

Rationalising Explanations and Rationality

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My research concerns rationalising explanations and the role rationality plays in them. Within the debate on rationalising explanations, it's sometimes argued that an action explanation is a rationalising explanation only if it shows that it was rational of the agent to *A*. (e.g. Dancy 2004) I explore a novel argument from this claim to the conclusion that rationalising explanations in terms of the agent's belief are basic, and rationalising explanations in terms of the agent's reason derivative.

The argument is this. Rationality requires combinations of non-factive attitudes only. For instance, that, if one believes one ought to *A*, then one intends to *A*. So an action explanation can show that it was rational of the agent to *A* only by showing that in *A*-ing she had a rationally required combination of non-factive attitudes. But only an action explanation in terms of the agent's belief can show this directly. An action explanation in terms of the agent's reason can only show this indirectly, in virtue of entailing facts about the agent's belief. So whilst both action explanations in terms of the agent's belief and in terms of the agent's reason are rationalising explanations, the former are basic, the latter derivative.

I suggest that this argument is unsound because, I argue, rationality requires responding correctly to the reasons one has. Following this, I rewrite the argument to give the conclusion that rationalising explanations in terms of the agent's reason are basic, and rationalising explanations in terms of the agent's belief derivative.