e.g.

judgments, inferences and acts of supposition) and observable as such bodily actions conceived of as non-mental events on the other. An alternative is to maintain, with Ryle, that reasoning is a mental process which can feature constituents which qualify as *both* mental events and bodily actions. From the Rylean perspective, the Aristotelian misses the possibility of this view, being led astray by the fact that when we describe a given event as a bodily action we thereby operate at a level of description on which we abstract away from its potential mental nature.

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