

(Call it SRT.) It's worth some attention for its own sake, because if true it's right up our alley: it reveals a very dramatic difference in kind not only between intention content and belief content, but for that matter between intention content and desire content. (You'll have noticed that a theme in the writings on intention is the need to distinguish intending from other conative states such as "merely"(!) desiring, wishing, hoping and preferring. Intending is to be a *distinguished* conative state.)

As Baier says, SRT is defended by Harman, but it's also been maintained by Searle and by the late Alan Donagan. Here I'll just catalogue the arguments for it in a nonscholarly fashion and then refer you to two critics.

1. As noted in class, an intention's content has to incorporate *agency*. A mere conation short of actually intending--even when combined with a detailed plan--does not do that. SRT explains the agency feature.

2. Any causal analysis of intentional action (i.e., one that portrays an action as a bodily movement that has such&such a mental cause) is subject to the general problem of deviant causal chains; for sufficiency, the causal chain will have to be *of the right sort*. A requirement is that it include an intention to do the action in question. Cases in which an agent intends to do A and does A but *still* not intentionally are best diagnosed by SRT.

3. An intention incorporates at least a minimal plan for carrying out the relevant action. (This is a popular thesis, defended by Myles Brand, Michael Bratman and Al Mele.) But the explanatory coherence of such a plan requires knowing how the intention itself should lead to the action.

4. Harman maintains that one cannot intend to do A if one believes that one will not do A. SRT explains that.

5. Harman argues that intending to do A requires intending to intend to do A. (The argument assumes that intentions have to be formed and that the forming of an intention is an action.) But no one wants an infinite regress here, and SRT blocks it.

6. An intention typically results from practical reasoning and is its conclusion. But the reasoning will have been rational only if the conclusion incorporates the stipulation that your intention will lead to the action in question. Hence, SRT.

7. Only some intentions are justified ones. For an intention to be justified, the agent must be justified in believing that it will lead to the relevant action. This will normally be the case only if the intention does refer to itself.

8. If you intend to do A, you suppose that you will do A only if you do intend to do A. Thus, you view your intention as part of the *means of* your doing A. In general, an intention's content includes the intended means. So your intention includes itself.

At least some of these arguments are (obviously) pretty bad. For criticisms, see Ch. 11 of A. Mele, *Springs of Action*, and Tom Kapitan: <http://www.niu.edu/phil/~kapitan/pdf/IntentionsandSelf-ReferentialContent.pdf>.