

Cognitivists about intention hold that intending to do something entails believing you will do it. Non-cognitivists hold that intentions are conative states with no cognitive component. I argue that both of these claims are true. Intending entails the presence of a belief, even though the intention is not even partly the belief. The result is a form of what Sarah Paul calls Non-Inferential Weak Cognitivism, a view that, as she notes, has no prominent defenders.

## **Intentions, Intending, and Belief: Non-Inferential Weak Cognitivism**

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Cognitivists like David Velleman and Kieran Setiya identify intentions with beliefs about what one will do. Non-cognitivists like Michael Bratman and Sarah Paul identify intentions with conative attitudes whose presence does not entail any such belief. But as Paul points out, there is a third option. Weak cognitivists, as she calls them, hold that intending to  $\phi$  entails believing one will  $\phi$ , but do not identify the intention with the belief. In what follows, I develop and defend a form of weak cognitivism.

Paul remarks that there are ‘no prominent defenders of a non-inferential brand of Weak Cognitivism’ (2009a). Grice, she says, held an inferential form of weak cognitivism (1971: 278-9; Davis 1984). On his view, intending to  $\phi$  entails believing you will  $\phi$ . But he takes this belief to be grounded in an inference from signs of its truth. You infer that you will  $\phi$  from the premise that you currently ‘will’ to  $\phi$ . In my view, when you decide to  $\phi$  you thereby form a belief that you will  $\phi$ . But this belief is not inferred from signs of what you will do. Moreover, while intending entails having such a belief, having the belief does not entail intending. So I hold the view Paul says is missing. I defend what she calls non-inferential weak cognitivism about intention.

One reason this sort of view tends to be overlooked is that we confuse entailment with identity. Consider an example. It follows from the fact that something is a planet that it orbits a star.<sup>1</sup> But the planet itself is just the object that orbits the star. Its being a planet requires the presence of the star, but the star and the planet are distinct. Indeed, the star is not even part of the planet. Analogously, while intending to do something does entail thinking you will do it, the intention itself is not a thought about what you will do. It is not identical to the thought, nor does it have the thought as a proper part.

My argument that intentions are not thoughts about what you will do is that they are not shown to have been true or false by what you go on to do. In this respect, they are like preferences and desires. If you prefer sleeping in the parlor to sleeping in the attic, and wind up sleeping in the attic, your preference for sleeping in the parlor is not thereby shown to have been false. Similarly, if you intend to sleep in the parlor, and wind up sleeping in the attic, your intention is not thereby shown to have been false. By contrast, if you think you will sleep in the parlor, and wind up sleeping in the attic, your thought is thereby shown to have been false. On the face of it, intentions to  $\phi$  fall in with desires to  $\phi$  and preferences for  $\phi$ -ing, rather than with thoughts and beliefs that you will  $\phi$ .

It is easy to underestimate this argument. We are apt to think its force depends on whether intending entails belief. If intending entails believing you will do the action, we think, then intentions must be, or at least be partly composed of, beliefs about what you will do. To claim that intentions are conative rather than cognitive, therefore, is in effect to assume that intending does not entail believing you will do the action. And that just begs the question against cognitivism about intention.

But this reasoning rests on a mistake. It rests on the assumption that if intending entails believing you will do the action, then intentions are at least partly beliefs. This is like assuming

that if being a planet entails orbiting a star, then planets must be at least partly stars. Being an intention can entail the presence of a belief, even if intentions are not even partly beliefs. The force of the argument, therefore, does not depend on whether intending entails believing. The oddness of describing intentions as true or false, rather than just as fulfilled or not fulfilled, is a strike against the view that intentions are beliefs.

On the view I shall defend, intentions are conative rather than cognitive, but intending still entails believing you will do the action. What makes this a form of cognitivism is that it embraces this entailment. What makes it weak cognitivism is that I reject the entailment in the other direction. I argue that the belief whose presence is necessary for intending is not sufficient for intending. Finally, what makes it a non-inferential form of weak cognitivism is that the belief does not rest on an inference from signs or indications that it is true.

I proceed as follows. In Section 1, I explain why we should accept cognitivism, construed as the claim that intending to act entails believing you will do the action. I distinguish two ways of posing a question about what you will do, one receptive and the other directive. This distinction supports a broad construal of the category of belief, on which some beliefs are directive rather than receptive. Intending, I argue, entails having a directive answer to a question about what you will do. In section 2, I explain why we should reject strong cognitivism, construed as the claim that the sort of belief that is necessary for intending is also sufficient for intending. In sections 3 and 4, I explain why we should prefer a non-inferential form of cognitivism to an inferential form. I conclude with a reply to Paul's objections to non-inferential weak cognitivism.

## **Section 1) Cognitivism**

Cognitivism about intention is the view that intending to do something entails believing you will do it. The central argument for cognitivism is that intentional action entails at least some

awareness of what one is doing. Setiya offers the following example:

...if I have no idea that in humming Beethoven's Ninth I am driving my wife crazy, I simply cannot be driving her crazy intentionally -- at least as far as my humming goes (2007: 25).

Similar examples support a parallel thesis for future-directed intention. Suppose you are about to open the door, and someone asks, 'Why are you going to let the cat out?' If you had no idea you were about to let the cat out -- perhaps you didn't even know there was a cat -- then although it may be true that you were going to do that, you did not intend to do it.

So we have two claims:

If you have no idea that you are  $\phi$ -ing, then although you may be  $\phi$ -ing, you are not  $\phi$ -ing intentionally.

If you have no idea that you will  $\phi$ , then although it may be true that you will  $\phi$ , you do not intend to  $\phi$ .

These claims *appear* to contradict the idea that intending is a non-cognitive state, and the field divides accordingly.<sup>2</sup> Some authors group intentions with other 'conative' states like desires and preferences, and deny that intending entails believing you will do the action. Others hold that intentions are, wholly or in part, beliefs about what you will do. But there is no contradiction. One can hold that intending entails belief while denying that intentions are even partly beliefs. This is the option I develop here.

What does it mean, though, to say intending to do something entails believing you will do it? Here I have two points of clarification. The first is that my topic in what follows is prospective, or future-directed, intention. I do think acting intentionally entails believing you are doing the action, but I do not make that argument here.

The second concerns the notion of belief. One cannot, without circularity, define believing  $p$  as believing  $p$  is true. One might try to explain believing  $p$  as representing or regarding  $p$  as true. But as David Velleman says, one can represent or regard a proposition as true without believing

it, as when one imagines something to be the case or assumes it for the sake of argument (2000: 183). One might try to fix this by saying that beliefs are the kinds of things that can be true or false. But assumptions for the sake of argument are the kinds of things that can be true or false, and yet they are not beliefs. If one assumes  $p$  for the sake of argument, and it is not the case that  $p$ , one is not thereby shown to be mistaken, or in error, about whether  $p$ . But if one believes that  $p$ , and it is not the case that  $p$ , one is thereby shown to be in error about whether  $p$ . I am going to understand believing  $p$  as follows:

**B)** To believe that  $p$  is to represent  $p$  as true, and to do so in such a way that if it is not the case that  $p$ , one is thereby shown to be in error about whether  $p$

Believing that  $p$ , so construed, is roughly equivalent to thinking that  $p$ , and I shall use these expressions interchangeably.

## **Section 2) Weak Cognitivism**

Why should we prefer weak cognitivism to strong cognitivism? Here we need to ask whether the sort of belief that is necessary for intending is also sufficient. Harry Frankfurt and Sarah Paul do not explicitly address this question, but they come close. Their remarks will help us to see why we should prefer weak cognitivism to strong cognitivism.

As Paul notes (2009a: 13; 2012: 339), Frankfurt holds that in making up my mind about how I will act I may fail to constitute my will in the way that I think I have.

To be sure, a person may attempt to resolve his ambivalence by deciding to adhere unequivocally to one of his alternatives rather than the other; and he may believe that in thus making up his mind he has eliminated the division of his will and become wholehearted. Whether such changes have actually occurred, however, is another matter. When the chips are down he may discover that he is

not, after all, decisively moved by the preference or motive he supposed he had adopted (Frankfurt 1999: 101).

Paul applies this idea specifically to intention, arguing that one can decide to  $\phi$  without forming an intention to  $\phi$ :

Take Anna, who upon reflecting on all the reasons why her love affair with V is a terrible thing for her reputation, her children and so forth decides to break it off with him. Someone with thorough knowledge of her motivational profile -- her passion for V, her loathing of her husband, her feelings of suffocation in the role of political housewife -- would conclude that her motivation to end the affair is far too weak to bring her even to try to break it off. Knowing this we may be tempted to say that Anna never really intended to break up with him. She believes she ought to *and has even made the decision to* but was at no point committed to the breakup in the right way to count as intending it (Paul 2012: 338, my emphasis).

Given that Anna has made the decision to break it off with V, she cannot be undecided on the question whether she will. If we ask her what she will do, her answer can't be, 'I don't know,' or 'I'm still thinking about it.' And given that her answer to the question whether she will break it off with V is that she will, it follows that she believes she will. For if it is not the case that she will break it off with V, she is thereby shown to be in error about whether she will. One can easily imagine her friends marveling at her ability to think she will break it off. They would be amazed, not at what she is capable of intending, but at what she is capable of believing.

In Frankfurt's terms, Anna has 'made up her mind' to break it off, and she thinks she has thereby 'adopted' an intention to do so, but this change has not 'actually occurred.' Given that, as I have just argued, Anna believes she will break it off with V, it follows that her believing this is not sufficient for intending. The strong cognitivist, however, holds that the presence of this belief is sufficient for intending. This is why we should reject strong cognitivism.

The criteria for ascribing intentions are more closely bound to the agent's motivations than are the criteria for ascribing beliefs. This is not a problem for weak cognitivism, however. The weak cognitivist agrees that there is more to intending than believing you will do the action. This is why we should prefer weak cognitivism to strong cognitivism.

One might object that Paul has misdescribed the example. Perhaps she is wrong to say Anna has 'made the decision' to break it off with V. One might think that to count as really having decided, one must have the intention. This does not affect my argument, however. For suppose we agree that Anna has not really decided to break it off with V. Then we will have to find some other description for what she has done. We could say she has reached the conclusion that she will break it off with V, or that she has settled in her own mind the question whether she will do so, or that she has made up her mind that she will do so. But however we describe it, we are left with the fact that if it is not the case that she will do the action, she is thereby shown to be wrong about whether she will do it, and hence that she believes that she will do it.

Another possible objection is that the question one answers, in deciding to do something, is not the same as the question whether one will do it. One might claim that in addition to the question what she will do, Anna faces the question 'what to do' (Shah 2008). The idea would be that Anna has answered, in her own mind, the question what to do. But since this question is distinct from the question what she will do, she need not have formed a belief about what she will do.

The immediate difficulty with this proposal is that there are at least two ways to understand the question ‘what to do.’<sup>3</sup> In one ordinary sense of the expression, anyone who knows what she should do, or ought to do, or what would be best, knows what to do. One way to understand the question what to do, therefore, is to identify it with some such normative question. This will not help here, however. Anna may think for some time that she ought to break it off with V before finally deciding to do it. Answering the question ‘what to do,’ therefore, cannot be answering the question what she ought to do. One could clarify matters by saying that the question Anna has settled is whether she will break it off with V. But this is to abandon the proposal. It is to admit that in answering the question what to do, Anna has answered the question whether she will break it off with V.<sup>4</sup> For the proposal to work, therefore, there must be some third type of question, over and above the normative question, on the one hand, and the question what one will do, on the other. There is no apparent reason, however, to think there is any third type of question.<sup>5</sup>

One might respond that there simply must be a third type of question because there is a question that leads to intending.<sup>6</sup> Intending, one might argue, is a conative state, and yet we can form intentions by answering a question. If the question were about what you will do, however, then what would be formed would be a cognitive state, not a conative one. You would get a belief rather than an intention. So there must be a question that is distinct from the question what you will do, such that answering it is deciding to act.

This response overlooks an important possibility. It overlooks the possibility that forming a belief is part, but not all, of what it is to form an intention. Perhaps answering a question gets you part way to intending, but not all the way. To return to our astronomy example, suppose you wanted to make a planet, but there were no stars. If you made a star, you would then have done part, but not all, of what was required to make a planet. Recall that this does not mean the star is



part of the planet. It just means the presence of a star is part of what it is for something to be a planet. Analogously, we can say that in concluding that she will break it off with V, Anna has done part, but not all, of what is required to form an intention. She has formed a belief that she will do it, but more needs to happen. And likewise, this does not mean the belief is part of the intention. It just means believing you will do the action is part of what it is to intend.

What more is needed for Anna to count as intending to break it off with V? Intuitively, the problem is that the action has not taken root in her. One way to bring this out is to consider what we could say after the fact. Suppose Anna never does break it off with V. She thought she would, but in fact she was never really going to do it. This is what I mean by saying the action did not take root in her. It was never the case that she was going to do it.

At this point one might object that '*S* was going to  $\phi$ ' is just another way of saying *S* intended to  $\phi$ . I am trying to describe what more is needed for Anna to count as intending. If all I am saying is that she needs to intend, then I have failed to say what more is needed.

The trouble here is that 'was going to' does not express a sufficient condition for intending. Suppose you see that your friend is about to step on a rattlesnake. You yell out, causing her to stop. The snake slithers off. Your friend asks why you yelled at her. You say it was because she was going to step on a snake. If she had no idea she would do that ('What snake?') then although she was going to, she did not intend to. Why not? Because to count as intending to do something, you must have a belief that you will do it. This example shows that being going to do something is not the same as intending to do it.

The foregoing case involves an agent. But we can often say even of inanimate objects that they were going to do something but did not. Seeing that the pasta is about to boil over, I might turn down the heat just in time. In that case, the pasta was going to boil over. That's why I turned down the heat. But the pasta never did boil over.

So far I have focused on examples in which someone or something was going to do something. But we do sometimes use 'is going to' to express the same idea. For example, an arborist might say, 'That tree is going to fall over. I recommend taking it out.' Later you can say you took out the tree because it was going to fall over. What the arborist says of the tree is the same as what you say, after the fact, of the tree as it was in the past. The intuitive notion of being going to is the idea that things are headed in a certain direction, but defeasibly so.<sup>7</sup>

The upshot is that the sort of belief that is required for intending is not sufficient for intending, and the sort of conative state that is required for intending is also not sufficient for intending. Anna has the belief that is required for intending to break it off with V but lacks the conative state that is required for having that intention. And she has the sort of conative state that is required for intending to continue the affair but lacks the belief that is required for having that intention.

One might respond, on behalf of strong cognitivism, that if Anna was never really going to break it off with V, then she never really believed she would. One might point to well-known examples in which people believe that they believe *p*, but behave in ways that suggest they do not believe *p*. For example, I might genuinely believe that I believe death is not bad, but behave in ways that undermine the claim that I believe death is not bad (Schwitzgebel 2010). One might think that, analogously, Anna believes *that she believes* she will break it off with V, but the fact that she is not really going to do it undermines the claim that she believes she will.<sup>8</sup>

But the analogy is flawed. The sort of behavior that would undermine the claim that Anna believes she will break it off with V would be evidence that she is uncertain about what she will do. For example, she might tell a friend, in a confident tone, that she is going to break it off with V, but then anxiously ask whether the friend thinks she is doing the right thing. This would be evidence that, however firmly she says she will do it, she has not reached a settled conclusion

about what she will do. (One suspects she might be sending up a trial balloon to get her friend's reaction.) But Anna is not in that position. She shows no signs of uncertainty. A better analogy would be someone who believes he wants to be a lawyer, but habitually skips his law classes and spends his days playing his guitar. His behavior undermines the claim that he wants to be a lawyer, but not the claim that he *believes* he wants to be a lawyer. Likewise, Anna's 'psychological profile' undermines the claim that she was ever going to break it off with V, but not the claim that she believed she would break it off with V.

While this completes my case for weak cognitivism, an important question remains. I have said that in answering a question about what you will do, you do part of what is necessary to form an intention. If the action actually takes root, then you will be going to do the action, and in that case, you will have formed an intention. But what is the relation between the belief and the being going to?

One way to answer this question is to say the conative state serves as evidence on which the belief is based. The idea is that the agent takes the presence of the conative state as a sign or indication that she will do the action, and thus infers, from the presence of that conative state, that she will do the action. If the weak cognitivist adds this, and only this, to the conditions on intending, we get inferential weak cognitivism. In the next section, I argue that weak cognitivists should reject the inferential version.

### **Section 3) Against Inferential Weak Cognitivism**

So far I have argued that future-directed intentions are conative states of being going to do something. Cognitivism is still true because part of what it is for such a state to be an intention is for the agent to believe she will do the action. But this leaves the question of the relation between the conative state and the belief. This, we've seen, is where we face the choice between

the sort of view Grice held, which Paul calls inferential weak cognitivism, and the position she calls non-inferential weak cognitivism. The purpose of this section is to explain why we should prefer the non-inferential version. I first argue that inferentialism is too weak: its conditions are not jointly sufficient for intending. Then I show that it is also too strong. To count as intending, according to Grice, one must make a specifically *evidential* inference from the presence of the conative state to a conclusion about what one will do. But as we shall see, one can intend without making any such inference.

These points refute the Gricean version of weak cognitivism. But they do not refute weak cognitivism as such. We can have a view that is strong enough if we distinguish between two sorts of belief, one receptive and the other directive. And we can avoid making it too strong by dropping the condition that the agent makes a specifically evidential inference. This leaves it open that the agent may make some sort of inference to a conclusion about what she will do, however. So there is a respect in which the term non-inferential is misleading. The non-inferentialist can go on to speak of inference, as long as the inference in question is not evidential.

What exactly are Grice's conditions on intending? Being a cognitivist, he holds that intending to do something entails believing you will do it. And being a weak cognitivist, he holds that there is more to intending than merely having the belief. The agent must also be in a certain kind of conative state, which Grice calls a state of 'willing' the action.

But it is not enough, according to Grice, that the agent has the belief and is in the conative state. The belief must rest on an *evidential* inference from the premise that she is in the conative state to the conclusion that she will do the action.<sup>9</sup> Suppose, for example, that you 'will' to get sick, because you don't want to go to school. You also believe you will get sick because you can feel the scratchy throat and muscle aches. But you are under no illusion that your willing to get

sick makes you any more likely to get sick. So you don't infer that you will get sick *from the fact that you will to get sick*. Rather, you infer that you will get sick from the scratchy throat and muscle aches. In that case, an inferentialist like Grice will deny that you intend to get sick. You merely expect to get sick and welcome that result.

In calling this inference evidential, I mean that you accept the conclusion that you will get sick because you take the premises -- the scratchy throat and muscle aches -- as signs or indications, that is, as evidence, that the conclusion is true.

Finally, we need to note an implication of the inferentialist position. Like any weak cognitivist, the inferentialist must have in mind some conative state whose presence is not itself sufficient for intending. The idea is that absent the belief, the conative state would not be an intention. Thus, for example, whatever 'willing' is for Grice, willing an action cannot be the same as intending it.

We can now see a problem for inferentialism. The problem is that if we hold to the stricture that the conative state itself be distinct from intending, then the inferentialist's conditions are not jointly sufficient for intending. To see this, suppose your boss has been behaving badly, and you would really like to give him a piece of your mind. But you are too wise to have any intention of doing so. He is your boss, and you need the job. The desire remains, however, and you know from experience that you lack the self-control it would take to bottle it up indefinitely. Sooner or later, you conclude, you will scold your boss.

In this example, you are in a conative state whose object is scolding your boss. You also believe you will scold your boss. Moreover, you believe this on the basis of an *evidential* inference, from the presence of the conative state to the conclusion that you will scold your boss. And yet you do not intend to scold your boss. It isn't that you intend not to, necessarily. You just do not intend to do it.

One might say you do, deep down, intend to scold your boss in this example, because the urge itself is an intention all along, even before you form any belief about what you will do. But recall the stricture on conative states. If you are an inferentialist, you cannot think of the relevant conative state as being an intention all along. On that view, the conative state only becomes an intention when the inference is made and the belief is formed. So we need to imagine that before you reflect on your anger-management issues and form the belief, the conative state you are in is not an intention.

In that case, the inferentialist's conditions are all satisfied. You are in the relevant conative state, and you believe, on the basis of an evidential inference from the presence of that state, that you will do the action. But you do not intend to do the action. You merely see it coming.

This example shows that the inferentialist's conditions are not jointly sufficient for intending. This means we need to add a condition. Notice, however, that we have not yet seen any reason to *subtract* any conditions. For all we have seen so far, the inferentialist's conditions may all be necessary, even the evidential inference.

Do we need to subtract a condition? I will now argue that we do. Consider a well-known example from Michael Bratman. As we shall see, this example does not challenge cognitivism about intention, as Bratman thought it did. But it does show that the inferential version of weak cognitivism is too strong:

I might intend now to stop at the bookstore on the way home while knowing of my tendency toward absentmindedness – especially once I get on my bike and go into ‘automatic pilot.’ If I were to reflect on the matter I would be agnostic about my stopping there, for I know I may well forget (1987: 37; 2009: 31).

In the example, I intend to stop at the bookstore, but I do not make any evidential inference to the conclusion that I will stop at the bookstore. We may suppose that I am indeed in the relevant conative state of 'willing' to stop or being going to stop. But given my history, I do not take the available evidence to indicate, one way or the other, whether I will stop at the bookstore. So I neither infer that I will nor infer that I won't. The example shows that it is possible to intend to do something without making an evidential inference from the presence of the relevant conative state to the conclusion that you will do it. This means we need to subtract a condition. We need to drop the requirement that the agent makes an evidential inference from the conative state to the conclusion that she will do the action.

So the inferentialist's conditions are both too weak and too strong. We know what we need to subtract. But what do we need to add?

#### **Section 4) Non-Inferential Weak Cognitivism**

In this section, I argue that we need to add a belief condition. We need to add the requirement that one believes, in a way that does not rest on an evidential inference, that one will do the action. My argument is that there are at least two ways of *not knowing* what one will do. One way is to have no receptive answer to the question what one will do. Another way is to have no directive answer to the question what one will do. If one lacks a directive answer to that question, I argue, then one does not have an intention. So intending entails having a directive answer to the question what one will do. But our directive answers to such questions do not rest on inference from evidence of their truth. I conclude that intending entails that one believes, in a way that does not rest on an evidential inference, that one will do the action.

The case of the bad boss shows that the inferentialist's conditions are too weak. In that example, you have an answer to the question, 'Will I scold my boss.' But your answer is

grounded in an evidential inference from considerations taken as signs of what the answer is.

What is missing is a different kind of answer to that same question.

Suppose, for example, that you are Maggie Fitzgerald, the fictional prizefighter, heading into the ring. In previous bouts with this opponent, you've never lasted a full three rounds. Given your track record, you judge that you will go down in the third round. Alternatively, imagine that a gambler has offered you money to lose in the third round. Given the advantages of doing so, you decide that you will go down in the third round. Or consider these two scenarios.

Having discovered, an hour before the wedding, that my only dress clothes are at the cleaners, I might ask myself, 'What will I do?' There are various options. I could skip the wedding, go in casual dress, borrow, rent, and so on. Now compare this with a case where I am about to have my wisdom teeth pulled. I have never had ether before, and I've heard stories of people behaving strangely under the influence of ether. Here too I might pose the question, 'What will I do.' And again there are various possibilities. I might giggle a lot, talk a blue streak, or fall asleep.

One might try to explain this distinction in terms of prediction. The thought would be that when Maggie goes on her track record and I speculate about the effect of the ether, we are making predictions, and when Maggie opts to take the bribe and I opt to borrow some clothes, we are not predicting, but deciding or forming an intention.

But the appeal to prediction is problematic. First, predicting is a speech act, whereas we are centrally concerned, not with speech, but with the activity of answering a question in one's own mind. What then is it to 'predict' in one's own mind? Perhaps it is to form the sort of mental state that one could express with a future-tense assertion, such as, 'I will go down in the third round.' But that does not distinguish predicting in one's own mind from deciding or forming an intention. For one can express a decision or intention with the same sentence.



One might reply that when one does express a decision or intention, one's speech act is not that of predicting. And then one could explain predicting in one's own mind as forming the sort of mental state that one could express in a *bona fide* speech act of predicting. But now we need help in understanding what counts as the speech act of predicting. Do we perform a speech act of this type whenever we say what we will do? Evidently not, since we can express a decision or intention by saying what we will do. What then is the speech act of predicting? The temptation here is to say it is the speech act that expresses the mental state of predicting in one's own mind. But now we are moving in a circle. We are trying to explain predicting in one's own mind in terms of a certain kind of speech act while explaining that kind of speech act in terms of predicting in one's own mind.

How are we to understand the distinction between these two ways of posing a question, if not in terms of prediction? The difference lies, I believe, in one's relation to the answer. When Maggie goes on her track record, she takes there to be an answer to the question how long she will last, and she tries to tell what the answer is. She aims, as Velleman puts it, to 'reflect the truth' about what the answer is. And likewise, when I speculate about how the ether will affect me, I aim to reflect the truth. But when Maggie considers the advantages and disadvantages of her going down in the third round in light of the bribe, she stands in a different relation to the answer. Rather than trying to discover or tell what the answer is, she sees herself as settling what the answer is. The object is to 'create the truth,' as Velleman says, not to reflect it. And likewise in the wedding case, when I ask myself what I will do, my aim is not to reflect the truth about what the answer is, but to create the truth about what the answer is. When we answer a question with the aim of reflecting the truth, I will say we answer it receptively. And when we answer a question with the aim of creating the truth, I will say we answer directly.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to bear in mind that directive answers, as I use that term here, are not receptive. They are not attempts to reflect the truth about what the answer is. For this reason, an answer's being directive is not the same as its being, or being calculated to be, self-fulfilling.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps one could form a receptive belief because one expected it to be self-fulfilling. For example, one might form a receptive belief that one will recover from an illness because one is counting on the placebo effect of having that very belief. But this would not, in my view, be the sort of belief that is required for intending because, by hypothesis, it would be an attempt to reflect the truth about what the answer is. When Maggie addresses the question directly, she does not try to *tell* whether she will go down in the third round. Her relation to the answer is directive *rather than* receptive.<sup>12</sup>

Now we can see what is missing in the case of the bad boss. In that example, you are going to scold your boss, and your receptive answer to the question whether you will scold your boss is that you will. What is missing is a directive answer to that same question. This is not to say you must have an answer that is grounded in perceived advantages or disadvantages of scolding your boss. It is only to say that you must have an answer of the sort that one might reach by looking to the advantages and disadvantages of scolding him. Moreover, if you are to count as intending to scold your boss, your directive answer must be affirmative; you must think, in the directive way, that you will. The condition we need to add to Grice's view, then, is that intending to do something entails having an affirmative directive answer to the question whether one will do it.

To see that this condition is necessary for intending, consider Bratman's example once again. Suppose you ask me, as I get on my bike, whether I will stop at the bookstore on my way home, and I say I don't know. I might mean I have no receptive answer to the question. But another thing I might mean is that I have no directive answer to the question. That would mean I have not yet settled on a course of action. That is another way of *not knowing* whether I will stop at

the bookstore. But if I am undecided in this way, then I do not yet have an intention to stop. If I intend to  $\phi$ , I must have an affirmative *directive* answer to the question whether I will  $\phi$ . My stance on that question cannot be, 'I don't know, I'm still making up my mind.' So here is what we need to add:

IA) Intending to  $\phi$  entails having an affirmative directive answer to the question whether you will  $\phi$ .

From here, we can see why intending entails belief. Recall the present understanding of belief:

B) To believe that  $p$  is to represent  $p$  as true, and to do so in such a way that if it is not the case that  $p$ , one is thereby shown to be in error about whether  $p$

If your answer to the question whether you will  $\phi$  is that you will, and it is not true that you will  $\phi$ , you are thereby shown to have a false answer to the question whether you will  $\phi$ . In so far as your answer is false, things are otherwise than you represent them as being. So if your answer is that you will  $\phi$ , then you represent it as true that you will  $\phi$ . Moreover, to have a false answer to the question whether you will  $\phi$  is to be in error about whether you will  $\phi$ . Thus, if you have an affirmative directive answer to the question whether you will  $\phi$ , and it is not true that you will  $\phi$ , you are thereby shown to be in error about whether you will  $\phi$ . By (B), it follows that you believe you will  $\phi$ . And by (IA) it follows that intending to  $\phi$  entails believing you will  $\phi$ .

One might think that only receptive answers are liable to error, since error consists in a failure to discover what the answer is. But as Velleman points out, this is not the only way one can go wrong in representing the truth. One can err by failing to register, or reflect, the truth. But one can also err by failing to create the truth.<sup>13</sup> For example, Anna might believe she will break it off with V, that being her directive answer to the question what she will do, but fail thereby to constitute herself as being going to break it off with V, and hence not in the end break it off with

V. When we err in our directive answers, the error consists in a failure of self-constitution, not a failure of discovery.

I conclude that intending to  $\phi$  entails believing you will  $\phi$ . But we can also see why this belief cannot rest on an inference from signs of what you will do.

The reason is that when one's answer to a question rests on an inference from signs of what the answer is, the resulting belief is receptive rather than directive. For example, if I take the fact that you are wearing a gold band on your left ring finger to as a sign that you are married, and conclude that you are married, then my answer to the question whether you are married is receptive; it is an attempt to tell what the answer is. Likewise, if my answer to the question whether I will go down in the third round, or whether I will talk a blue streak, rests on signs of what the answer is, the resulting belief will be receptive.<sup>14</sup>

One might argue that the phenomenon of transparency provides a counterexample to this claim. Suppose, to take a familiar example, that someone asks you whether you believe there will be a third world war (Evans 1982: 225). As Evans points out, you would not ordinarily answer this question by looking to evidence of what your own psychology is like. Instead, you would look 'outward' to evidence of whether there will be a third world war, and use that evidence to decide what you believe. In that case, one might argue, your answer to the question, 'Do I believe there will be a third world war,' is not an attempt to reflect the truth about the condition of your own psychology. It would therefore not be a receptive answer to that question, and yet it would rest on signs. So sometimes, even though our answer to a question rests on signs, our answer to that question is not receptive. But I just said that if one's answer to a question rests on signs of what the answer is, then it is receptive. How can I say this?

The answer is that my claim only concerns signs of what the answer is. When we use evidence of whether  $p$  to answer the question whether we believe that  $p$ , we are using signs, but

we are not using signs of what the answer is. Signs of what the answer is would be evidence that we do or do not believe that  $p$ . For example, if the question is whether I believe there will be a third world war, one sign of what the answer is might be that I have not built a bomb shelter. If I expected a war, one might think, I would prepare for one. But as Evans notes, I would ordinarily answer the question of what I believe by looking to evidence of whether there will be a third world war. This is not evidence of what the answer to the question, 'Do I believe there will be a third world war,' is. It is evidence of what the answer to a different question is, namely, 'Will there be a third world war.' So although my answer to the question, 'Do I believe  $p$ ' typically rests on signs, it does not typically rest on signs of what the answer is. My claim is just that if one's answer to a question rests on signs of what the answer is, then that answer is receptive. Transparency is no counterexample to this.

### **Section 5) Summary**

I have argued that prospective intentions are states of being going to do something. They are not beliefs, either in whole or in part, nor are they the kinds of states that can be true or false. I have also argued that part of what it is for such a state to be an intention is for the agent to believe, in a way that does not rest on an evidential inference, that she will do the action. Intentions are thus non-cognitive states whose status as intentions depends on the presence of a cognitive state. Perhaps we sometimes do make an evidential inference from the presence of the non-cognitive state to the conclusion that we will do the action. But Bratman's example shows that this is not necessary for intending. In his example, my directive answer to the question whether I will stop at the bookstore is that I will, but my receptive stance on that question is, 'I don't know.'

One might find it odd that we can have more than one answer to the same question. But it is hard to see this as an objection. Cognitivists have rarely if ever claimed that believing you will  $\phi$  entails intending to  $\phi$  (Setiya 2016: 27). Instead, they distinguish beliefs that are ‘desire-like’ or ‘directive’ or ‘practical’ from beliefs that are not. Why should we be surprised to find that one can have beliefs of both sorts on the same topic? We might be surprised that one can believe  $p$  in one way while being agnostic about whether  $p$  in another way. But there are good surprises.<sup>15</sup>

Another worry is that the word belief is too strong for many of our directive answers. This is true. But the word belief is too strong for many of our receptive answers as well, and they are still liable to error. Suppose I have a vague suspicion, or a mere hunch, that the coin you are tossing will come up heads. I may hesitate to say, in an unguarded way, that it will come up heads. Nevertheless, if it does not come up heads, then I was in error about whether it would. I had a feeling it would be heads, but I was wrong. The difference between a full-fledged belief and a hunch or suspicion is in the subject's degree of conviction. Neither is immune to error.

Likewise, directive answers vary in degree of conviction. If I have an affirmative directive answer to the question whether I will stop at the bookstore, but my level of conviction is low, and you ask if I will stop at the bookstore, I may say, ‘That's the idea, anyway,’ or ‘That's the plan,’ or perhaps, ‘God willing.’ These are guarded ways of expressing a directive answer to a question about what I will do. And here too we may hesitate to say, flat out, that I believe I will stop at the bookstore. Full-fledged directive beliefs and mere plans differ in degree of conviction. But any degree of conviction exposes one to the possibility of error.

Note also that having an answer to a question is not the same as having what is sometimes called a credence or a degree of belief. I might have a 0.5 degree of belief that the coin will come up heads without having so much as a hunch or suspicion as to how it will come up. Having a non-zero credence that  $p$  does not entail having even the scantest feeling about whether

## **Section 6) Paul's Rejection of Non-Inferential Weak Cognitivism**

Non-inferential weak cognitivism has received almost no attention in the literature. As Sarah Paul says, it has no prominent defenders. Paul stresses the possibility of such a view, however, and makes a point of engaging with it. Her opposition to it is grounded partly in an opposition to cognitivism generally, which she supports with examples similar to Bratman's, discussed above. But as we have seen, Bratman's example is entirely consistent with the idea that intending to stop at the bookstore entails having an affirmative directive answer to the question whether I will stop there. Such an answer, I have argued, is a kind of belief. While Bratman's example works well against the view that intending entails having an affirmative receptive answer, it does not test the form of cognitivism I have developed here.

But Paul also makes an objection that is specific to non-inferential forms of weak cognitivism. The objection is that non-inferential weak cognitivism leaves the belief unsupported. Paul sees two ways in which the belief could be supported. It could be grounded in an evidential inference from the presence of the conative state, or it could be grounded in an evidential inference from its own presence. But the non-inferential weak cognitivist, she argues, cannot regard the belief as supported in either of these ways. Paul concludes that the non-inferential weak cognitivist leaves the belief 'quite ill-supported indeed' (2009a:19).

In arguing this way, Paul assumes that the belief is supported only if it is supported by an evidential inference. This assumption is reasonable if the relevant belief is a receptive answer to the question what one will do. But it is not reasonable if, as I contend, the sort of belief that is entailed by intending is a directive answer to the question what one will do. Directive answers can be supported, but they are not supported by signs of what the answer is.

To see how directive answers can be supported, suppose the gambler offers Maggie Fitzgerald money to go down in the third round. She thinks it over, asking herself, in the directive way, whether she will go down in the third round. Suppose she concludes that she will go down in the third round. This answer is supported, if it is supported at all, by what she takes to be advantages of going down in the third round. Perhaps the money will help cover her mother's prescriptions, or the early exit will provide much-needed rest. If her answer rested on signs of how long she will last, it would be receptive, not directive. Likewise, my directive answer to the question whether I will stop at the bookstore is supported, if it is supported at all, by perceived advantages of my stopping at the bookstore, not by perceived signs of whether I will.

Some of Paul's resistance to non-inferential weak cognitivism, however, appears to have a different source. She describes weak cognitivism in general as the view that intentions are composite states -- she calls them 'beliefs plus' -- consisting in a belief and a conative state, whereas she holds that intentions are 'practical' or 'conative' states with no cognitive component. But this is no objection to cognitivism. Intentions, I agree, are conative, practical states with no cognitive component. I only want to add that intending entails believing you will do the action.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> What I am calling a planet is what astronomers currently call a bound planet (Wambsgans 2011).

<sup>2</sup> While I follow common practice in referring to intentions as mental states, this is no more than a placeholder for a metaphysical account. Some authors place intentions the category of process or event, rather than state (Thompson 2008; Russell 2018). Thompson appeals to linguistic analysis (2008: 143ff). On the linguistics, see Haegeman (1989) and Brisard (2002).

<sup>3</sup> Compare Marušić and Schwenkler (2017: 309).

<sup>4</sup> Some interlocutors have suggested that deciding is answering the question what to intend. This merely pushes the problem back. Suppose I decide now to intend at midnight to drink a toxin tomorrow (Kavka 1983). In so doing, let us suppose, I answer the question what to intend. But what is that question? If we identify it with a normative question, we face the problem of weakness of will. We can fix this by saying the question is, ‘What will I intend,’ but this is to abandon the non-cognitivist proposal.

<sup>5</sup> The argument of this paragraph assumes the possibility of weakness of will. One might say, to the contrary, that thinking you ought to do something entails deciding to do it. But even if this is right, we need to know what it asserts. So we still need some understanding of what is meant by deciding to do it. We could say deciding to do it means deciding you ought to do it. But then we lose our grip on the dispute between those who think deciding one ought entails deciding to act and those who deny this. Both parties accept that deciding one ought entails deciding one ought, so we lose our sense of what is at stake between them. We can restore that sense by adopting the view that deciding to do it is deciding that you will do it. But again, this would be to abandon the idea that Anna decides *to* break it off without deciding that she will.

<sup>6</sup> Pamela Hieronymi invokes the question what to do, and holds that when one settles that question for oneself one ‘therein’ intends to act (2006: 56-7; 2011: 408).

<sup>7</sup> Thompson (2008: 132) describes intending as ‘a specifically self-conscious and reason-involving’ form of action-in-progress (cf. Tenenbaum 2012: 94-95). On a common reading, this commits Thompson to the view that intending to  $\phi$  entails that you are already  $\phi$ -ing, thus exposing Thompson's position to counterexamples (Setiya 2014; Paul 2014; Russell 2018). The view I am proposing avoids this commitment. It doesn't follow from the fact that you were going to  $\phi$  that you were ever actually  $\phi$ -ing. Thompson's remarks on ‘was going to’ suggest that our positions converge on this point and that the common reading is therefore mistaken (2008: 143ff).

We must, however, distinguish the relevant notion of being going to from the idea that some event is imminent, or in the offing. To see why, consider Anna once more. She thought she would break it off with V, but she was never actually going to do that. In fact, she was going to continue her affair with V. Now suppose that unbeknownst to Anna, V was killed in a duel. It remains true, in this case, that Anna was going to continue the affair, even though no such event was imminent. This was the direction in which she was headed, despite what she thought she

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would do. The sense in which Anna was going to continue the affair, in this case, is not that this was imminent. But it is also not that Anna intended to continue the affair.

<sup>8</sup> See Marušić and Schwenkler on the Anna example (2017: 334).

<sup>9</sup> Grice (1971: 279) is clear that the inference is an ‘evidential matter.’

<sup>10</sup> ‘Receptive’ and ‘directive’ are Velleman’s terms (2000: 194n55). Others (Marušić 2015; Marušić and Schwenkler 2018) use ‘theoretical’ and ‘practical’.

<sup>11</sup> I thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this issue.

<sup>12</sup> Velleman too describes directive beliefs as ‘cognitive rather than conative, but directive *rather than* receptive’ (2000: 194n55, my emphasis).

<sup>13</sup> Velleman observes that ‘a subject can attempt to accept what’s true by accepting something so as to make it true’ (2000: 194n55; cf. Marušić 2015: 136-40).

<sup>14</sup> I am not asserting the converse, however.

<sup>15</sup> On the idea that we can have ‘two knowledges of *exactly* the same thing,’ see Anscombe (1957: 51, 88-9), McDowell (2013), Moran (2004), Schwenkler (2015) and Setiya (2016a).

<sup>16</sup> Compare Marušić and Schwenkler (2017: 322-28).

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