

English summaries

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ENGLISH SUMMARIES

M. NEUBERG, Does intention define action? RThPh 1992/III, pp. 217-229.

Is it not the case that in the philosophy of action we generally have a highly simplified idea of the physical structure of action? Does not defining action in terms of an intention seem unavoidable simply because we give such an anemic meaning to the notion of bodily movement? But if this notion were adequately analyzed, it would perhaps prove sufficient as a basis for the concept of action.

F. BUEKENS, Try, succeed and fail: a critique of empirical theories of action. RThPh 1992/III, pp. 231-248.

What is meant by the attempt, the success or the failure of an action? Using Davidson's philosophy of action, I elaborate a theory which admits that every action contains in embryo a possibility of failure. This does not imply that every action is accompanied by an attempt to act, which is only an empiricist prejudice. Attempts are intentional actions. Attempts which fail are actions whose envisioned outcome has not been fulfilled.

J. DOKIC, The body in action: the relationship between action, intention and corporal movement. RThPh 1992/III, pp. 249-270.

This is an investigation into the ontological nature of action. In opposition to the "internalist" point of view, whereby action occurs in a separate psychological world from the non-psychological changes it effects, I try to show that action is an essentially "psycho-physical" process of control. More precisely, I draw out a natural structure of action by defining two different types of control. The description of this structure and the introduction of the general notion of control will help, I hope, to clarify how the mind can "change the world".

R. CASATI, *De re* and *de corpore*. RThPh 1992/III, pp. 271-289.

The author analyses 'de corpore' concepts, concepts belonging to the structure of the attempt to move a part of the body. A famous argument of Kant suggests that the concepts of left and right are 'de re': they refer to a part of absolute space. In showing—in opposition to Kant—that this space is not physical but phenomenal, one can argue for the existence of phenomenal individuals. Since the concepts of left and right are inescapable when describing certain human actions, one can conclude that some 'de corpore' concepts are 'de re'; and some 'de re' concepts are not necessarily external.

- C. MOYA, Intention, intentionality and causality. RThPh 1992/III, pp. 293-304.

Current philosophies of the mind try to envisage intentionality of the basis of causality and/or rationality. Davidson's understanding of the mind stems from these two categories, though their correlation in the human mind remains 'a mystery' for Fodor. This article takes 'primitive intentional behaviour' rather as a starting point, a concept inspired by what Wittgenstein called 'the primitive expression of intention'. The main characteristics of the conception of mind which results from this are shown, as well as the advantages of this conception over those of Davidson and Fodor.

- P. ENGEL, Actions, reasons and mental causes. RThPh 1992/III, pp. 305-321.

One of the main difficulties with contemporary materialism is the risk of epiphenomenalism: if mental properties systematically depend on physical properties, how can they have causal efficiency? Davidson's 'anomalous monism' only solves this problem through a "feeble" understanding of the individuation of events and with relative imprecision as to the pertinence of causal explanations formulated in psychological terms. Nor do other conceptions of the individuation of events and the causal power of mental states, as that of Kim and of Jackson and Pettit, solve the problem. It will not then be solved by modifying the theory of the individuation of events.

- P. JACOB, Externalism and mental causality. RThPh 1992/III, pp. 323-340.

According to common sense, beliefs (and propositional attitudes in general) are causes of intentional action and are reasons for what we do. The content of what we believe is held to be a causal property of what we intentionally do. In the externalist conception of most contemporary philosophers, the content of a person's belief depends on his/her environment. The theory of the causal efficacy of the intentional properties of propositional attitudes is subject to two epiphenomenalist threats. 1) If intentional properties are held to be functional properties of a person's brain, their causal efficacy risks being pre-empted by the causal efficacy of the brain's physical properties. 2) If externalism is admitted, then intentional properties are not functional properties and they risk being deprived of causal efficacy if one holds that causal properties are local properties.