

## ACTING IN IGNORANCE

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The title I have given this paper is not really helpful, even though it is perfectly accurate. My topic is how to understand the reason for which one acts when one is acting, not from knowledge, but from mere belief. Is it possible to run for the reason that the train is leaving when one does not know that the train is leaving? There are three views to be considered here. The first view is the most all-encompassing: one can run for that reason so long as one believes the train to be leaving, even when it is not in fact leaving. The second view holds that one can run for that reason so long as one believes that the train is leaving and it is in fact leaving, but not if it is not leaving. One's reason for running cannot be something that is not the case. The third view, the narrowest, holds that one can only run for that reason if one knows that the train is leaving; believing, whether truly or falsely, is not enough.

I think it fair to say that the majority of philosophers would accept the second view. I accept the first, and John Hyman accepts the third<sup>1</sup>. This generates a rather peculiar debate between the two fringe positions, each trying to undermine the other without at any point appealing to the middle position, which is agreed by both sides to be false.

I will begin by elaborating the two fringe positions, starting with my own.

There is more than one way of explaining an action. One is to specify the purpose with which it was done; he ran in order to avoid missing the train. Another is to give the reason for which it was done; his reason for running was that the train was leaving. In most cases sufficient understanding of the situation enables us to move back and forth between these. But in the present debate we are talking only of the sort of explanation that is achieved by specifying the reasons. Such explanation works by specifying the

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<sup>1</sup> One should also mention H. A. Prichard, Jennifer Hornsby, Peter Unger

attractions the action had for the agent, the favourable light in which the action was done. It is not important for this purpose that things actually be the way the agent took them to be. Once we know how the agent saw things, we know enough to explain his action (normally, anyway). We can say that his reason for running was that the train was leaving, or that he was running for the reason that the train was leaving, without any commitment to the agent's being right about that, for what we have said already reveals, or at least alludes to, the value that the agent saw in running. Whether the train was leaving or not makes no difference to what the agent's reason for running was – though it does make a difference to the ways in which we might express that reason. We have ways of explaining the action which work just as well whether the agent was right or wrong, and we have other ways that only work well if the agent was right. So if we say that he ran because the train was leaving, or that his reason for running was the fact that the train was leaving, we have no room left for allowing that he might have been mistaken. The form we have given our explanation commits us to the agent's being correct – not correct about what his reason was, but correct in supposing what his reason was to be the case.

But we have other ways of explaining the action which do not commit us in this sort of way, and which work equally well whether the agent was correct in this way or not. If I say 'his reason for running was that the train was leaving', or 'the reason for which he was running was that the train was leaving', I can perfectly well continue by saying 'in fact, however, he was quite wrong about that'. This sort of explanation is not factive, therefore, since it has a contained clause which need not be true for the whole to be true. Another way of putting this is by saying that the context 'His reason for V-ing was that ...' is an intensional context.

In such cases it is possible, though not necessary, to say 'his reason for running was that he thought the train was leaving'. But this should not lead us to suppose that his reason if he is right is a different reason from his reason if he is wrong. His reason was that the train was leaving; that is what he would have said at the time, and he would have been right about what his reason was even if he turned out to be misinformed about the scheduled departure time and there was no need to run at all. What he would have been wrong about in that case would have been whether the favourable light in which the

action appeared to him was in fact a true light. But being wrong about that does not automatically make him wrong about the reason for which he was running. And in fact the sorts of case in which we say that people are wrong about their reasons are very different from this.

The position I have been laying out distinguishes itself by what it says about false belief. One might say that it simply assumes that someone who believes that the train is leaving can act for that reason, that is, for the reason that the train is leaving, and argues that there is no relevant difference in this respect between a true belief and a false one. But as we will see, the way in which the position is built up involves taking a stance on how to understand the relation between 'his reason for running was that the train was leaving' and 'his reason for running was that he believed that the train was leaving. And this matter is relevant to assessment of the arguments given by proponents of the other fringe view, to which I now turn.

This other position takes the crucial contrast to be that between knowledge and belief; it is not much interested in whether the belief is true or false. The central claim is easy to express. It is that one can only run for the reason that the train is leaving if one knows that the train is leaving. Otherwise one's reason will be that one believes that the train is leaving. One can run for this reason, whether one's belief is true or false.

It is an interesting question how this view is to be argued for. In Hyman's presentations, they are associated with a view about knowledge. Hyman argues that knowledge is best understood as a sort of ability. On its own this claim is almost impossible to assess, but Hyman immediately suggests which ability is at issue: knowing that  $p$  is the ability to act for the reason that  $p$  (here 'act' is to be taken in the broadest sense, namely 'do anything whatever').

At this point one might be forgiven the comment that there are two bold claims here, neither of which does much to improve the prospects of the other. But I don't think that this is how Hyman sees the matter. There are some philosophers who find the claim that one cannot act for the reason that  $p$  unless one knows that  $p$  to be intrinsically plausible. Jennifer Hornsby told me in a recent email that this is how it was for her. And Hyman points out that Harold Prichard, a philosopher for whom I have the greatest respect,

thought it so clear that he didn't even bother to argue for it. Prichard wrote at one point that '[according to a certain view about duties] we can never, strictly speaking, do a duty, if we have one, because it is a duty, i.e. really in consequence of knowing it to be a duty.... At best, if we have a duty, we may do it because we think without question, or else believe, or again think it possible that the act is a duty'.<sup>2</sup> (It is interesting to note Prichard's use of italics here.)

Of course the claim at issue is just the claim that one cannot act for the reason that p if one does not know that p, and this is merely a necessary condition for the claim that to know that p is to be able to act for the reason that p. The account of knowledge is not directly helped by the fact, if it be a fact, that knowledge is required for acting for a reason. One could, after all, think that these are two quite separate issues.

This, then, is how I intend to treat them. I shall not, therefore, be responding to the person who says that since knowledge is an ability, it must be this ability. My question is whether if someone does not know that p, it necessarily follows that he cannot act for the reason that p. I will not be asking, if it does necessarily follow, why it follows. This further question is the one addressed by the identification of knowledge as an ability, and the answer it gives is that this is just what knowledge is. I shall not be concerned with the merits of this answer, but with the merits of the explanandum for which it is offered as explanans.

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I will call the view that one cannot act for the reason that p if one does not know that p the Knowledge View. And I will call the opposing view the Non-factive View, for reasons that will shortly emerge if they are not already obvious.

If one were not intuitively convinced of the Knowledge View, what might persuade one to accept it? Hyman's argumentation is characteristically varied and interesting.

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<sup>2</sup> H. A. Prichard, 'Duty and Ignorance of Fact', in his Moral Writings ed. J. MacAdam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 84-101, at p. 87.

His first point is that reasons are facts. (He offers no account of what a fact is, which seems to me to be the path of wisdom.) Now I will take it that we all agree that good reasons, reasons for doing this rather than that, are facts. But this does little to persuade us that the reason for which one acts must always be a fact. To suppose otherwise without argument would simply be to beg the question against the Non-factive View. After all, that view holds that one can act for a reason that is not even the case. What we need, then, is a reason to accept that a reason for which someone acts must always be a fact. That this is so does not follow from that on which we all agree, namely that reasons for doing one thing rather than another are all facts.

Hyman's second point, then, is that explanations are factive, that reasons-explanations are explanations, and so they must be factive too. This, however, also begs the question against the Non-factive View, which explicitly claims that though most explanations are indeed factive, reasons-explanations are not – or not always. Now the Non-factive View is definitely out on a limb on this point. Hyman's simple assumption that reasons-explanations are factive is a rare case where he simply adopts the standard line without question. But the Non-factive View questions it, and does so for a reason, or rather, for two reasons.

The first reason is that the normal way of showing that a concept is factive is by offering examples that don't seem to make sense. Knowledge is factive, because 'he knows that it is raining but it isn't' is uninterpretable. Seeing is factive (in certain locutions, at least), because 'he can see that it is raining but it isn't' is uninterpretable. Proving is factive, because 'he has proved that  $p$  but it is not true that  $p$ ' is uninterpretable. And the same applies to 'he is running because the train is leaving, but it isn't leaving'. But it does not seem to apply to all forms of reasons-explanation of action. It does not apply to 'His reason for running is that the train is leaving, but in fact it is late and hasn't even arrived yet'. It does not apply to 'He is running for the reason that the train is leaving, but in fact he has been misinformed'.

A possible reply to these points, which I know that some find less persuasive than do others, is that even if the last two examples do seem rather different from the preceding three, they are still dubious. But even if that be admitted, there is more to be said, and that more is, I think, philosophically more penetrating. We should ask ourselves what

these reasons-explanations are trying to achieve. And a very attractive answer to this question is that they are trying to reveal the favourable light in which the relevant action presented itself to the agent. Now this notion of a favourable light needs to be taken carefully.<sup>3</sup> We are dealing here with all practical reasons, and that includes not only reasons for action, but also reasons for emotions, reasons to be angry or upset. And it is not as if a reason to be upset is a consideration that reveals the favourable light in which being upset appears to the agent. That is not how reasons for emotions work. So the notion of a favourable light, if it is to cover all practical reasons, needs to be understood broadly. A reason to be angry is a consideration that, for the agent, renders anger an appropriate response, and if someone is angry for that reason, the anger presents itself to him as appropriate to the situation, as called for by it. A mere cause of anger is different.

But, as I suggested in the previous section, it is not required for the purpose of explanation that the agent be right about things. This reveals a very telling difference between reasons-explanations and most other explanations. For causal explanations, it is required for the purposes of the relevant explanation that the cause obtain (or happen, or be the case – however one wants to make the point). If the cause adduced did not obtain, the explanation is undermined. But things are different with reasons-explanations. It is not required, for the purposes of the explanation, that the agent be correct in seeing the action in a favourable light. And if he does see it in a favourable light, his reason for action need not be that he sees it in that light, but the light in which he sees it – which can itself be expressed propositionally if one wants. (More on this below.)

So the real thrust of the Non-factive View is that nothing in the nature of reasons-explanation requires the explanans to be the case, or to obtain, or to be a fact. Those who unwarily suppose that all explanation is factive must suppose that this is required by the very purpose of explanation. And in most cases they are right. But they have over-generalised.

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<sup>3</sup> I am grateful here to John Hyman for pointing out something that should have been obvious to me.

To say that reasons-explanations are not themselves factive is not, however, to deny that there are some factive ways in which those explanations can be given. Hyman's presentation of the Knowledge View appeals at several points to explanations that use the term 'because'. And all such explanations are indeed factive, but they are factive not because they are reasons-explanations but because of the factive pressure of the word 'because'. It is true that one cannot interpretably say 'He was running because the train was leaving, when it wasn't', but this is due to the difference between 'because' and 'for the reason that'. 'He was running because the train was leaving, when it wasn't' is clearly uninterpretable, but 'He was running for the reason that the train was leaving, when it wasn't' is not. So there are factive ways of giving an explanation which, in its own nature, is non-factive. But this is no difficulty for the Non-factive View. Hyman does at one point assert that 'the canonical form of a sentence stating or giving a reason for doing or believing something is 'A F-ed because p' or B believes that q because p', and then comments on the role of 'because' as a connective.<sup>4</sup> But the selection of one rather than another way of giving a reasons-explanation as canonical seems to me to be arbitrary, and tendentious.

We should bear in mind in all this that there is a quite different way of explaining actions, by giving the agent's purpose. We do this when we say 'he is driving to the station to pick up his daughter off the train'. Now, first, this explanation is neither factive nor non-factive – at least not if we allow that the explanans here is 'to pick up his daughter off the train'. If so, some explanations are not factive. (If we take the whole sentence to be the explanans, then of course all explanation is factive, but trivially so.) But also, we might say, this can be his purpose even if he does not succeed, perhaps because his daughter was not on the train. There is nothing wrong with saying 'he went to the station to pick up his daughter, but she never arrived'. And this explanation operates in the way in which all standard explanations of action do, namely by giving, or at least revealing, the favourable light in which the action presented itself to the agent. That this favourable light is founded on a mistake is irrelevant to the success of the explanation that alludes to it.

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<sup>4</sup> 'How Knowledge Works', p. 443.

I mention, only to put aside, a view that I have seen expressed in an unpublished paper by Dustin Locke. Locke allows that some reasons-explanations are not factive, so that there is a non-factive sense of 'S's reason is that  $p$ '. But he wants to admit the pressure on the other side, and so he allows that there is a distinct, factive sense of 'S's reason is that  $p$ '. Those who say that reasons-explanations fail if the supposed reason is not the case are using the factive sense; those who deny it are using the non-factive sense. So in a way everyone is right, and everyone is wrong. My only comment on this is that one cannot resolve philosophical puzzlement in this way by multiplication of senses.

Hyman puts the issues that I have discussed in this section together when he asks how someone's reason for acting can be the fact that  $p$  when he does not know that  $p$ . To this end he writes 'But if his belief was false, the fact that Mary loves truffles cannot have been Jim's reason for making them, since there was no such fact'.<sup>5</sup> And this of course is true. But we should distinguish between 'the fact that Mary loves truffles was John's reason for making them' and 'that Mary loves truffles was John's reason for making them'. The former expression commits the user to Mary's loving truffles; the latter does not. So if we write 'But if his belief was false, that Mary loves truffles cannot have been Jim's reason for making them', we get something that is false. That her need was greater than his could have been his reason for allowing her to go first, even if in fact her neediness was just a pretence. The fact that her need was greater than his could not have been his reason in such a case, but nothing of interest follows from that.

There is a lesson to be learnt from this. The interposition of the two words 'the fact' does nothing to alter the ability of the consideration that follows (that Mary loves truffles') to explain John's action nor the style of its role as explanans in 'that Mary loves truffles was John's reason for making them'. Putting those two words in at the front is effectively nothing more than a sort of comment or independent commitment on the part of the explainer. It is as if the explainer had said 'that Mary loves truffles was John's reason for making them – and that is a fact', where this last 'that' is to be understood as referring to 'that Mary loves truffles'. Another way of inserting the independent

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<sup>5</sup> ibid. p. 447.

commitment would be ‘that Mary loves truffles, as indeed she does, was John’s reason for making them’.

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There is a further issue that needs to be addressed, and which emerges when I give the full version of the example of Mary and the truffles:

But if his belief was false, the fact that Mary loves truffles cannot have been Jim’s reason for making them, since there was no such fact. Hence the fact that Mary loves them was not his reason, even if his belief was true.

Thus the objection fails. If A does not know that  $p$ , his reason for doing something may be that he believes that  $p$ , or it may be that  $p$  is probable, or even that  $p$  is possible. But the fact that  $p$  cannot be A’s reason for doing something unless A knows that  $p$  ...

The objection referred to concerns the relation between true and false belief. The imagined objector is taking the middle position of the three I outlined at the beginning of this paper. This objector allows that one cannot act for the reason that  $p$  when one falsely believes that  $p$ , but wants to hold that one can act for that reason when one merely believes that  $p$ , so long as that belief is true. Hyman’s response is, as we have seen, that the fact that  $p$  cannot have been John’s reason if it was not the case that  $p$ , and hence cannot have been his reason even if it had been the case that  $p$ . And this is an interesting inference. It is interesting even if one allows my reworked version of it: that  $p$  cannot have been John’s reason if it was not the case that  $p$ , and hence cannot have been his reason even if it had been the case that  $p$ .

The force of this inference derives, I think, from what I think of as Bernard Williams’ dictum that the form of the relevant explanation should not depend on the distinction between true and false.<sup>6</sup> But I think that this dictum is misapplied in the present context.

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<sup>6</sup> B. A. O. Williams ‘Internal and External Reasons’, reprinted in his Moral Luck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 101-13, at p. 102.

For neither the form nor the force of the explanation is essentially dependent on the presence (or absence) of the two words 'the fact'. That Mary loves truffles can perfectly well have been John's reason for making them; all that is required for this is that John believes it to be so, whether his belief is true or false. But someone could still say, supposing that Mary does love truffles, that the fact that she does was John's reason, without in any way committing themselves to exactly the same form of words should it turn out that things were not so. This is because the form and force of the explanation do not depend on whether things were so or not, though the truth or falsehood of what was said in giving that explanation might incidentally do so. So the form of the relevant explanation is not affected by the true/false distinction.

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There is another, similar issue about the relation between the different forms of explanation that are appropriate in different cases. James knows that the train is leaving and is running for that reason. His reason is that the train is leaving. Sally does not know that the train is leaving; she only thinks that it is, but she is running anyway. What is the reason for which she is running if it is not that the train is leaving? Hyman's general suggestion here is that her reason is that she thinks the train is leaving. (He has other suggestions such as that her reason is that it is probable that the train is leaving – which would on his view require her to know this. I leave this and other possibilities aside.) So now we see someone running and we know that their reason is either that the train is leaving or that they think that the train is leaving. What is the relation between these two reasons? Hyman knows that they are not quite on a par.

It sometimes occurs that someone's belief that p is the same sort of reason for him to act as is any other fact that he knows. I might seek professional help because I believe that there are pink rats in my boots. When I do this, my reason is not that there are pink rats in my boots; it is that I believe this to be so (since people who believe this sort of thing need help). But most of the cases where we say that the agent is acting because he believes that p are not of this type. In these other cases the consideration in the light

of which the agent is acting is not that he believes that p, but still that p. But, Hyman insists, that p is not his reason. How are we to make sense of this?

Helen thought she was late and left in a hurry. Later she discovers that she was not late at all and had plenty of time. How is she now to explain her having left in a hurry? She cannot now say that she left in a hurry because she was late. She has to retreat to something less committal, namely that she left in a hurry because she believed that she was late, or that her reason for leaving in a hurry was that she thought she was late.

Hyman comments:

‘Notice that the revised explanation identifies the reason for which, as it seemed to her then, she left in a hurry, namely, that she was late. But it does not say that this was her reason: on the contrary.

In sum, if we explain why Helen left in a hurry by saying that her reason was that she believed she was late, this, I take it, is the force of the explanation: it does not cite the fact in view of which Helen acted, but by citing the fact that she believed she was late, it identifies the answer that she would have given, had she been asked at the time for her reason, and had she answered the question honestly.<sup>7</sup>

But this does not seem to address the question what Helen’s reason was when she left in a hurry, thinking that she was late. We know what answer she would have given. But that answer, according to Hyman, was wrong. Helen made two mistakes. First, she thought she was late, and second, she thought that she was leaving in a hurry for that reason. But she wasn’t late, and she wasn’t leaving in a hurry for the reason that she was late. So what was her reason for leaving in a hurry? As far as I can see, the only thing left to say is that she had no reason to leave in a hurry, and so she left in a hurry for no reason at all. But this seems to me deeply unsatisfactory. It seems to cast poor Helen out into outer darkness. Things cannot be as bad as that.

There is a potential distinction between leaving for no reason at all and leaving for no good reason. There are two ways of leaving for no good reason. The first is when what one takes to be a reason to leave is in fact no reason at all. The second is when that

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 445.

which one takes to be a reason is not in fact the case; it would have been a reason had it been the case. And of course we can get both of these together; I can take something which is not the case to be the case and I can take it to be a reason when it is not (and would not have been had it been the case).

Helen's reason for leaving was that she was late. (This is how I would characterise things.) That she was late would have been a good reason to leave had it been the case. But it was not the case, and so she left for no good reason. But this needn't mean that she left for no reason at all. Someone who left for no reason at all is someone who just got up and walked out. This can happen – though leaving in a hurry for no reason at all must be pretty rare. We do lots of things for no reason at all; putting on the left shoe before the right, for example. Helen was not like that. In her case, there was a consideration in the light of which she acted, which was that she was late. To say this is not just to say that she thought she was acting for a reason when she wasn't. This idea, which seems to be the core of Hyman's account, gives a bizarre account of what went on. I put my left shoe on before my right shoe this morning. Suppose that I honestly believed that I was doing this for the reason that it would affect the weather (which has been so dismal recently). But I was not doing it for that reason. I was doing it for no reason at all. I was doing it for no reason, while believing that I was doing it for this reason. This is not what we should be saying about people who act in the light of a consideration that is not the case. There is a state intermediate between acting for no reason at all and acting in the light of a consideration that one knows to be the case, and Hyman has failed to capture such a state.

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There remains an issue. How are we to understand 'Helen's reason for leaving in a hurry was that she believed that she was late' if it is not identical to either 'Helen left in a hurry for the reason that she was late' or 'Helen left in a hurry for the reason that she believed she was late'? It is hard to find any space between these two rejected options. But I have a suggestion here, which is analogous to one that has already emerged in earlier discussion of such phrases as 'the fact that the train was leaving was his reason

for running'. There I suggested, effectively, that the words 'the fact' in this explanation constitute a kind of comment on the part of the explainer rather than playing any substantial role in the explanation. One could hear them as standing in apposition, thus: that the train was leaving (and this was indeed the case) was his reason for running. This appositional presentation shows the sense in which the explainer has signed up independently to things being as the agent supposed. 'Independently' here means two things: independent of the agent's view of the situation, and independent of the purposes of the explanation offered.

Something similar could be said of the phrase 'he believed that' in 'his reason for running was that he believed that the train was leaving'. On the account I favour, the reference to the agent's belief is redundant here. If he is running for the reason that the train is leaving, necessarily he believes that the train is leaving. One does not act in the light of considerations that one supposes not to be the case, or that one does not suppose to be the case. But the person explaining the agent's action need not believe what the agent believes. I can explain your actions by revealing the light in which the action appeared to you without any commitment to your having been right about that. Still, there is a way of signalling the lack of any such commitment, which we commonly use in explaining actions performed under a misapprehension, and this is precisely the 'because he believes that' locution. This does not affect the explanans in the explanation (any more than do the two words 'the fact'), which remains the light in which the agent saw the action (which, again, is not the same as his having seen things in that light). It is a sort of comment on it, which can be heard as standing in apposition. The explicit version of this is quite common. His reason for running is that, as he believes/supposes, the train is leaving. To this one can even add, if one wants, an explicit de-commitment: 'his reason for running is that, as he supposes, the train is leaving, but he is quite wrong about that'.

Something about Moore's Paradox

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Something should be said, finally, about some of the examples that have been adduced in this debate. Hyman is not alone in appealing to this remark of Gilbert Ryle's:

To say that he keeps to the edge, because he knows that the ice is thin, is to employ quite a different sense of ‘because’, or to give quite a different sort of ‘explanation’, from that conveyed by saying that he keeps to the edge because he believes that the ice is thin.<sup>8</sup>

Ryle’s point here is to do with his contention that ‘know’ and ‘believe’ do not signify occurrences. They are ‘dispositional verbs’, but ‘dispositional verbs of quite disparate types. ‘Know’ is a capacity verb, and a capacity verb of that special sort that is used for signifying that the person described can bring things off, or get things right. ‘Believe’, ... is a tendency verb and one which does not connote that anything is brought off or got right’.<sup>9</sup> As far as I can see, this distinction as it stands is perfectly compatible with the Non-factive View; it cuts no ice in the debate with which this paper is concerned.

Jennifer Hornsby, however, turns Ryle’s remark into an example. She writes:

Edmund ... believes that the ice in the middle of the pond is dangerously thin, having been told so by a normally reliable friend, and ... accordingly keeps to the edge. But Edmund’s friend didn’t want Edmund to skate in the middle of the pond (never mind why), so that he had told Edmund that the ice there was thin despite having no view about whether or not it actually was thin. Edmund, then, did not keep to the edge because the ice in the middle was thin. Suppose now that, as it happened, the ice in the middle of the pond was thin. This makes no difference. Edmund still didn’t keep to the edge because the ice was thin. The fact that the ice was thin does not explain Edmund’s acting, even though Edmund did believe that it was thin, and even though the fact that it was thin actually was a reason for him to stay at the edge.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> G. Ryle, The Concept of Mind (London: Hutchinson’s University Library, 1949), p. 135 (check this page number – Hyman has it at 132-3).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. pp. 133-4. (ditto)

<sup>10</sup> J. Hornsby, ‘A Disjunctive Theory of Acting for Reasons’, in Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge, eds. F. Macpherson and A. Haddock (OUP, 2008), pp. 244-61.

Hornsby’s example is very similar to one given by Peter Unger in his Ignorance: a Case for Scepticism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 209-10.

Pressure from examples of this sort is rather different from the sort of philosophical pressure I have been trying to deal with so far in this paper. Hyman's appeal to Ryle comes right at the end of his paper; he treats it as corroboration of something already established in other ways (e.g., by appeal to the claim that reasons are facts). But others might treat examples of this sort as a primary source of support. And then there can be counter-examples (in the special sense of examples that run counter to other examples); Dustin Locke offers one of these in his paper 'What Gettier Cases can Teach us about Reasons'.

Of course one has to be careful in the phrasing of one's example, and I would say that Hornsby fails in this respect. Bearing in mind points I have made earlier in the present paper (about 'because' and 'the fact that'), we might rewrite her final two sentences above as:

Edmund's reason for keeping to the edge was not that the ice was thin. That the ice was thin was not Edmund's reason for acting, even though Edmund did believe that it was thin, and even though that it was thin actually was a reason for him to stay at the edge. ...

And if we do this, the example seems to collapse, in the sense that it generates nothing incompatible with the Non-factive View. The rewriting is of course tendentious in the way that it moves from 'that the ice was thin does not explain Edmund's acting', which seems true, to 'that the ice was thin was not Edmund's reason for acting', which seems false. But there is an explanation of this discrepancy. If someone acts for the reason that p, we might ask for an explanation of his doing so. Sometimes that explanation will appeal to its being the case that p. But sometimes it won't. Sometimes it won't, even though it is allowed that it is the case that p. And this is what we see in Edmund's case. In his case, he acts for the reason that the ice is thin, but the explanation of that is not that the ice is thin, but that someone misleadingly told him that the ice is thin. There is no explanatory route from the actual thinness of the ice to his acting for the reason that the ice is thin; the explanation of his acting for that reason comes to a halt at his unsatisfactory friend. But this does nothing to tell us what his reason was for doing what he did.

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My conclusion is not that the Non-factive View is true and the Knowledge View false. It is rather that the arguments adduced in support of the Knowledge View have no purchase against a defender of the Non-factive View (that is, me). Nor is the Knowledge View supported by an account of knowledge as an ability. It might be that knowledge is an ability to be guided by reasons, and belief is a tendency to be guided by reasons, since that to believe that  $p$  is to tend to act as if it were the case that  $p$ . Nothing would follow from this about whether one can act for the reason that  $p$  only when one knows that  $p$ . The Knowledge View is a lovely, exciting hypothesis. But since we do not know it to be true, we cannot appeal to it as a reason for accepting or rejecting other views.

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