

Thought's Efficacy

We are able, through thinking, to effect change in the world. Sometimes we think about what to do so that instead of merely passing judgment on the passing scene we enter into it as agents of change in our own right. We are not confined to passive observation. It is hard to imagine how, for us, things could be otherwise.

However, as happens in philosophy a satisfying account of an apparent triviality can prove strangely elusive. Soon we are in a position to earnestly pose the question: how is it that thought could be efficacious? Questions of this sort do not arise in a vacuum. Human agency is something that becomes puzzling. One reason the efficacy of thought and human agency becomes puzzling owes to the difficulty of reconciling on the one hand, the conceptual resources at our disposal through which we explain our own and others' actions, and on the other hand, a certain conception of the resources at our disposal through which we can hope to understand efficacy. The strand of thought I have in mind relies on a certain assumption as to what efficacy and causation must consist in, an assumption that efficacy is a notion that finds its home only in physical descriptions of phenomena, or the in the sorts of explanations employed in the physical sciences. In what follows I will argue that this strand of thought must be avoided if we are to do justice to our explanations of action, and therefore our conception of thought's efficacy.

I do not mean to give the impression that if only we could free ourselves of a certain way of thinking then we would also be freed of all puzzlement concerning the efficacy of thought, that our philosophical work would be done. After all, there are many ways in which the idea of practical thought can and does become puzzling. I have only mentioned one dominant way in which it does.¹ Once the question of thought's efficacy is raised we owe an account of it which, though seeking to vindicate the trivial idea we

¹ Elizabeth Anscombe describes another way in which the idea of practical thought can be puzzling. Because we have an 'incurably contemplative' (i.e. theoretical) conception of knowledge we cannot see how there could be what she calls 'practical knowledge.'

observation we began with, nevertheless wins us a securer comprehension of its significance than we had before our puzzlement began.

We shall begin by considering the causal theory of action, both the form it takes in Davidson's initial formulations as well its subsequent development. I will argue, via consideration of the problem of 'causal deviance', that ultimately the theory cannot do justice to the nature of our practical thought. However, this failure ultimately lies in its conception of what efficacy or causation must consist in. We shall see how an apparently slight shift in this conception of efficacy opens up the possibility of another kind of account. I characterize the form of this account, all too briefly, before defending it from the objections that it does not constitute an account of thought's efficacy and that it suffers from a 'causal deviance' problem of its own.

1. How is it possible that through some of our thinking we can act? How, in other words, can thought be practical? The default answer to these questions in contemporary philosophy can be traced to the dominant conception of intentional action. This conception of action - the causal theory of action - is usually framed in response to a slightly different question, one posed clearly by Michael Smith in the following passage:

Suppose an agent acts in some way. What makes it the case that he acted, as distinct from his having been involved in some mere happening or other? What makes him an agent, rather than a patient? According to the standard story of action that gets told by philosophers, the answer lies in the causal etiology of what happened.²

In the process of tackling the question Smith raises, the causal theory of action thereby develops a conception of thought's efficacy. Certain of our mental states - perhaps combinations of beliefs and desires, perhaps 'irreducible' intentions - cause our bodily movements. Bodily movements are considered intentional as opposed to 'mere

² Smith (2012) We must be careful to distinguish between the causal theory of action (what Smith here calls the 'standard story of action') and what philosophers more generally call the 'standard story of action'. The former aims to explain intentional actions in terms of their causal antecedents. The latter is a specific kind of causal theory of action, one on which the causal antecedents to action are specifically beliefs and desires.

movements' just in case they have those mental states as their causal antecedents. The theory explains in virtue of what some bodily movement counts as genuinely intentional action through the addition of a further feature: practical thought *qua* causal antecedent. This kind of theory – at least in its classic formulations - has non-reductive aspirations. It aims to give an account of our ordinary explanations of human action without reducing them to some other, allegedly more fundamental, mode of explanation. Although the theory has faced significant criticism since its inception it has nevertheless remained ascendant in philosophy of action over the last half-century or so. As a consequence many variations of the account now exist. However, it will be most fruitful to examine Donald Davidson's pioneering work, drawing on other later as necessary.³

In 'Actions, Reasons and Causes' Davidson framed his account of intentional action in opposition to an orthodoxy - that of the 'little red books'⁴ – which held that causes cannot rationalize actions. In Davidson's jargon to 'rationalize' an action is to render it explicable by 'giving the agent's reason for doing what he did'. The relation between reasons and actions in explanations of this form was not, according to the orthodoxy Davidson opposed, causal. Davidson argued that this orthodoxy faced a fatal objection. If justifications of actions bear no relation to causes of actions one can never be sure when explaining an action whether one is citing the actual reason the agent acts or some other reason which, although it might justify the action, is not their actual reason. Explanations of actions can be asked for and produced, yet whether the action truly has its source in the reasons thereby cited is always left unanswered, or strangely indeterminate.⁵ But it is essential to our ordinary way of explaining actions that there be –

³ Davidson is often cited the source of the theory. However, as Davidson himself noted (cf. 'Hempel on Explaining Action'), 'Actions, Reasons and Causes' was on many points preceded by Hempel (1962) and even earlier, Ducasse (1925). Other well-known formulations of the causal theory are found in Bishop (1989), Enc (2003) and Peacocke (1979).

⁴ By this phrase Davidson is referring to a series of books edited by R.F Holland, especially Kenny (1961), Melden (1961) and Winch (1958). Davidson also mentions Anscombe's *Intention* (published before the books in this series) as a notable anti-causalist view. As we shall by the end of the papers see this can be true in a qualified sense.

⁵ In fact, it is unclear whether the criticism Davidson makes of the authors of the 'little red books' is entirely fair. He says that 'Noting that nonteleological causal explanations do not display the element of justification provided by reasons, some philosophers have concluded that the concept of cause that applies elsewhere cannot apply to the relation between reasons and actions, and that the pattern of justification provides, in the case of reasons, the required explanation.' (1980, p. 9) But as Marcus (2012, p. 152) points out none of the authors cited by Davidson think that patterns of justification provide this kind of explanation.

at least in a central group of cases - such a thing as the *very* reason an agent, on a occasion, acted for.

Davidson's own account attempts to close the gap between justification and explanation by explaining the sense of 'because' in sentences of the form 'A Φ -ed because y' - where ' Φ ' stands for a type of action and 'y' stands for an agent's reason - as causal. Crucially, Davidson is thinking of 'y' here as a mental item, a part of the agent's psychic economy which explains why the agent acted in the way they did.⁶ More specifically, he is thinking of what he calls a 'primary reason', a mental state made by combining a pro-attitude towards actions of a certain kind and a belief that the agent's action is of that kind. (Davidson later thought that the attitude of intending was *sui generis* and thus irreducible to such a combination. However, for our purposes this shift will be of a little importance.) An attractive feature of Davidson's account is that it captures the important unity of explanation and justification present in action explanation. The resources used to explain why the action happened are the very same that provide a rational explanation of the action. Or, to put it slightly differently, the reasons that explain why an action is justified (in Davidson's 'anemic' sense that the agent saw 'something to be said' for the action) simultaneously explain why the action happened. We can think of this thought - that to explain action causally just is to explain it rationally - as Davidson's core insight. The question will be to what extent he will be able to uphold it.

Davidson originally hoped to give necessary and sufficient conditions for intentional action in terms of causal antecedents. An intentional action would be any bodily movement caused by the mental states making up the agent's reason for performing that action. However, his optimism had been tempered by the time of 'Freedom To Act' published some years later. There he gives an example of what would subsequently be called 'causal deviance' or 'wayward causation' and around which an

⁶ Davidson's account is therefore a form of what has been come to be known as 'psychologism', the view that an agent's reasons for acting are their mental states, as opposed to entities 'outside' of them. I will not be pursuing the issue of whether this view is tenable here, though I have serious doubts about it. For a criticism of psychologism see Dancy (2000) and in defense of the view see Setiya (2011) and Davis (2005). The latter authors claim that psychologism need not be committed to the idea that reasons are mental states, only that it is mental states which cause actions. If these mental states are appropriately related to reasons 'outside' of the agent, then all is well. Marcus (2012) gives good reasons for thinking this destroys what he calls the 'equivalence thesis' i.e. the idea that reasons can play both an explanatory and justificatory role.

entire sub-literature has developed. Davidson noted that the mental states causing action might not do so 'in the right way':

Let a single example serve. A climber might want to rid himself of the weight and danger of holding another man on a rope, and he might know that by loosening his hold on the rope he could rid himself of the weight and danger. This belief and want might so unnerve him as to cause him to loosen his hold, and yet it might be the case that he never chose to loosen his hold, nor did he do it intentionally.⁷

Famously - or infamously, depending on one's perspective - Davidson despaired of 'spelling out the way in which attitudes must cause actions if they are to rationalize the action' and so the prospects for an analysis of action looked poor. Davidson himself appeared to remain relatively sanguine despite this problem. But many others have found his attitude wanting, and have taken up the challenge of trying to specify what, precisely, 'the right way' of being caused is. The reaction is sound. If the causal theory of action aims to separate intentional action from mere spasm through the presence of a causal antecedent then it must take seriously counter-examples in which the presence of the causal antecedent does not guarantee intentionality. The causal theory must, in other words, specify the 'right way' of being caused that occurs in the case of action proper. However, before rushing to consider proposed solutions to this problem it will be illuminating consider Davidson's own despair at the prospect of specifying what it would be for actions to be caused 'in the right way'. Doing so will help us recognize where the true deficiency of the causal approach lies, a deficiency of which wayward causation is only the symptom.

2. It is impossible to properly assess Davidson's account of action in isolation from his doctrine of anomalous monism. Anomalous monism is introduced by Davidson as a way of rendering consistent three principles which appear to form an inconsistent triad:

⁷ Davidson (2001, Essay 4)

- i. *Principle of Causal Interaction*: 'Some mental events causally interact with physical events.'
- ii. *Principle of The Nomological Character of Causality*: 'Events related as cause and effect fall under strict general laws'
- iii. *Principle of the Anomalism of the Mental*: 'There are no strict deterministic laws on the basis of which mental events can be predicted and explained.'⁸

These principles appear to contradict one another. If, by (i), mental events can cause physical events (e.g. a primary reason causes my bodily movement) then those events fall into a causal relation with one another and therefore, by (ii), a strict general law 'covers' them. But as the first event is mental then by (iii) no such law covers them. Davidson, with some ingenuity, manages to avoid this contradiction. Although all mental events are mental *under a description*, all events (*a fortiori* all mental events) are physical *under a different description*. Mental events are indeed anomalous in relation to strict general laws - but only under their mental descriptions. Described physically, they fall under strict general laws through which they can be predicted and explained. The possibility referred to in the first of Davidson's principles is vindicated – reasons (mental) can cause bodily movements (physical) - but only on the condition that both events are covered by a strict law under their physical description. Davidson's view of events is thus 'anomalous monism.' Events are *anomalous* insofar as they are described mentally, but *monistic* insofar as they are both mental and physical.

It is understandable, once the doctrine of anomalous monism is in proper view, that Davidson should have despaired of specifying the 'right way' of causing. On Davidson's considered account we can know that mental states cause actions, but there is no possibility of knowing *how* they do. A full account of any singular causal statement must make reference, for Davidson, to strict covering laws. This is what providing an account of how something is caused consists in for Davidson: identifying the correct covering law or laws involved in such a way that the question 'How was *E* caused?' is

⁸ Davidson (2001, Essay 11)

answered. However, if such an explanation were possible in the case of actions it would undermine Davidson's non-reductive aspirations. For the real explanation of action would find its source in physical descriptions of events, as opposed to the rationally evaluable contents attributed to them under their mental descriptions. But it is also clear that no conditions of correct causation cast in a mental idiom are available. Mental descriptions of events employ predicates that cannot feature in statements of strict general laws and thus no fuller account of the way in which they cause other events can be formulated.

Davidson's despairing is perfectly intelligible. Less so, perhaps, his lack of despair over his despairing. He apparently thought that anomalous monism provided good reasons for thinking that it would be impossible to specify the 'right way' of causing action. As we have just seen, this is correct. But it is important to see that for those same reasons he was wrong to be unworried. Anomalous monism has historically been criticized as a form of epiphenomenalism, the view that mental events are caused by physical events but have no causal efficacy themselves. Although crude formulations of this criticism miss their target there is an important related criticism.⁹ Davidson has the resources to state that one mental event caused another, but not the resources to state how. The latter kind of explanation is limited to events under physical descriptions as only they instantiate properties are properly nomic. However, what the climber case precisely demands is a principled distinction between actions caused by mental states *simpliciter* and actions caused by reasons 'in light of' or 'through' their contents. Because Davidson's framework is unable to ground this distinction it can justifiably be said that explanations of actions are causally impoverished in relation to explanations of physical phenomena. Any explanation of the manner in which events cause other events is confined to the physical. So although it would be wrong to call mental events epiphenomenal, it is the case that there exists a real asymmetry between physical and mental explanations.

⁹ The crude criticism (cf. Honderich (1982)) holds that because only physical properties are properly nomic, they alone can be identified as causally efficacious. Mental properties are not really causally relevant, being neither nomic properties nor reducible to nomic properties. But Davidson does not think properties feature in singular causal statements. Tokens do. Token events can instantiate multiple properties. As anomalous monism holds that mental and physical events are token-identical it makes no sense to say that *only* the physical is causally relevant. Events conceived as tokens are the relata of causation, not the properties they instantiate.

Despite his best intentions Davidson creates a gap between reasons and causes. His theory provides the resources to give the very reason that explains the agent's action, and so constitutes that improvement on the orthodoxy he opposes. However, he is unable to guarantee that the reason that explains was after all the reason that justifies: that in the light of which the agent acts. Davidson's theory fails to live up to its non-reductive aspirations. Although it affirms anomalousness of the mental, it ultimately locates the explanation of efficacy not at the level of practical thought, but at the level of physical events and their covering laws. It is true that he escapes the charge of epiphenomenalism by affirming the token-identity of mental and physical events. But he still leaves us with an asymmetry of mental and physical explanation.

John McDowell nicely summarizes the tension in Davidson's work which we are running up against here. On the one hand, Davidson is wedded to the idea that:

concepts of "propositional attitudes" make sense only as governed by a "constitutive ideal of rationality"...the fundamental points of these concepts is to subserve the kind of intelligibility that is proper to meaning, the kind of intelligibility we find in something when we place it in the space of reasons. On that basis Davidson argues that we cannot reduce those concepts to concepts governed by a different "constitutive ideal", or, to put Sellarsian terms, concepts whose home is a different logical space.¹⁰

Yet as we have seen, Davidson also holds that:

the satisfiers of the *sui generis* concepts can be causally linked only if they are also occupants of the realm of law; and Davidson says they are, even though they are not revealed as such by their satisfaction of the *sui generis* concepts. So a reason can be a cause, though it is not by virtue of its rational relationships that it stands in causal relations.

¹⁰ McDowell (1994, 74-5)

The problem of causal deviance is best understood as a symptom of this tension in Davidson's work, one that arises because of his simultaneous acknowledgement of the *sui generis* nature of what Sellar's called 'the space of reasons', and his assumption that any efficacy – even the efficacy possessed by the denizens of the space of reasons – must ultimately have its explanation in the realm of law. As such, it is not a mere quirk of the theory, not to be taken seriously.

3. Since Davidson the main challenge facing the causal theory of action has been to specify conditions under which mental states cause actions in the 'right way'. As we have already noted, when an action is intentional we express this by saying that it was caused in the 'light of' the agent's reason or something similar. However, another way of saying this is to say that an action is caused in the right way when it is caused *because* of the reason, where the sense of 'because' is the same sense one finds in justifications of action. ('Why did you do that?' 'Because he was about to vote for the Tories!') It is precisely this sense of 'because' that Davidson invoked in 'Action, Reasons and Causes', and that he claimed could be understood using our ordinary notion of cause. However, the possibility of deviant causation revealed that the bare notion of cause Davidson invoked needs to be further specified or supplemented in order to match the 'because' that in fact figures in action explanation. Such specification must reveal how when something is caused in the 'right way' it is caused in virtue of the fact that the agent's reason justifies it. If the notion of being caused in the 'right way' simply appeals to physical mechanisms then Davidson's core insight will be lost entirely. His own account failed because it could not explain the distinctive way in which mental states cause intentional actions. Davidson's notion of efficacy, tied as it is to the realm of physical law, could not illuminate the causal relation between mental states and intentional action. Unless we are to give up on the anomalous and *sui generis* character of reasons explanations, an explanation of the 'right way' of causing must extricate itself from the notion of physical efficacy. I will be assuming, therefore, that Davidson's mistake was not in thinking that the explanations guided by the constitutive idea of rationality are *sui generis*, but in thinking that the objects of such explanations had to be efficacious in the way Davidson thought they were. That said, as the causal theory of action aims to

analyze intentional movement in terms of the concept of causation no condition on normal causation can simply smuggle the idea of intentional movement (be it through unanalyzed ideas of agential 'control', 'sensitivity' or whatever) into the explanation.

There exists a huge literature on the problem of deviant causation comprising a plethora of proposed solutions and as many, or more, bizarre and wonderful counter-examples designed to foil those solutions. A tour through the literature would surely convince the reader that no uncontroversial solution as yet exists. Some despair of finding a solution, others think there is still good reason to hope for one. However, rather than exhaustively surveying the proposed solutions and corresponding counter-examples - which would at any rate constitute a mammoth task - I will instead argue that we have good reason to be skeptical on independent grounds that any solution will be forthcoming. Once we have in proper view the problem of deviant causation and the materials the causal account has at its disposal, it will be hard to see how the problem could ever be resolved.

4. Sarah Paul glosses the causal theory as follows: 'Intentional actions are those behaviors that are caused to occur by some relevant psychological property of the agent, where the notion of "cause" in use here is efficient causation – "the primary source of the change or rest" of the agent.'¹¹ It might be thought that because the kind of cause in question is efficient causation that the causal theorist must have already adopted an implicitly reductive view of action. I think that would be too hasty a conclusion. The idea of efficient causation Paul cites need not be the idea of mere physical causation (though it may harmlessly involve it). We can – as I take it Aristotle did – understand a 'primary source of change or rest' as encompassing more than change caused merely in virtue of the physical things, or the physical properties of things.¹² Perhaps the specific way in which an intention is a primary source of change in bodily movement might be such as to count as 'the right way' of being caused that the causal theory is after.¹³

¹¹ Paul (2011, 2) The quotation is from Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, v. 2.

¹² For example, in Aristotle we find among the efficient causes the art of casting a bronze statue. See *Physics* 195 a 6-8., *Metaphysics*. 1013 b 6–9.

¹³ From now on for ease of expression I'll let intentions stand proxy for the sort of mental states causing actions.

However, the conception of causation in question is more specific than Paul's gloss suggests. According to the causal theory of action causal relata are fundamentally discrete. I use the word 'discrete' here as a quasi-technical term. A discrete cause or effect is one about which - through consideration of it in isolation - nothing can be inferred concerning what caused it, or what it caused. One can think of this as a kind of conceptual independence. None of the concepts through which we grasp the intrinsic nature of an effect imply that the effect arose from any specific kind of cause or that it will give rise to any specific kind of effect. In the causal theory of action this means that a bodily movement can be grasped as exactly the movement it is, without us knowing whether it is intentional or not. Its being intentional is an additional, 'relational' property, that it earns in virtue of its causal etiology. Enc is especially clear on this point: 'what counts as [an action] depends not on the *intrinsic* (physical, physiological, or chemical) structure (or properties) of [actions], but rather on their aetiology (an *extrinsic*, relational property of [actions]). Hence of two *physically identical* entities, one may be [an action], and another not.'¹⁴ No mark of intentionality is found *in* bodily movement, as intrinsic to the sort of movement it is, when that movement counts as intentional.

Similarly, that an intention has a certain content provides no way of knowing, just through the consideration of it alone, that it will cause any particular sort of bodily movement. Consider this passage from Paul:

Of course, the representation of [the action of] squirrel-house building is not irrelevant to the behavior caused by the state of intending; it is not merely the initiation of the building that is causally explained by the intention, but the sustained progression from initiation to completion of the squirrel house. The causation and guidance of behavior must be somehow sensitive to the representative content of the intention. But the representation of the squirrel-house-building is independent of the causal powers of intending in the sense that the very same representation could feature as the content of a variety of other intentional states – beliefs,

¹⁴ Enc (2003, 99)

desires, wishes – and in that its satisfaction conditions could be met without the requisite behavior being caused by an intention.¹⁵

Although Paul says the intention is supposed to cause the movement specified in its content in a way sensitive to the contents of the intention, it is still true that the causal power of intending is separate from the content it in fact has. As strange as it seems there is no way of telling just from the fact that an intention caused movements describable as *building a squirrel house* that the content of the intention was in fact: *build a squirrel house*. Similarly, there is no telling, just through consideration of an intention with the content: *build a squirrel house*, that it will cause bodily movements falling under that description.

If intentions and bodily movements are discrete in the way I've described a rift opens up between the contents of intentions and their causal power. This immediately creates difficulties. If the power of an intention to cause movement is conceived of as separate from the content of that intention then it will be mysterious – or at least require more elaboration - how intentions are able to cause the appropriate bodily movements. Moreover, the account simply threatens to become reductive. If the causal power of intentions are separate from what makes them items in the space of reasons, it would appear that some form of epiphenomenalism is being proposed. These criticisms may appear unfounded. Did Paul not explicitly indicate in the above passage that according to the causal theory intentions are such as to cause actions in a sustained way that is sensitive to their contents? If that's the case then what I'm saying here would seem misguided. If the causal theorist can explain that feature of intention in a satisfactory way then these problems will disappear, or at least appear more resolvable. However, I am doubtful that this feature can be so explained. Since the most common concept appealed to in attempts to specify normal causation is that of sensitivity, it will be worthwhile considering why the causal theory cannot help itself to it. In so doing we will have gone a long way towards the task of demonstrating that the prospects for the theory are very dim.

¹⁵ Paul (2011, 3)

5. One way to explain action's sensitivity to intention would involve an understanding of the intrinsic nature of bodily movements making up intentional actions as internally related to the intentions responsible for them. However, this possibility – whatever sense can be made of it – is clearly ruled out on the causal theory because it (the possibility) conceives the intention and the action as not being discrete. It is a consequence of this feature of intentions and actions that any condition formulated in order to guarantee the sensitivity of one to the other will have to do so without positing any intrinsic features of either that would explain this.

Now, this may seem to be precisely what the causal theorist wants to deny. For example, if Paul's gloss is correct, then intentions are supposed to be those states whose intrinsic nature is to tend to bring about what they represent. I do not deny that this is the concept of intention that the causal theory aims to have – that it is part of the theory's self-conception that intentions work that way - my skepticism is directed at the thought that the theory can make sense of this concept given its broader commitments. Recall the concerns rehearsed above. If mental states like intentions are discrete then the thought that an intention must be sensitive to its own content threatens to become problematic. The causal power of intentions – i.e. their capacity to be the 'primary source of change or rest' in the body – will be separate from their contents. Although my intention may carry the content *build a squirrel house*, the capacity of the intention to bring about that action is not dependent on that content. If it were, then we would be able to infer through consideration of the content of the intention, what kinds of movements it would cause. In light of this, how can the causal theorist explain the sensitivity of intentions to their contents?

In the literature on causal deviance the notion of sensitivity is cashed out in different ways, the details of which are not particularly significant for our purposes. We can take Bishop's account as representative:

In...intentional action, the agent *carries out* [an]...intention by making controlled bodily movements to fit its content. According to the sensitivity strategy, this reference to the agent's exercise of control can be analyzed without reference to agent-causation. There is exercise of control if and

only if the causal link from basic intention to matching behavior is sensitive, in the sense that *over a sufficiently wide range of differences, had the agent's intention differed in content, the resulting behavior would have differed correspondingly*. The sensitivity condition is thus understood in terms of the existence of suitable pattern of counter-factual dependence of resulting behavior upon the content of the agent's intention.¹⁶

Bishop's characterization of sensitivity is suggestive but it raises the question - in virtue of *what* is behavior counterfactually dependent on the contents of intentions? Let us grant for the sake of argument that the idea of a pattern of counterfactual dependence captures our intuitions as to what movements we would count as 'controlled' and thus intentional. Our concern was that if even intentions are sensitive to their contents, it would be mysterious how they could be so, given the conception of causation at play. Bishop has given us a characterization of what it would be for an intention to cause bodily movement sensitively, but not an explanation of how this would be possible.

Now, at this point we are in danger of reaching something of an dialectical impasse. I think Bishop (as well as other causal theorists) do not see it as part of their explanatory task to explain the manner in which intentions are sensitive to their contents. Bishop thinks that to specify what it is to be caused 'in the right way' by an intention it is enough that one characterize (in terms that do not assume the concept of agency) what sort of structure or pattern of causal relation would hold between the intention and bodily movement in cases of normal action. On Bishop's view the answer to the question - 'In virtue of what do these counterfactuals that underlie sensitivity hold?' - must either be that they hold in virtue of nothing in which case we are left with a brute mystery. Or it must be that they hold in virtue of some physical mechanisms which perhaps can be realized in different sorts of ways. Either answer is unsatisfactory. The latter is a retreat into a reductive account. The former simply gives up on providing an account of action.

Bishop's inability to explain normal causation is unsurprising given the conception of causation at work in causal theory of action. Attempts post-Davidson to

¹⁶ Bishop (1989, 150)

provide sensitivity conditions for action causation rest, sometimes more crudely, on the same assumptions regarding efficacy that we find in Davidson's work. I have been explaining the failure of this sort of account through reference to the discrete nature of intentions and action. However, it is clear these relata are not absolutely discrete. Although we cannot know through consideration of an intention what sort of bodily movement it will cause we *can* know, just through consideration of it, that it can cause bodily movements. The fact that this latter is knowable reveals a bias in favor of a notion of physical efficacy that has its proper place somewhere else. The challenge for the causal theory is to connect this bare power to cause movement – a power assumed to be unproblematic - to the contents of intentions. Such a difficulty only occurs because it is taken for granted that the efficient-causal nature of intentions can be made sense of, whilst the idea that intentions (and other items Sellar's would have placed in the 'space of reasons') posses a distinctive mode of efficacy is mysterious, and so must be domesticated within another form of explanation.

6. The mode of explanation that the causal theory adopts can be usefully characterized as *mechanistic*. The agent is conceived as a complex mechanism whose parts can be understood as being efficacious primarily in terms of their efficient-causal powers. Consider a player-piano (or pianola). The player-piano's function can be described in terms of discrete parts which are understandable entirely separately from the operation of the whole. A single part, considered of itself is fully comprehensible without reference to any other part of the mechanism. But in virtue of its role in the mechanism as a whole we can judge that it is nevertheless a percussive part, a script reader, or whatever. Because it has a place in the causal workings of the whole we ascribe to it properties we otherwise would not. This ascription is external insofar as nothing depends for us to grasp of any given part what *it* is that we comprehend it as having the role that it does. The lesson we learned above is that this model does not provide a notion of causation that will solve the problem of causal deviance and illuminate the nature of intentional of action. Once the connection between the efficient causal power of an intention and its content is severed fatal problems emerge.

However, there is one other way a causal theorist might exploit the model of a mechanism in order to solve the problem of causal deviance. One might distinguish between an agent's proper and improper functioning. Instead of developing an account of the 'right way' of being caused merely from the structure of a causal chain, one would define the purpose of the mechanism (the agent) as a whole and understand what constitutes normal causation in terms of however the mechanism normally functions so as to behave in the way it is supposed to. A mechanism might malfunction in some way and produce the same movement as it would had it been functioning normally, but this sort of case could be respectably distinguished from the good one through the notion of normal function.

Something essential was left out of our description of a player-piano. Namely, that it is an artifact. As such there is a clear way of explicating its overall function in terms of what it is supposed to do. This form of explanation makes essential reference to the skill and/or intentions of its makers. So in this case the idea of a mechanism in fact involves, at some level, reference to human mindedness. We can only grasp the function of the whole and its parts in view of the maker's intentions. Otherwise, there would be no matter of fact about what mechanism it was, or whether it was a mechanism at all. It is in virtue of it being an artifact – the product of self-conscious labour – that we can ask what it is *supposed* to do. Where does the notion of 'supposed to' get a foothold in the case of an agent? One natural answer is that the agent functions properly when it causes the action that it intended to. But of course, one cannot appeal to the notion of agency here to specify the conditions of correct functioning on pain of giving a circular account.

Now, the notion of correct functioning will not be able to be arrived at from merely observing the internal workings of the agent *qua* mechanism. As the states or events which make up the mechanism are discrete we can only attribute a function to the parts or the whole as an 'additional characteristic'; such ascriptions turn on something external to the parts considered in themselves. Consider Berent Enc's proposed solution to the problem of causal deviance which turns on the idea of a mechanism's proper functioning. He gives the following definitions:

Causal Theory of Action: The behavioral output of an organism is an

intentional action A if it is caused in the way it is supposed to be caused by an intention to do A.

Correct Causation: An intention to do A causes an event in the way it is supposed to if and only if for any intermediate link, X, from the intention to the event, the fact that the intention causes X is explained by the fact that X results in that event.¹⁷

Enc's account of correct causation makes use of the idea of proper function insofar as it counts an event as causing an action 'in the right way' if the fact that it caused the action is explained *by* the fact it was 'supposed' to cause action. Enc's hope is that he can in turn give an account of this in a way which does not simply presuppose the notion of agency. To this end he reformulates *Correct Causation* thus:

Correct Causation (2): An intention to do A causes an event in the way it is supposed to if and only if for any intermediate link, X, from the intention to the event, the fact that a tokening of the intention causes a token X is explained by the fact that under the circumstances that type of X would generate that kind of event.

Enc has here glossed 'supposed to' in terms of what X 'would generate' under certain circumstance. Everything depends, therefore, on what explanation is given of the fact that a token intention 'would generate' a token action. Unfortunately the answer Enc gives to this question is: evolutionary adaptation. What separates proper from improper functioning of the agent for Enc is that when properly functioning the action is caused by an intention which has adapted – in the sense of 'adaptation' we find in evolutionary biology - to cause that kind of action. In giving this kind of explanation he entirely neglects the point that an explanation of correct causation must illuminate how the action is caused in light of the agent's reasons. The fact that natural selection has led to a

¹⁷ Enc (2003, 112), I've renamed the two principles for ease of exposition, which otherwise are quoted verbatim.

situation in which events of a certain sort normally cause events of another certain sort in no way guarantees that actions are performed this way. It is simply the statement of how an certain alleged regularity came about.¹⁸

Can we draw any general lessons from Enc's failure here? On the face of it, his account falls foul to a similar problems that afflicted Bishop and other sensitivity theorists. In the end the Enc's story of what it is to be caused 'in the right way' is to be caused in a way which one's intentions have adapted to cause actions. This sort of explanation either still owes us an account of how that way lines up with being caused 'in light of the reason'. However, Enc's failure to deploy notion of proper function in aid of the causal theory is instructive. Once we conceive of the agent as a mechanism we are unable to give content to the notion of proper functioning which draws on something *internal* to the mechanism itself. Neither can we find any *external* principle (e.g. the designer in the case of the player-piano) that would suffice, except of course one simply presupposes the concepts which are to be explained causally.

7. The causal theory of action faces insurmountable problems. In conceiving of practical thought and action as discrete in the way that it does it opens up a rift which cannot be closed by any but reductive means. In the light of this, one might be tempted to reassess the anti-causal doctrines of the 'little red books' Davidson opposed. I think this would be mistaken. Although some the authors Davidson cites and their doctrines were perhaps too quickly dismissed following his popularization of the causal theory there is no doubt that there is often a difficult tension in those works. At any rate, we should not, I think, forget Davidson's most important insight. That through which we explain actions is that through which actions are justified. To state the same point in slightly grandiose terms: in the explanation of intentional action, rationality and causality are one. However, in aftermath of our discussion it can seem difficult to uphold Davidson's insight and so the temptation to dig in one's heels arises. The anti-causalist view is one way this can be done. One insists that explanation through reasons are one thing, explanations through causality

¹⁸ This point is somewhat obscured in Enc's book. When he tests his account against various examples of deviant causation he does so using the formulations above without mentioning the notion of adaptation which underlies them. As such, his account gets around the counter-examples fairly well. However, the real question is whether the idea of adaptation given by natural selection is able to give sense to the idea of some bodily movement arising how it is 'supposed to.' The answer to that question has to be 'no'.

another. The opposite temptation is to give up on the idea that an illuminating causal account of intentional action is in the offing, and think that therefore it is better to employ a causal understanding of human beings that pays no heed to our existing action explanations. However, this is a radical step that threatens to make nonsense of our ordinary practices of explanation.

Perhaps we can avoid both of these unappealing paths by finding a different way to think about the causality of intention. We traced the source of the difficulties facing the causal account to its conception of causation. The idea that intentions and actions are discrete with respect to one another, combined with the idea that intentions possess an efficient-causal power led to inextricable problems. We can break with this conception by first of all bracketing the notion of efficient causation momentarily and asking what kind of explanation we would be engaged in if we dropped the idea that intentions and actions are discrete. For a bodily movement to be non-discrete with respect to an intention it would have to be impossible to grasp the movement as the movement it is without knowing the intention responsible for it. Similarly, for an intention to be non-discrete it would have to be the case that by consideration of the intention alone one would be able to know what sorts of movements it would cause. From the perspective of the causal theory of action these ideas are incredible. How could knowledge of bodily movement or intention in mere isolation yield such an understanding? However, we do not ordinarily treat these ideas as outrageous. On the contrary, there is something strange about the idea that one could grasp the kind of movement a bodily movement is without knowing whether it was intentional or not. Similarly the idea that intentions can bring about *actions* otherwise than the ones they intend to is also peculiar from our usual perspective, even if we can't be sure an intention won't cause us to lose our nerve and drop a rope. Our intuition about Davidson's climber is that he hasn't performed the very same action as his intention specified. It is the causal theory that has trouble accounting for this fact.

Our ordinary way of thinking may not obviously be in tension with this line of thought, but we are still in the dark as to what sort of explanation this non-discrete conception of action and intention might figure in. Now, if we take efficient causation as our model here we are likely to come a cropper. The causal relations in the case of action and intention seem to be somehow closer – more tightly bound one another – than the

relata in efficient causation are. In order to understand what kind of movement an intentional action is one has to know what the agent's intention in acting is. Nothing else but *that*, will suffice. Any time we witness someone acting there are always an indefinitely large number of possible actions the agent could be performing consistent with their observable movements. Unless we know with what intention someone is moving we cannot know what movement it is they are making.¹⁹ This seems to be because in some sense their intention dictates the movements being made. Now, in efficient causation this tight bond between causal relata seems absent. To know how something came to be I may need to know its efficient cause. But I do not need to know something's efficient cause in order to successfully classify it as the sort of thing it is.²⁰ This suggests that the kind of causation at hand is not what Aristotle called efficient causation, but in fact is closer to what he called *formal* causation. If I am to understand what someone is doing when they are moving in such-and-such a way what I need to know is how those movements constitute a way of doing something. This seems precisely the sort of knowledge that I would gain in knowing someone's intention. For it is this which gives their movement the particular character that it does whether it be that of tossing a pancake, racing a dog etc. If this is true then perhaps the reason why conceiving of actions and intentions as discrete causal relata has been so problematic is because this feature is appropriate to efficient – as opposed to formal - causation.

8. How can we better understand the idea that intention is the formal cause of action? In her monograph investigating the concept of intention Elizabeth Anscombe suggests that practical knowledge – by which she means knowledge of one's own action – is the 'cause of what it understands.' Everything suggests that she means the *formal* cause:

¹⁹ I do not mean to suggest that one cannot see what someone is intending to do just by looking at them. Here I am in agreement with Anscombe, "All I am here concerned to do is note the fact: we can simply say 'Look at a man and say what he is doing' –i.e. say what would immediately come to mind as a report of give someone who could not see him and who wanted to know what was to be seen in that place. In most cases what you will say is what the man knows; and again in most cases you will be reporting not merely what he is doing, but *an* intention of his..." (1957, 8-9) My claim is just that if it were not possible to know with what intention someone was moving, then one could not know what kind of movement one was witnessing.

²⁰ This is not to say that knowing the efficient cause of something might make it easier for me work out what it is if for some reason this is not immediately clear. It might narrow down my options for working out what sort of thing it is. But it won't be necessary for me to grasp something's form that I know its efficient cause.

This means more than that practical knowledge is observed to be a necessary condition of the production of various results...It means that without it what happens does not come under the description – execution of intentions – we have been investigating.²¹

On Anscombe's view an intentional action is a movement of a certain form which can only have that form if it is the product of the agent's non-observational practical knowledge. Practical knowledge does not figure here an 'extra feature' which makes some otherwise identifiable movement intentional.²² Rather, it is constitutive of that form of movement called action that it is the product of the agent's practical thought. Without the practical thought there is no movement to speak of.

A mark of this kind of practical thought is that it involves the fitting together of means and ends in a calculative order. Anscombe gives the following famous example, in which an agent is being asked a series of 'why' questions by an interlocutor:

Why are you moving your arm up and down (A)?

B: *I'm operating the pump*

Why are you B?

C: *I'm replenishing the house water supply*

Why are you C?

D: *I'm poisoning the inhabitants.*

We find here either a means-end pattern (in which one thing is done *in order to* do another) or a part-whole pattern (in which one thing is being done *as part of* doing another). Each action-description is explained by the one following it until we reach *D*, which marks the end of the rationalization. The first thing to note about this order is that it has a *teleological* structure. Each action is done for the sake of the next, as well as for

²¹ Anscombe (1957, 88)

²² Anscombe criticizes this approach in the infamously tricky section 19 of *Intention*. See Ford (2011), (2015), for illuminating discussions of Anscombe's own methodology as well her reasons for rejecting this approach.

the sake of the action as a whole. Crucially however, this order does not only specify the structure of the agent's action, it gives the structure of the agent's practical reasoning. It is only because the agent knows that they are acting according to this order that the action takes place at all. Were it a surprise to the one acting that they are poisoning the inhabitants – or if they knew this only by observation - then it could not be the case they were doing so intentionally. If the agent didn't know how to do each of these things by doing the others, and hadn't fitted these means and ends together, there would be no A-D order. Thus, we are dealing not just with a teleological structure, but a *self-conscious* teleological structure.

We can see that causal deviance, far from being a problem on this view, is in fact excluded in principle. A bodily movement will count as intentional action on Anscombe's view only if it is the object of an agent's practical knowledge. But to be the object of practical knowledge just is to be brought about through the agent's intention. There is no independently specifiable movement-type of which we can sensibly ask, 'Was it caused by an intention?' or 'Did the intention cause it in the right way?' We can only ask of some movement, one which we have not already grasped the intrinsic nature of, 'is this an intentional action?' If it is, then we already know that it was shaped by the agent's intention.

However, not only is causal deviance ruled out but we also have the beginnings of a positive account of a distinctively rational form of causation. This should not be surprising, given our explanation of how the problem of causal deviance arises in the first place. Our criticism of the causal theory has been that it is unable to do justice to the idea that a causal explanation might also be an explanation in terms of the rational 'contents' of intention, the problem being that the notions of causality and the rational contents of mental states have come apart in a problematic way. On the approach currently being proposed there is no sense to be made of the separation of the causal and rational aspects of an agent's practical thought. It is only insofar as it is knowledgeable that an intention is able to be the formal cause of movement, and the movement it causes is action only in virtue of being brought about by that knowledge.

I have tried to depict the transition from the causal theory of action to a different conception as an attractive one, once one has abandoned the idea that intentions and

actions are discrete. However, it will be clear to the reader that this small change from discrete to non-discrete causes leads to an entirely different form of account. Instead of offering an analysis of intentional action. Anscombe is involved in elucidating certain forms of judgment and description in a way which does not seek to explain the action's essence in terms of fundamentally different concepts. Clearly, to understand and vindicate such a position more fully would take more than a paper in itself. Before concluding I want to rebut two concerns that might block someone's initial interest in such an account. The first concern is about whether I have lost any notion of efficacy we would be interested in having in advocating a transition from efficient causation to formal causation. The second concern is raised by a recent paper by Paul, in which she argues that there is a form of 'deviant causation' that applies even within Anscombe's account.

9. I have suggested that we should view the relation between an agent's practical thought and their action through the lens of formal causation. A part of the attraction of this view was supposed to be that it allows us move past the issue of deviant causation whilst still offering a properly causal explanation of action. Yet some will be left with the nagging feeling (perhaps the howling pain) that formal causation is not what is wanted. If we want thought to be properly efficacious, surely we want it not just to be involved in the explanation of action's form, but in the explanation of how action is brought about. If the account of action being offered is *merely* constitutive then it would seem that we will have failed in giving an explanation of what brings about action.

Sometimes, as Aristotle notes, formal and *final* causation coincide in our explanations of things.²³ Aristotle's examples are drawn mainly from nature. For example, in the explanation of the generation of a lizard we appeal to the full-grown lizard as the end point of its generation. But this is also what we appeal to in our account of *what* a lizard is. I want to suggest that something similar is true of intentional action. If so, then we arguably have an explanation of action which is not merely constitutive but also causal, for a teleological explanation does not just explain what something is but how it has come to be, and potentially where it is headed.

²³ *Physics* 198 a 23–26

I noted before that an intention is the formal cause of action in virtue of being an expression of the agent's practical knowledge. Practical knowledge is the principle of unity (or 'structuring principle') of a certain teleological order (the 'A-D' action order). The form an intention gives to an action is therefore teleological. The form an action 'inherits' from the agent's practical knowledge is of a sort that must be comprehended in terms of a teleological whole (A for the sake of B, B for the sake of...etc.) This means that an agent's intention does not just determine an action's form, but also how it came to be. Intention is to the explanation of how an action came about and its form, as mature lizard is to explanation of how lizards come about and a lizard's form.

Now, of course, employing the explanatory framework of formal and teleological causation is likely to be controversial in the climate of contemporary philosophy and their use in explaining action no doubt requires greater elaboration and defense. Though, of course, part of the motivation for doing so has been the failure of a modern conception of efficient causation as applied to action. However, I hope to have shown there is at least notion of *efficacy* being appealed to which, if it can be defended, would show that we are engaging in the project of explaining how an action came to be, not just what it is.

10. Sarah Paul has argued in a recent paper that there is a form of causal deviance that afflicts the Anscombian account of action and that therefore the reasons for adopting it over the causal theory of action are lacking.²⁴ Paul's counter-example to Anscombe's theory takes as its point of departure Anscombe's own water-pumping example:

Imagine two gardeners, each of whom is moving his body in precisely the same way. Each grasps the handle of a water pump and moves his arm up and down, thereby operating the pump, thereby causing water to flow into the cistern that is the water supply for his employers' house. Further, each has been informed by a reliable source that there is poison in the water being pumped, and each knows that the inhabitants of the house will drink the poisoned water once it is in the cistern. The two gardeners thus have

²⁴ Not that issues of causal deviance are the only reason to adopt Anscombe's account over the causal theory of action. However, insofar as the dialectic of this paper is concerned, Paul's challenge seems particularly relevant.

precisely the same knowledge of the causal chain that holds in these particular circumstances between the arm movement, the operation of the pump, the replenishing of the water supply and the inhabitants of the house being poisoned.²⁵

Paul goes on to imagine that when each gardener is asked why they are doing what they are doing they give different answers. The 'Murderous Gardener', claims that he is poisoning the inhabitants. That way, the other lot (whoever it is doesn't matter, just *not* the Tories) will get in power. The 'Indifferent Gardener', claims that he just earning is pay, which require him to pump water into the cistern. He does not care whether the inhabitants end up dead or not, although he knows the water is poisoned and that the inhabitants will likely drink it and die. Paul takes it that these agents are intuitively engaged in different actions. The former is poisoning the inhabitants in order to allow a coup to take place, the latter is simply filling the cistern with water as his pay depends on it. Still, he knows what the foreseen side-effect of this action will be.²⁶

Paul thinks the Anscombian view struggles to capture the difference between the actions the gardeners perform. On Anscombe's view the action the agent is performing is determined by the agent's practical knowledge. If in two cases the agent's practical knowledge is indistinguishable, then it would seem that they are performing the same action:

The problem immediately arises that on the surface, each gardener appears to have precisely the same non-observational knowledge of what he is doing. Murderous and Indifferent Gardener each knows full well, and in a non-observational way, that in moving his arm up and down he is operating the water pump, thereby refilling the cistern, and thereby poisoning the inhabitants. Further, this knowledge has a practical orientation in the sense of determining the thing known, in that in the

²⁵ Paul (2011, 10)

²⁶ Paul's choice of example is very unfortunate. For the fact that the foreseen side-effect is so terrible that we would hold the gardener morally responsible for it means that our judgements about whether the poisoning is intentional are likely to diverge from Paul's. However, I will go along with Paul here, for the example could have been easily changed to make the same point.

absence of this knowledge, there would be no intentional action that comes under all of those description...Specifically, what is problematic is the particular bit of non-observational knowledge both gardeners appear equally in possession of and entitled to: "By refilling the cistern, I am hereby poisoning the inhabitants of the house." The very same series of events is occurring in each case, and both gardeners have non-observational knowledge of these events that includes the description "poisoning." It looks for all that has been said as though Murderous Gardener and Indifferent Gardener have performed the same action after all.²⁷

If Anscombe's account of action has the consequence that it counts two actions as identical which are in fact distinct then - Paul reasons - this phenomenon warrants the title 'deviant formal causation'. Deviant formal causation occurs when the form an action inherits from the agent's practical knowledge renders it a different action than we would intuitively consider it to be. However, Paul makes some unwarranted assumptions which lead her to think about her example in the wrong way. Before addressing those I want to give a different interpretation of the scenario.

Consider what would happen in each case if for some reason the water was getting pumped into the cistern but the poison – perhaps due to a differing density level – was not moving into the cistern properly with it. At this point the Murderous Gardener would have to take measures to prevent this from happening or else find another way to get the poison into the cistern. The Indifferent Gardener, however, could simply keep pumping away happy in the knowledge that not only would he still be getting paid, but he wouldn't be a suspect in a murder investigation any time soon. This difference is registered in Anscombe's account by the fact that they are each doing different things *in* pushing the pump up and down. Although they have a similar looking A-C order, they have very different action once we reach the letter D. One gardener's D-action is 'To murder the inhabitants' whilst the other's D-action is 'to get paid'. However, because the A-D order is a teleological whole, we can only understand each part insofar as it

²⁷ Paul. (2011, 10-11)

contributes to the whole. The act of pushing up and down on the pump is a different one when aimed at a different end.²⁸ What action we can be considered to be performing is highly dependent on how that action fits into the calculative context of the agent's reasoning. Paul's example trades on the fact that the two agents might look as though they are doing something identical some of the time if conditions were just so. However, reflection on what *would* happen if things went slightly differently reveals that what looks identical to the naked eye can differ vastly once each agent's reasoning is taken into account.

In the quoted passage Paul makes two assumptions which appear problematic. The first is that each gardener has the same non-observational knowledge. The second is that each gardeners' non-observational knowledge is practical. Given that each gardener has a different overall purpose there should be, for Anscombe, at least one difference between their respective non-observational knowledge. The Murderous Gardener knows non-observationally that he is poisoning the inhabitants, whilst the Indifferent Gardener knows non-observationally that he is getting paid. Paul wants to insist, however, that both gardeners know, non-observationally, that they are poisoning the inhabitants of the house. However, in making this claim lumps together two kinds of non-observational knowledge. According to Anscombe only the Murderous Gardener has non-observational knowledge *in intention* (or practical knowledge) that he is poisoning the inhabitants. The Indifferent Gardener is not trying to poison anyone – that's not apart of his intention – and thus his non-observational knowledge regarding the poison must have its source elsewhere. Judging by the example Paul has in mind testimony here. In fact I think it would be a mistake to consider testimonial knowledge as non-observational.²⁹ But even we put aside that point and count it as non-observational knowledge, this knowledge does not derive from his practical reasoning. Therefore Paul's second assumption is also false: the Indifferent Gardener's knowledge concerning the poison is *not* non-observational knowledge that is the cause of what it understands. Thus, there is no concern that he must

²⁸ This becomes even clearer when one reflects that the differing aims of the gardeners may require them to make their movements differently, slightly quicker or slightly slower, depending on their overall purpose in operating the pump.

²⁹ No matter how long the chain of testimony *someone* had to know the poison is in the cistern through sense-perception, in which case I would want to say that the knowledge is observational, even for the person who is only told it.

be intentionally poisoning the inhabitants on Anscombe's view. Paul makes the mistake of thinking that any non-observational knowledge an agent has concerning their action must be practical knowledge, but there is no reason to assume this. *Pace* Paul, Anscombe can distinguish the two different actions performed by the gardeners. This becomes clear once we recall that not all non-observational knowledge is on a par.

11. We began this paper with the claim that thought's efficacy will appear inherently problematic if we draw our conception of efficacy from an image of the physical, or the physical sciences. The problems afflicting the causal theory of action bore this diagnosis out. I have tried to explain how Anscombe's approach to action helps resolves these problems. I have done little to explore that approach in depth, or speculate as to what distinctive challenges it might face, aside from rebutting Paul's concerns.

A final thought. If Anscombe is correct, then practical thought is efficacious in virtue of being the formal cause of action. On this view intentions are not separate from the actions they cause, but are *in* them as their form. An agent's practical thought is, strictly speaking, a 'a thought that is a movement.'³⁰ This raises a question. What is it about this form of thought which makes it practical? After all, not all our thinking is practical. A venerable tradition - one that Anscombe herself appears to belong to - has it that some of our thinking is practical because it is the cause of the objects that it represents. This seems to me a thought worth pursuing. If it is correct, however, a full accounting of thought's efficacy will have to take into account the formal differences between this productive mode of thinking and its theoretical counter-part. I think this question has, in fact, been relatively neglected. A first formulation would be: What form does a thought exemplify, when that thought is also a movement?

³⁰ Rodl (2007). Paul quotes the same, and describes it as 'poetic.' Perhaps. But if 'poetic' is taken to mean metaphorical then this is wrong. Rodl's description is perfectly literal.

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