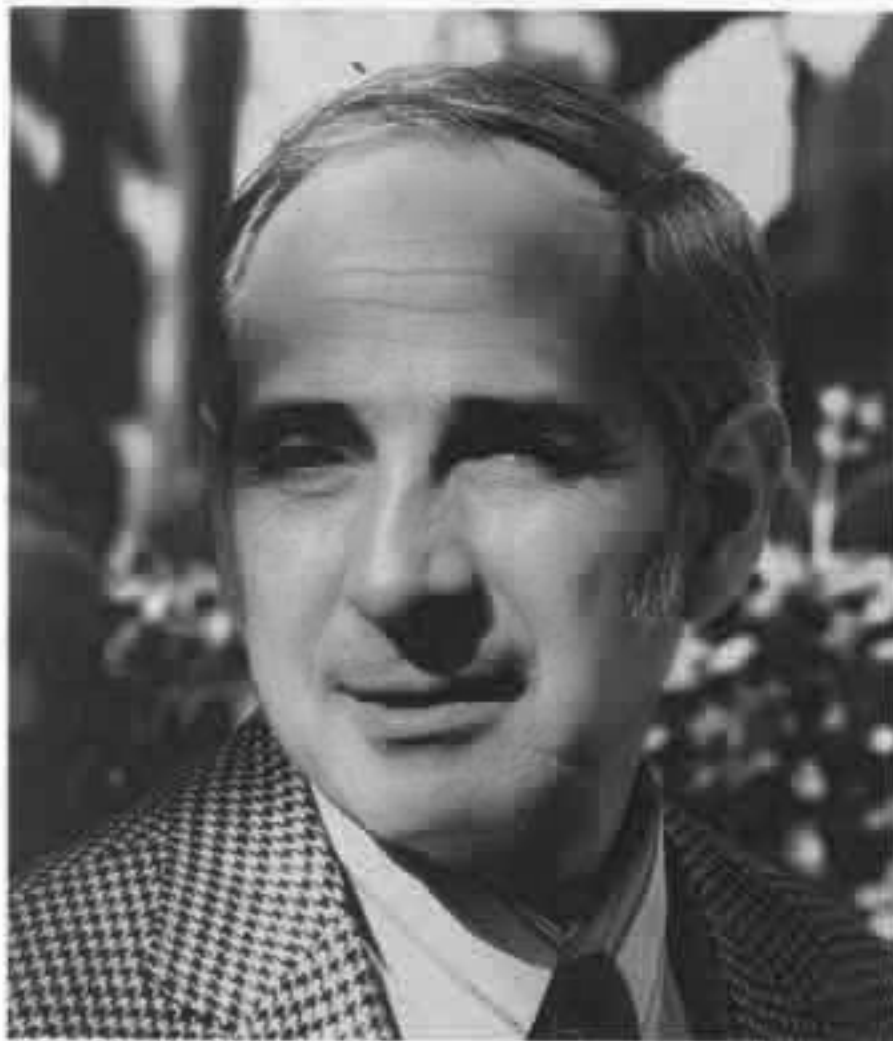


Intentionality

AN ESSAY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF MIND



JOHN R. SEARLE

INTENTIONALITY

An essay in the philosophy of mind

FOR DAGMAR

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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK <http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk>
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA <http://www.cup.org>
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

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First published 1983
Reprinted 1983, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993,
1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999

Typeset in Garamond

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Catalog card number: 82-19849

ISBN 0-521-27302-1 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2004

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Chapter 3

INTENTION AND ACTION

I

In the course of our discussion of the Intentionality of mental states such as belief and desire and mental events such as visual experiences, we have developed a fairly extensive conceptual apparatus for analyzing problems of Intentionality, an apparatus that includes the notions of Intentional content, psychological mode, conditions of satisfaction, direction of fit, causal self-referentiality, direction of causation, Network, Background, and the distinction between presentations and other sorts of representations. The explanation of Intentionality in terms of these notions is not intended to be reductive, since each is an Intentional notion. We are not trying to show that Intentionality is really something else, but rather to explain it in terms of a family of notions each of which is explained independently, usually by way of examples. To repeat: there is no nonintentional standpoint from which we can survey the relations between Intentional states and their conditions of satisfaction. Any analysis must take place from within the circle of Intentional concepts.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the relations between intentions and actions, using this apparatus. At first sight intentions and actions seem to fit very neatly into the system. We are inclined to say: Just as my belief is satisfied iff the state of affairs represented by the content of the belief actually obtains, and my desire is satisfied iff the state of affairs represented by the content of the desire comes to pass, so my intention is satisfied iff the *action* represented by the content of the intention is actually performed. If I believe that I will vote for Jones, my belief will be *true* iff I vote for Jones, if I desire to vote for Jones my desire will be *fulfilled* iff I vote for Jones, and if I intend to vote for Jones my intention will be *carried out* iff I vote for Jones. Besides these 'semantic' parallels, there are also syntactical parallels in the sentences reporting

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Intentional states. Leaving out the problems of tense, the ‘deep structure’ of the three sentences reporting my belief, desire, and intention is, respectively,

I believe + I vote for Jones
I want + I vote for Jones
I intend + I vote for Jones.

We ought to be deeply impressed by the apparent tightness of fit between the syntax and semantics: each sentence represents an Intentional state; each state represents its conditions of satisfaction and these conditions are represented by the sentence “I vote for Jones”, which is exactly the embedded sentence in the sentences representing the Intentional states. The latter two sentences, but not the first, permit an equi NP deletion of the repeated “I” and the insertion of the infinitive in the surface structure, thus:

I want to vote for Jones
I intend to vote for Jones.

Furthermore, the way in which intention and action fit into this general account of Intentionality enables us to give a simple (but provisional) statement of the relations between intentions and intentional actions: an intentional action is simply the conditions of satisfaction of an intention. On this view anything that can be the satisfaction of an intention can be an intentional action. Thus, for example, spilling one’s beer is not normally the condition of satisfaction of an intention, because people don’t normally spill their beer intentionally; but such a thing can be an intentional action, for it can be the condition of satisfaction of an intention.

As it stands this account won’t quite work, because it seems to admit too much. For example, if I intend to weigh 160 pounds by Christmas and I succeed, it won’t do to say I performed the intentional action of weighing 160 pounds by Christmas nor will it do to say that weighing 160 pounds by Christmas can be an intentional action. What one wants to say rather is that if I fulfilled my intention to weigh 160 pounds by Christmas, I must have performed certain *actions by means of which* I came to weigh 160 pounds; and that needs to be further explained. Furthermore the account says nothing about general intentions. But, worse yet, this account seems to have very little explanatory power: what we want

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to know is, what is an intention? What is an action? And what is the character of the relation between them that is described by saying that one is the condition of satisfaction of the other? Still, I believe this provisional account is on the right track and I will come back to it later.

One advantage of it, by the way, is that it ties in with our intuition that there is a close connection between intentional actions and what one can tell people to do. Since, when one gives orders, one orders people to perform intentional actions, one can only order people to do things that they can do intentionally, and indeed it does not make any clear sense to say “I order you to perform *A* unintentionally”. (As opposed to, say, “I order you to put yourself in a situation where you are likely to perform *A* unintentionally”.) A good rough test for whether or not a verb phrase denotes an action type is whether or not it can occur in the imperative. “Walk”, “run”, and “eat” all take the imperative, but “believe”, “intend”, and “want” are not names of actions and so do not have a natural imperative mood form. The test is only rough because some verb phrases in the imperative indicate the manner in which actions are to be performed, rather than name actions, e.g., “Be honest!”, “Be kind!”

II

So far we seem to be moving quite smoothly in our efforts to assimilate action and intention to a theory of Intentionality. However, now our troubles begin. There are several asymmetries between the relation of intention to action on the one hand, and the relation between the other Intentional states and their conditions of satisfaction on the other, asymmetries which a theory of intention and action ought to be able to explain.

First, it ought to strike us as odd that we have a special name such as “action” and “act” for the conditions of satisfaction of intentions at all. We have, for example, no special names for the conditions of satisfaction of beliefs and desires. Furthermore, the connection between what is named and the Intentional state which it satisfies is much more intimate in the case of intentions than in such other states as beliefs and desires. We saw that my belief will be satisfied iff the state of affairs I believe to obtain really does

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obtain and my desire will be satisfied iff the state of affairs I desire to obtain does obtain, and, similarly, my intention to do an action will be satisfied iff the action I intend to perform actually is performed. But notice that, whereas there are lots of states of affairs which are not believed to obtain or desired to obtain, there are no actions without intentions. Even where there is an unintentional action such as Oedipus's marrying his mother, that is only because there is an identical event which is an action he performed intentionally, namely, marrying Jocasta. There are many states of affairs without corresponding beliefs and many states of affairs without corresponding desires, but there are in general no actions without corresponding intentions.¹ Why should there be this asymmetry?

Second, even though an event represented in the content of my intention occurs, it isn't necessarily the satisfaction of my intention. As many philosophers have remarked, it has to come about 'in the right way', and this again has no analogue for beliefs and desires. Thus, if I believe it's raining and it is raining, my belief is true no matter how it got to be raining. And if my desire is to be rich and I become rich, that desire is satisfied no matter how I became rich. But a variation on an example of Chisholm's² will show that this condition does not hold for actions. Suppose Bill intends to kill his uncle, then it might come about that he kills his uncle and yet the conditions of satisfaction of his intention do not obtain. They may not obtain even in some cases where his intention to kill his uncle actually caused him to kill his uncle. Suppose he is out driving thinking about how he is going to kill his uncle, and suppose his intention to kill his uncle makes him so nervous and excited that he accidentally runs over and kills a pedestrian who happens to be his uncle. Now in this case it is true to say that he killed his uncle and true to say that his intention to kill his uncle was (part of) the cause of his killing his uncle, but not true to say that he carried out his intention to kill his uncle or that

¹ On my account such things as snoring, sneezing, sleeping, and many reflex movements are not actions. Whether or not I am right about ordinary usage is less important than whether I can give an account of intention and action that shows such cases to be fundamentally different from those that I count as actions.

² R. M. Chisholm, 'Freedom and action', in K. Lehrer (ed.), *Freedom and Determinism* (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 37.

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his intention was satisfied; because he didn't kill his uncle *intentionally*.

There are several such puzzling examples in the literature. Consider the following from Davidson,³ which he says illustrates the sources of his

despair of spelling out . . . the way in which attitudes must cause action if they are to rationalize the action 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.

And, one could add, he might even form the intention to loosen his hold and his intention might make him so nervous that he loosens his hold unintentionally. In such a case, he intends to loosen his hold, he does loosen his hold, and his intention causes him to loosen his hold, but he does not loosen his hold intentionally nor does he carry out his intention to loosen his hold. Why not?

Another (equally homicidal) example derives from Dan Bennett.⁴ A man may try to kill someone by shooting at him. Suppose he misses him, but the shot stampedes a herd of wild pigs which trample the intended victim to death. In this case the man's intention has the death of the victim as part of the conditions of satisfaction and the victim dies as a result, but all the same we are reluctant to say that it was an intentional killing.

III

In this section and the next, I want to develop an account of the relations between intention and action that will show how the relations fit into the general theory of Intentionality sketched in Chapters 1 and 2 and yet account for the paradoxical features of the relation of action and intention discussed in the previous section.

³ D. Davidson, 'Freedom to act', in T. Honderich (ed.), *Essays on Freedom of Action* (London, Henley and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 153-4.

⁴ Cited by D. Davidson in Honderich (ed.), *op. cit.* pp. 152-3.

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For the sake of simplicity I will start with very simple actions such as raising one's arm. Later I will consider more complex cases.

We need first to distinguish those intentions that are formed prior to actions and those that are not. The cases we have considered so far are cases where the agent has the intention to perform the action prior to the performance of the action itself, where, for example, he knows what he is going to do because he already has an intention to do that thing. But not all intentions are like that: suppose you ask me, "When you suddenly hit that man, did you first form the intention to hit him?" My answer might be, "No, I just hit him". But even in such a case I hit him intentionally and my action was done with the intention of hitting him. I want to say about such a case that the intention was *in the action* but that there was no *prior intention*. The characteristic linguistic form of expression of a prior intention is "I will do *A*" or "I am going to do *A*". The characteristic form of expression of an intention in action is "I am doing *A*". We say of a prior intention that the agent acts on his intention, or that he carries out his intention, or that he tries to carry it out; but in general we can't say such things of intentions in action, because the intention in action just is the Intentional content of the action; the action and the intention are inseparable in ways that I will shortly try to explain.

There are at least two ways to make the distinction between an intention in action and a prior intention clearer. The first, as our previous example suggests, is to note that many of the actions one performs, one performs quite spontaneously, without forming, consciously or unconsciously, any prior intention to do those things. For example, suppose I am sitting in a chair reflecting on a philosophical problem, and I suddenly get up and start pacing about the room. My getting up and pacing about are clearly intentional actions, but in order to do them I do not need to form an intention to do them prior to doing them. I don't in any sense have to have a plan to get up and pace about. Like many of the things one does, I just do these actions; I just act. A second way to see the same distinction is to note that even in cases where I have a prior intention to do some action there will normally be a whole lot of subsidiary actions which are not represented in the prior intention but which are nonetheless performed intentionally. For example, suppose I have a prior intention to drive to my office, and

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suppose as I am carrying out this prior intention I shift from second gear to third gear. Now I formed no prior intention to shift from second to third. When I formed my intention to drive to the office I never gave it a thought. Yet my action of shifting gears was intentional. In such a case I had an intention in action to shift gears, but no prior intention to do so.

All intentional actions have intentions in action but not all intentional actions have prior intentions. I can do something intentionally without having formed a prior intention to do it, and I can have a prior intention to do something and yet not act on that intention. Still, in cases where the agent is acting on his prior intention there must be a close connection between the prior intention and the intention in action, and we will also have to explain this connection.

Both prior intentions and intentions in action are causally self-referential in the same sense that perceptual experiences and memories are causally self-referential. That is, like perceptual experiences and memories their conditions of satisfaction require that the Intentional states themselves stand in certain causal relations to the rest of their conditions of satisfaction. We will explore this feature in detail later but it can be illustrated by considering the causal self-referentiality of prior intentions. Suppose I intend to raise my arm. The content of my intention can't be that my arm goes up, for my arm can go up without me raising my arm. Nor can it be simply that my intention causes my arm to go up, for we saw in our discussion of the examples from Chisholm, Davidson, and Bennett that a prior intention can cause a state of affairs represented by the intention without that state of affairs being the action that would satisfy the intention. Nor, oddly enough, can it be

(that I perform the action of raising my arm)

because I might perform the action of raising my arm in ways that had nothing to do with this prior intention. I might forget all about this intention and later raise my arm for some other independent reason. The Intentional content of my intention must be at least

(that I perform the action of raising my arm by way of carrying out *this intention*).

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But what is meant by “carrying out” in this formulation? At least this much: If I am carrying out that intention then the intention must play a causal role in the action, and the argument for this is simply that if we break the causal connection between intention and action we no longer have a case of carrying out the intention. Suppose that I forget all about the prior intention to raise my arm in such a way that it plays no causal role, conscious or unconscious, in the subsequent action; in such a case the action is not a case of carrying out that intention. Still, this formulation raises a lot of questions we will have to answer later. What is meant by “action” and what exactly is the role of the causal self-reference?

In the meantime, this causal self-referential character of intentions will seem less mysterious if we compare it to a similar phenomenon in the realm of speech acts (and incidentally it is always a good idea when you get stuck in the theory of Intentionality to go back to speech acts, because the phenomena of speech acts are so much more accessible). Suppose I order you to leave the room. And suppose you respond by saying “I am going to leave the room, but not because you ordered me to, I was just about to leave the room anyhow. But I would not have left the room because you ordered me to.” If you then leave the room, have you *obeyed my order*? Well, you certainly didn’t *disobey* the order, but there is a sense in which you did not obey it either, because the order did not function as a reason for what you did. We would not, for example, on the basis of a series of such cases describe you as an “obedient” person. But what this illustrates is that the content of my order is not simply that you leave the room, but that you leave the room by way of obeying *this order*; that is, the logical form of the order is not simply

I order you (that you leave the room)

but rather it is causally self-referential in the form

I order you (that you leave the room by way of obeying this order).⁵

⁵ The self-reference does not lead to an infinite regress. When I order you to do *A*, I am indeed creating a reason for your doing *A* such that the order will be obeyed iff you do *A* for that reason, i.e., because I ordered you to do it; but I do not in addition create a reason for it to be a reason, nor do I give a second-level order to you to obey my first-level order.

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So far in this section I have argued that we need a distinction between prior intentions and intentions in action, and I have claimed, though not yet fully substantiated, that both are causally self-referential in the same sense as visual experiences and memories. I now want to extend the analogy between perception and action by exploring those experiences that are characteristic of actions. Let us first remind ourselves of the relevant features of perceptions. When you see the table in front of you there are two elements in the perceptual situation: the visual experience and the table, but the two are not independent for the visual experience has the presence and features of the table as conditions of satisfaction. Now how is it with simple actions such as raising your arm? What happens when you perform the intentional action of raising your arm? Just as there are characteristic experiences of seeing a table, so I shall argue there are characteristic experiences of raising your arm. Raising your arm, like seeing the table, characteristically consists of two components: the experience of raising your arm and the physical movement of the arm, but the two are not independent, for just as the visual experience of the table has Intentionality, so the experience of raising your arm has Intentionality; it has conditions of satisfaction. If I have exactly this experience but my arm doesn't go up, I would be in a situation analogous to the situation where I had exactly this experience but there was no table in front of me. I would have an experience with an Intentionality whose content was unsatisfied.

We can probe the parallel between action and perception further by considering Wittgenstein's question: If I raise my arm, what is left over if I subtract the fact that my arm went up?⁶ The question seems to me exactly analogous to the question: If I see the table what is left over if I subtract the table? And in each case the answer is that a certain form of presentational Intentionality is left over; what is left over in the case of visual perception is a visual experience; what is left over in the case of action is an experience of acting. When I raise my arm I have a certain experience and, like my visual experience of the table, this arm-raising experience has an Intentional content. If I have this experience and my arm doesn't go up, that content is not satisfied. Furthermore, even if

⁶ See Chapter 1, p. 16.

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my arm goes up, but goes up without this experience, I didn't raise my arm, it just went up. That is, just as the case of seeing the table involves two related components, an Intentional component (the visual experience) and the conditions of satisfaction of that component (the presence and features of the table), so the act of raising my arm involves two components, an Intentional component (the experience of acting) and the conditions of satisfaction of that component (the movement of my arm). As far as Intentionality is concerned, the differences between the visual experience and the experience of acting are in the direction of fit and in the direction of causation: the visual experience stands to the table in the mind-to-world direction of fit. If the table isn't there, we say that I was mistaken, or was having a hallucination, or some such. And the direction of causation is from the object to the visual experience. If the Intentional component is satisfied it must be caused by the presence and features of the object. But in the case of the experience of acting, the Intentional component has the world-to-mind direction of fit. If I have this experience but the event doesn't occur we say such things as that I *failed* to raise my arm, and that I *tried* to raise my arm but did not succeed. And the direction of causation is from the experience of acting to the event. Where the Intentional content is satisfied, that is, where I actually succeed in raising my arm, the experience of acting causes the arm to go up. If it didn't cause the arm to go up, but something else did, I didn't raise my arm: it just went up for some other reason. And just as the visual experience is not a representation of its conditions of satisfaction but a presentation of those conditions, so I want to say, the experience of acting is a presentation of its conditions of satisfaction. On this account, action, like perception, is a causal and Intentional transaction between mind and the world.

Now, just as we don't have a name for that which gives us the Intentional content of our visual perception but have to invent a term of art, "the visual experience", so there is no term for that which gives us the Intentional content of our intentional action, but have to invent a term of art, "the experience of acting". But the term would mislead if it gave the impression that such things were passive experiences or sensations that simply afflict one, or that they were like what some philosophers have called volitions or acts of willing or anything of that sort. They are not acts at all, for

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we no more *perform* our experience of acting than we *see* our visual experiences.⁷ Nor am I claiming that there is any special feeling that belongs to all intentional actions.

The simplest way to *argue* for the presence of the experience of acting as one of the components of such simple actions as raising one's arm is to show how each component may be carved off from the other. Consider first the famous case described by William James⁸ in which a patient with an anesthetized arm is ordered to raise it. The patient's eyes are closed and unknown to him his arm is held to prevent it from moving. When he opens his eyes he is surprised to find that he has not raised his arm; that is, he is surprised to discover that there was no arm movement. In such a case he has the experience of acting and that experience plainly has Intentionality; we can say of the patient that his experience is one of *trying* but *failing* to raise his arm. And the conditions of satisfaction are determined by the experience; he knows what he is trying to do and he is surprised to discover that he has not succeeded. Such a case is analogous to the hallucination case in perception because the Intentional component occurs in the absence of the conditions of satisfaction. Now consider cases from Penfield where we have the bodily movements but not the Intentional components.

When I have caused a conscious patient to move his hand by applying an electrode to the motor cortex of one hemisphere I have often asked him about it. Invariably his response was: "I didn't do that. You did." When I caused him to vocalize, he said, "I didn't make that sound. You pulled it out of me."⁹

In such a case we have a bodily movement but no action; indeed, we have a bodily movement which may be exactly the same as the bodily movement in an intentional action, but the patient is surely

⁷ Prichard's theory of action seems to me to commit the same mistake as sense datum theories of perception. He recognizes the existence of the experience of acting, but he wants to make the experience into the Intentional object in the same way that sense datum theorists want to make the visual experience the object of visual perception (H. A. Prichard, 'Acting, willing, desiring', in A. R. White (ed.) *The Philosophy of Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 56-69.

⁸ *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2 (New York: Dover Publications, 1950), pp. 489ff.

⁹ Wilder Penfield, *The Mystery of the Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 76.

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right in denying that he performed any action. If the bodily movements are the same in the two cases, what is missing in the case where the hand moves but there is no action? And how does the patient know with such confidence that in the one case he is moving his hand and in the other case he is not doing anything? As an answer to these questions I am suggesting first there is an obvious phenomenal difference between the case where one moves one's hand and the case where one observes it move independently of one's intentions, the two cases just feel different to the patient; and secondly that this phenomenal difference carries with it a logical difference in the sense that the experience of moving one's hand has certain conditions of satisfaction. Such concepts as "trying", "succeeding", and "failing" apply to it in ways that they do not apply to the experiences the patient has when he simply observes his hand moving. Now this experience with its phenomenal and logical properties I am calling the experience of acting. And I am not claiming that there is a characteristic experience common to every intentional action, but rather that for every conscious intentional action there is the experience of performing that action, and that experience has an Intentional content. One last argument for the same conclusion: we ought to allow ourselves to be struck by the implications of the fact that at any point in a man's conscious life he knows without observation the answer to the question, "What are you now doing?" Many philosophers have noted this fact but none, to my knowledge, have explored its implications for Intentionality. Even in a case where a man is mistaken about what the results of his efforts are he still knows what he is *trying* to do. Now the knowledge of what one is doing in this sense, in the sense in which such knowledge does not guarantee that one knows that one is succeeding, and does not depend on any observations that one makes of oneself, characteristically derives from the fact that a conscious experience of acting involves a consciousness of the conditions of satisfaction of that experience. And again, the parallel with perception holds. Just as at any point in a man's conscious life he knows the answer to the question, "What do you see now?", so he knows the answer to the question, "What are you doing now?" In both cases the knowledge in question is simply knowledge of the conditions of satisfaction of a certain sort of presentation.

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	visual perception	intentional action
Intentional component	visual experience	experience of acting
Conditions of satisfaction of the Intentional component	that there be objects, states of affairs, etc., having certain features and certain causal relations to the visual experience	that there be certain bodily movements, states, etc., of the agent, and that these have certain causal relations to the experience of acting
Direction of fit	mind-to-world	world-to-mind
Direction of causation	world-to-mind (i.e., the presence of features of the object cause the experience)	mind-to-world (i.e., the experience causes the movements)
Corresponding features of the world	objects and states of affairs	movements and states of the agent

The parallel between the Intentionality of visual perception and the Intentionality of intentional action can be made explicit in the accompanying table.

IV

So far I have made three claims: first that there is a distinction between prior intentions and intentions in action; second that both are causally self-referential; and third that the action, for example, of raising one's arm, contains two components, the experience of acting (which has a form of Intentionality that is both presentational and causal), and the event of one's arm going up. Next I want to put these conclusions into a general account of the relations of prior intentions, intentions in action, and actions.

The Intentional content of the intention in action and the experience of acting are identical. Indeed, as far as Intentionality is concerned, the experience of acting just is the intention in action. Why then do we need both notions? Because the experience of acting is a conscious experience with an Intentional content, and the intention in action just is the Intentional component, regard-

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less of whether it is contained in any conscious experience of acting. Sometimes one performs intentional actions without any conscious experience of doing so; in such a case the intention in action exists without any experience of acting. The only difference, then, between them is that the experience may have certain phenomenal properties that are not essential to the intention. In exactly the same way, the visual experience has the same Intentionality as its presentational content but the experience has certain phenomenal properties that are not essential to that Intentionality (as the Weiskrantz experiments mentioned in Chapter 2 show).

Our problem now is to lay bare the relations between the following four elements: the prior intention, the intention in action, the bodily movement, and the action. The method is to take a simple example and make fully explicit the Intentional contents of the two intentions. Now why is that the method? Because our aim is to explain the relations between intentions and actions; and since an action is, in some sense at least, the condition of satisfaction of the intention to perform it, any attempt to clarify these relations must make completely explicit how the Intentional content of the intention represents (or presents) the action (or movement) as its conditions of satisfaction. And this method differs somewhat from the standard methods of the philosophy of action because we don't stand back a long way from the action and see which *descriptions* we can make of it, we have to get right up close to it and see what these descriptions are actually describing. The other method incidentally produces such true but superficial results as that an action "can be intentional under one description, but not intentional under another" – one might as well say that a fire-engine can be red under one description but not red under another. What one wants to know is: What facts exactly are these various descriptions describing? What fact about the action makes it "intentional under one description" and what fact about it makes it "not intentional under another"?

Suppose I recently had a prior intention to raise my arm and suppose, acting on that intention, I now raise my arm. How does it work? The representative content of the prior intention can be expressed as follows:

(I perform the action of raising my arm by way of carrying out this intention).

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The prior intention thus makes reference to the whole action as a unit, not just the movement, and it is causally self-referential. But the action as we have seen contains two components, the experience of acting and the movement, where the Intentional content of the experience of acting and the intention in action are identical. The next step then is to specify the Intentional content of the intention in action and show the relation of its Intentional content to that of the prior intention. Remember, the method of identifying an Intentional content with a direction of fit is always to ask oneself what must be the case in order that the Intentional content be satisfied: one identifies the Intentionality by its conditions of satisfaction. Using this test the presentational content of the intention in action is

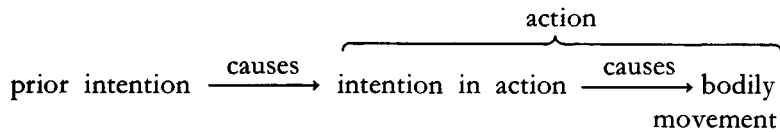
(My arm goes up as a result of this intention in action).

Now at first sight the contents of the prior intention and the intention in action look quite different, because, though both are causally self-referential, the prior intention represents the whole action as the rest of its conditions of satisfaction, but the intention in action presents, but does not *represent*, the physical movement and not the whole action as the rest of its conditions of satisfaction. In the former case the whole action is the 'Intentional object'; in the latter case the movement is the 'Intentional object'. The intention in action, like the prior intention, is self-referential in the sense that its Intentional content determines that it is satisfied only if the event that is its condition of satisfaction is caused by it. Another difference is that in any real-life situation the intention in action will be much more determinate than the prior intention, it will include not only that my arm goes up but that it goes up in a certain way and at a certain speed, etc.¹⁰

¹⁰ The relative indeterminacy of prior intentions is most obvious in the case of complex actions. In the earlier example of carrying out my intention to drive to my office, there will be a large number of subsidiary acts that are not represented by the prior intention but are presented by the intentions in action: I intentionally start the engine, shift gears, pass slow-moving vans, stop at red lights, swerve to avoid cyclists, change lanes, and so on with dozens of subsidiary acts that are performed intentionally but need not have been represented by my prior intention. This difference has also been a source of confusion in philosophy. Several philosophers have remarked that not everything I do intentionally is something I have an intention to do. For example, the particular movements of my hand when I brush my teeth are done intentionally, even though I had

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Well, if the content of the prior intention and the intention in action are so different, how do they ever – so to speak – get together? In fact the relationship is quite simple as we can see by unpacking the content of the prior intention and making explicit the nature of the causal self-reference of the prior intention. Since the whole action is represented as a unit by the prior intention and since the action consists of two components, the experience of acting and the physical movement, in order to make the content of the prior intention fully explicit we can represent each component separately. Furthermore, since both the self-reference of the prior intention and the self-reference of the intention in action are causal,¹¹ the prior intention causes the intention in action which causes the movement. By transitivity of Intentional causation we can say that the prior intention causes both the intention in action and the movement, and, since this combination is simply the action, we can say that the prior intention causes the action. The picture that emerges is this:



This also enables us to see what was wrong in the Chisholm-style counterexamples I presented earlier. For example, Bill had the prior intention to kill his uncle and his intention caused him to kill his uncle but his prior intention didn't cause an intention in action that presented the killing of his uncle as Intentional object, it just presented his driving his car or some such. (More about this later.) Since, as we have seen, the form of self-reference of the prior intention is causal and since the representation of the action can be

no intention to do them. But this view is a mistake that derives from a failure to see the difference between prior intentions and intentions in action. I may have had no prior intention to make just these hand movements but I had an intention in action to make them. G.H. Von Wright, *Explanation and understanding* (Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University Press), 1971, pp. 89–90.

¹¹ It is perhaps worth emphasizing that this view does not imply determinism. When one acts on one's desires or carries out one's prior intention, the desire and intention function causally, but it is not necessarily the case that one could not have done otherwise, that one simply could not help oneself.

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split into two components, the Intentional content of the prior intention can now be expressed as follows:

(This prior intention causes an intention in action which is a presentation of my arm going up, and which causes my arm to go up.)

And thus the prior intention causes the intention in action. By transitivity of Intentional causation, the prior intention represents and causes the entire action, but the intention in action presents and causes only the bodily movement.

I think these points can be made clearer by pursuing our analogy with perception a bit further. Roughly speaking the prior intention to raise my arm is to the action of raising my arm as the memory of seeing a flower is to seeing a flower; or rather the formal relations between the memory, the visual experience of the flower, and the flower are the mirror image of the formal relations between the prior intention, the intention in action and the bodily movement. The seeing consists of two components, the visual experience and the flower, where the presence of (and features of) the flower cause the visual experience and the visual experience has the presence and features of the flower as the rest of its conditions of satisfaction. The content of the visual experience is that there is a flower there and it is self-referential in the sense that, unless the fact that there is a flower there causes this experience, the conditions of satisfaction do not obtain, i.e., I do not actually see that there is a flower there, nor do I see the flower. The memory of seeing the flower represents both the visual experience and the flower and is self-referential in the sense that, unless the memory was caused by the visual experience which in turn was caused by the presence of (and features of) the flower, I didn't really remember seeing the flower. Now similarly the action consists of two components, the experience of acting and the movement, where the experience of acting causes the movement and has the movement (together with its features) as the rest of its conditions of satisfaction. The content of the experience of acting is that there is a movement of my arm, and it is self-referential in the sense that, unless the movement is caused by this experience, the conditions of satisfaction do not obtain, i.e., I do not actually raise my arm. The prior intention to raise my arm represents both the experience of acting and the

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movement, and is self-referential in the sense that, unless this intention causes the experience of acting which in turn causes the movement, I don't really carry out my prior intention. These relations can be made explicit by expanding our earlier table (p. 91). (Tables are usually boring, but since this one contains a summary of much of the theory of Intentionality, I ask the reader to scrutinize it carefully.)

A few things about this table are worth special mention. First, neither the memory nor the prior intention is essential to the visual perception or the intentional action respectively. I can see a lot of things that I have no memory of seeing and I can perform a lot of intentional actions without any prior intention to perform those actions. Second, the asymmetry of the direction of fit and the direction of causation is too neat to be accidental. Put crudely, the intuitive explanation is this: When I try to make the world be the way I intend it to be, I succeed if the world comes to be the way I intend it to *be* (world-to-mind direction of fit) only if I *make* it be that way (mind-to-world direction of causation). Analogously, I see the world the way it really *is* (mind-to-world direction of fit) only if the way the world is *makes* me see it that way (world-to-mind direction of causation). Third, for the sake of simplicity I have left out of the table the fact that the conditions of satisfaction of the Intentional components will contain various details about what the flower looks like and how the raising of the arm is performed. I have not tried to include everything. Fourth, the formal structure of the chart is not meant to suggest that perception and action function independently of each other. For most complex actions, such as driving a car or eating a meal, I have to be able to perceive what I am doing in order to do it; and similarly there is an intentional element in most complex perceptions, as when I am looking at a painting or feeling the texture of a rug. Fifth, because of the transitivity of causation, I have allowed myself to oscillate between saying the memory of seeing the flower is caused by the event of seeing the flower and the memory of seeing the flower is caused by the visual experience which when satisfied is in turn caused by the presence of the flower. Similarly I oscillate between saying the prior intention causes the action and the prior intention causes the intention in action which causes the movement. Since in each case the complex event contains a

A comparison of the forms of Intentionality involved in seeing a flower and remembering a flower on the one hand, and (prior) intending to raise one's arm and raising one's arm on the other

	visual perception	memory	intentional action	prior intention
How reported	I see the flower	I remember seeing the flower	I am raising my arm	I intend to raise my arm
Nature of the Intentional component	visual experience	memory	intention in action (=experience of acting)	prior intention
Presentation or representation	presentation	representation	presentation	representation
Conditions of satisfaction of the Intentional component	that there be a <i>state of affairs</i> that the flower is present and that this state of affairs causes <i>this visual experience</i>	that there be an <i>event of seeing the flower</i> consisting of two components, the <i>state of affairs</i> that the flower is present and the <i>visual experience</i> , and the <i>event</i> causes <i>this memory</i>	that there be an <i>event of my arm raising</i> and <i>this intention in action</i> causes that <i>event</i>	that there be an <i>action of raising my arm</i> consisting of two components, the <i>event of the arm raising</i> and the <i>intention in action</i> , and <i>this prior intention</i> causes the <i>action</i>
Direction of fit	mind-to-world	mind-to-world	world-to-mind	world-to-mind
Direction of causation	world-to-mind	world-to-mind	mind-to-world	mind-to-world
Nature of the self-reference of the Intentional component	as part of the conditions of satisfaction of the visual experience, it must be caused by the rest of its own conditions of satisfaction	as part of the conditions of satisfaction of the memory, it must be caused by the rest of its own conditions of satisfaction	as part of the conditions of satisfaction of the intention in action it must cause the rest of its own conditions of satisfaction	as part of the conditions of satisfaction of the prior intention it must cause the rest of its own conditions of satisfaction
Corresponding objects and events in the world (Intentional objects)	flower	flower event of seeing the flower	movement of the arm	movement of the arm action of raising the arm

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component which is both Intentional and causal and since in each case the Intentional component stands in certain causal relations to another Intentional state which represents the whole complex event, it doesn't seem to me to matter which of the two ways of speaking we adopt.

v

We have so far been talking mostly about very simple cases such as raising one's arm and I will now very briefly sketch how this theory could be extended to account for complex intentions and the relations between complex intentions, the accordion effect¹² and basic actions.¹³

Consider Gavrilo Princip and his murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. Of Princip we say that he:

pulled the trigger
fired the gun
shot the Archduke
killed the Archduke
struck a blow against Austria
avenged Serbia

Furthermore, each member of this list is systematically related to those preceding and succeeding it: Princip, for example, fired the gun *by means of* pulling the trigger and he shot the Archduke *by means of* firing the gun. Some but not all of these relations are causal. Pulling the trigger causes the gun to fire; but killing the Archduke doesn't *cause* a blow to be struck against Austria, in the circumstances it just *is* striking a blow against Austria. The members of the list, together with the causal (or other sorts of) relations between them constitute the conditions of satisfaction of a single complex intention in action on the part of Princip. The proof of this is that the specification of any or all of them could have counted as a true answer to the question, "What are you now doing?", where that question asks, "What intentional action are

¹² The term "accordion effect" is due to J. Feinberg, *Doing and Deserving* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1970, p. 34.

¹³ The term "basic action" is due to A. Danto, 'Basic actions', in White (ed.) *op. cit.* pp. 43-58.

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you now performing or trying to perform?” And the test which shows them to be part of the content of the intention in action, to repeat, is: “What counts as succeeding or failing?”, i.e., what are the conditions of satisfaction of the Intentional content? There were all sorts of other things going on at the time, many of them known to Princip, which were not part of the conditions of satisfaction and so not part of the complex intention. Complex intentions are those where the conditions of satisfaction include not just a bodily movement *a*, but some further components of the action, *b, c, d, . . .*, which we intend to perform by way of (or by means of, or in, or by, etc.) performing *a, b, c, . . .*, and the representation of both *a, b, c, . . .* and the relations among them are included in the content of the complex intention. It is a remarkable and little-noted fact of human and animal evolution that we have the capacity to make intentional bodily movements where the conditions of satisfaction of our intentions go beyond the bodily movements. Princip moved only his finger but his Intentionality covered the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This capacity to have additional conditions of satisfaction beyond our bodily movements is a key to understanding meaning and causation as we will see in subsequent chapters.

Our ability to expand true descriptions of actions in ways exemplified by this list is sometimes called the accordion effect. Starting in the middle we can extend the accordion up or down by earlier or later members of the sequence of intentions. But notice that we can't go on indefinitely. As far as the causal story is concerned there are lots of things that happened up above the top, down below the bottom and off to the side which are not part of the accordion of intentional action. Thus we could add to the list as follows:

He produced neuron firings in his brain	
contracted certain muscles in his arm and hand	
pulled the trigger	
fired the gun	
shot the Archduke	moved a lot of
killed the Archduke	air molecules
struck a blow against Austria	
avenged Serbia	

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ruined Lord Grey's summer season
convinced the Emperor Franz Josef that God was punishing the
family
angered Wilhelm II
started the First World War

But none of these things above, below, or to the side are intentional actions of Princip, and I am inclined to say none of them are actions of his at all. They are just unintended occurrences that happened as a result of his action. As far as *intentional* actions are concerned the boundaries of the accordion are the boundaries of the complex intention; and indeed we have the accordion effect for intentional actions, because we have complex intentions of the sort I have described. But the complex intention does not quite set the boundaries of the *action*, because of the possibility of unintentional actions.

If we are going to have any use for the concept of a basic action at all, we might say that the top member of any such accordion is a basic action, and we might indeed define a basic action type as follows: A is a basic action type for an agent S iff S is able to perform acts of type A and S can intend to do an act of type A without intending to do any other action by means of which he intends to do A . Notice that this definition would make an action basic only relative to an agent and his skills; what is basic for one agent might not be basic for another. But that may be a useful way to describe the facts. For a good skier, making a left turn can be a basic action. He just intends to do it and he does it. For a beginner to make a left turn, he must put his weight on the downhill ski while edging it into the slope, stem the uphill ski, then shift the weight from left to right ski, etc., all of which are reports of the content of his intentions in action. For two agents the physical movements might be indistinguishable even though one was performing a – for him – basic action and the other was performing the same actions by means of performing a basic action. Furthermore, this definition would have the consequence that for any one agent there may be no sharp dividing line between his basic and nonbasic actions. But again, that may be the right way to describe the facts.

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VI

In this section I want to tie up a few loose ends before going on to show how this account solves the paradoxes of section II.

Unintentional actions. What do people mean when they say that an action can be “intentional under one description but not intentional under another”? And what is an unintentional action anyhow? An intentional action consists of two components, an Intentional component and an event which is its Intentional object; the intention in action is the Intentional component and it presents the Intentional object as its conditions of satisfaction. But the complex event which constitutes the action will also have all sorts of other features not presented by the Intentional content of the intention in action. Oedipus intended to marry Jocasta but when he married Jocasta he was marrying his mother. “Marrying his mother” was not part of the Intentional content of the intention in action, but it happened anyhow. The action was intentional under the description “marrying Jocasta”, it was not intentional under the description “marrying his mother”. But all that means is that the total action had elements which were parts of the conditions of satisfaction of the intention in action and other elements which were not. It is misleading to state these facts about actions in terms of descriptions of actions because it suggests that what matters is not the action but the way we describe the action, whereas, according to my account, what matters are the facts that the descriptions describe. This distinction will be clearer if we consider intentional actions performed by animals, and it is no more puzzling, incidentally, to ascribe intentional actions to animals than it is to ascribe visual perceptions to them. Suppose my dog is running around the garden chasing a ball; he is performing the intentional action of chasing the ball and the unintentional action of tearing up the lobelias, but this has nothing to do with anybody’s descriptions. The dog certainly can’t describe himself, and the facts would remain the same whether or not any human being ever did or could describe them. The sense in which one and the same event or sequence of events can be both an intentional action and an unintentional action has no intrinsic connection with linguistic representation but rather with Intentional presentation.

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Some aspects of the event may be conditions of satisfaction of the Intentional content, some other aspects may not; and under the first set of aspects the action is intentional, under the second set, not; even though there need be nothing linguistic about the way an Intentional content presents its conditions of satisfaction.

How do we distinguish between those aspects of the complex event under which it is an unintentional action and those aspects which are so far from the intention that under them it is not an action at all? When Oedipus married his mother he moved a lot of molecules, caused some neurophysiological changes in his brain and altered his spatial relationship to the North Pole. These are all things he did unintentionally and none of them are actions of his. Yet I feel inclined to say that marrying his mother, though it was something he did unintentionally, was still an action, an unintentional action. What is the difference? I do not know of a clear criterion for distinguishing between those aspects of intentional actions under which they are unintentional actions and those aspects of intentional actions under which the event is not an action at all. One possible rough criterion, suggested by Dascal and Gruengard,¹⁴ is that we count an action as unintentional under those aspects which, though not intended, are, so to speak, within the field of possibility of intentional actions of the agent as seen from our point of view. Thus, marrying his mother is in the field of possibility for being an intentional action by Oedipus, but moving molecules is not.

Mental acts and refraining. So far I have discussed only cases where the action involves a bodily movement, but I believe it is easy to extend the account to actions where there is no bodily movement or where only a mental act is performed. If, for example, I am told to hold still and I comply, the relevant content of my intention in action will be

(that this intention in action causes it to be the case that there is no bodily movement).

Thus the absence of bodily movement may be as much a part of the conditions of satisfaction of a causally self-referential intention in

¹⁴ M. Dascal and O. Gruengard, 'Unintentional action and non-action', *Manuscripto*, vol. 4, no. 2 (April 1981), pp. 103-13.

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action as a bodily movement. Similar considerations apply to negative actions. If I am told to stop making so much noise or to refrain from insulting Smith and I comply, the intention in action must cause the absence of a phenomenon if it is to be satisfied.

Mental acts are formally isomorphic to the cases of physical acts we have considered. The only difference is that in the place of a bodily movement as a condition of satisfaction we have a purely mental event. If, for example, I am asked to form a mental image of the Eiffel tower and I comply, the relevant portion of the intention in action will be

(that this intention in action causes me to have a mental image of the Eiffel tower).

Intentions and foreknowledge. A common confusion is to suppose that if someone knows that something will be a consequence of his action then he must intend that consequence. But it is easy to see on my account why this is false. One may know that something will occur as a result of one's action even though its occurrence is not part of the conditions of satisfaction of the intention. If, for example, a dentist knows that a consequence of drilling a patient's tooth will be pain, it does not follow that he intends that consequence, and this is shown by the fact that if no pain occurs he need not say, "I have failed", but rather, "I was mistaken". In my jargon, that amounts to saying that the conditions of satisfaction of his belief were unsatisfied, not those of his intention. A related mistake is to suppose there is some close connection, perhaps even identity, between intention and responsibility. But we hold people responsible for many things they do not intend and we do not hold them responsible for many things they do intend. An example of the former type is the driver who recklessly runs over a child. He did not intend to run over the child but he is held responsible. And an example of the latter is the man who is forced at gunpoint to sign a contract. He intended to sign the contract but is not held responsible.

The reduction of intentions to beliefs and desires. Can we reduce prior intentions to beliefs and desires? I doubt it, and the reason has to do with the special causal self-referentiality of intentions. But it is instructive to see how far we can get. If I have a prior intention to perform an action A , I must believe it is possible to do A and I

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must have a desire to do A . The desire to do A may be a 'secondary' and not a 'primary' desire, as for example if I want to do A as a means to an end and not 'for its own sake'. Notice further that I do not have to believe that I will actually succeed in doing A , but I must at least believe it is possible for me to succeed. This last condition incidentally explains why a man may consistently have desires which he knows to be inconsistent, but he cannot consistently have intentions which he knows to be inconsistent. Even though I know it is impossible to be in both places at once, I may want to be in Sacramento all day Wednesday and want to be in Berkeley all day Wednesday. But I cannot consistently intend to be in Berkeley all day Wednesday and intend to be in Sacramento all day Wednesday. Since intentions, like desires, are closed under conjunction, the two intentions would imply an intention that I know to be impossible to fulfill.

So far, then, we have

$\text{Int}(\text{I will do } A) \rightarrow \text{Bel}(\diamond \text{I will do } A) \ \& \ \text{Des}(\text{I will do } A)$

To this we need to add the self-referential feature that I desire that the state in question will cause its own conditions of satisfaction and I believe that the state will function causally toward producing its own conditions of satisfaction. As I remarked before, I needn't believe that my intention will succeed, but only that success is possible. Thus the whole state has the following implications:

$\text{Int}(\text{I will do } A) \rightarrow$
There is some intentional state x such that x contains
 $\text{Bel}(\diamond \text{I will do } A) \ \&$
 $\text{Des}(\text{I will do } A) \ \&$
 $\text{Bel}(x \text{ will function causally toward production of:}$
 $\text{I will do } A) \ \&$
 $\text{Des}(x \text{ will cause: I will do } A)$

Now does all this add up to an intention? I think not. To construct a counterexample we would need only to construct a case where someone satisfied all of these conditions but still hadn't actually formed an intention to do A . Indeed, what the analysis of this chapter and Chapter 2 suggests is that it is a mistake to think of belief and desire as the primary forms of cognition and volition, wrong because they both lack the internal causal self-referentiality

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which connects cognition and volition to their conditions of satisfaction. Biologically speaking, the primary forms of Intentionality are perception and action, because by their very content they involve the organism in direct causal relations with the environment on which his survival depends. Belief and desire are what is left over if you subtract the causal self-referentiality from the Intentional contents of cognitive and volitive representational Intentional states. Now once you subtract that feature the resulting states are much more flexible. Belief, unlike memory, can be about anything and not just about what could have caused it; desire, unlike intention, can be about anything and not just about what it can cause.

Why are my intentions restricted to propositional contents that make reference to my further actions; why can't I, for example, intend that it will rain? The answer to this question follows immediately from our account: because of the causal self-referentiality of intentions I can only intend what my intention can cause. If I could cause rain as a basic action, as I can, for example, cause my arm to go up, then we could say, for example, "I intend to rain" as we now say "I intend to raise my arm", and we could say "I rained" as we now say "I raised my arm".

Intentions and explanations of action. If intentions really cause actions in the way described, then why is it that we can't normally explain an action by stating its intention. If I am asked, "Why did he raise his arm?", it sounds odd to say, "Because he intended to raise his arm". The reason it sounds odd is because by identifying the action as "raising his arm" we have already identified it in terms of the intention in action. We already reveal an implicit knowledge that the cause of the arm going up was the Intentional component in the action of raising it. But notice it doesn't sound at all odd to specify the intention in action as the cause of the movement: why did his arm go up? He raised it. Nor does it sound odd to give some *further* intention as the cause of the action. Why did he raise his arm? He was voting/waving goodbye/reaching for the book/exercising/trying to touch the ceiling. This is what people are driving at when they say that we can often explain an action by redescribing it. But if we redescribe it truly there must be some facts we are redescribing which were left out of our first description and these facts are that the action has an Intentional

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component which was left out of the first description and which causes the other component, e.g., his prior intention to vote by raising his arm causes his intention in action of raising his arm which causes his arm to go up. Remember, on this account all actions consist of an Intentional component and a 'physical' (or other sort of) Intentional object component. We can always explain this non-Intentional component by the Intentional component, and the Intentional component can be as complex as you like. Why is that man wriggling around like that? He's sharpening an axe. But to say he's sharpening an axe is to say his action has at least two components, an axe sharpening intention in action and the series of movements that intention causes. But we can't answer the question, "Why is he sharpening an axe?" by identifying that intention, because we have already identified the axe sharpening intention when we asked the question. But we can say, for example, "He's preparing to chop down a tree".

Further discussion of the explanation of behavior is perhaps a topic for another book, but already implicit in my account is the following constraint on the explanation of behavior: In the Intentional explanation of actions, the propositional content in the explanation must be identical with a propositional content of an Intentional state that functioned causally, via Intentional causation, in the production of the behavior. These states that function causally may be either intentions or they may be antecedent states, such as desires, beliefs, fears, hopes, etc., that cause intentions by way of practical reason. But, in either case, if the explanation really explains, the propositional content in the explanation must be identical with the propositional content of the Intentional state that functions via Intentional causation.

What are you now doing? The content of the intention in action makes reference to itself. That is why it makes perfectly good sense to say, in answer to the question, "What are you now doing?", "I am raising my arm", and not, "I am causing my arm to go up", even though the latter expression articulates the nonself-referential component of the intention in action. But the whole action is an intention in action plus a bodily movement which is caused by the intention in action and which is the rest of the conditions of satisfaction of that intention in action. And so the speaker states the content of the intention quite precisely when he says, "I am

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raising my arm”; or if he wants to carve off the Intentional content from its satisfaction he can say, “I am trying to raise my arm”.

VII

In this section I will try to show how this theory of action explains the paradoxes of section II.

First, the reason there is a more intimate connection between actions and intentions than there is between, say, beliefs and states of affairs is that actions contain intentions in action as one of their components. An action is a composite entity of which one component is an intention in action. If the composite entity also contains elements which constitute the conditions of satisfaction of the Intentional component in the way described earlier, the agent succeeds in the performance of an intentional action. If not, he tries but fails. Thus, to take our overworked example: the action of my raising my arm consists of two components, the intention in action and the movement of the arm. Take away the first and you don't have an action but only a movement, take away the second and you don't have success, but only a failed effort. There are no actions, not even unintentional actions, without intentions, because every action has an intention in action as one of its components.

The sense in which we can say that an intentional action is caused by an intention or simply is the condition of satisfaction of an intention can now be made more precise. Part of the conditions of satisfaction of a prior intention really is the performance of an action, but not all actions are performed as the result of prior intentions. As we have seen, there can be actions without corresponding prior intentions, e.g., when I just haul off and hit somebody without any prior intention to hit him. But there can't be any actions, not even unintentional actions, without intentions in action. Actions thus necessarily contain intentions in action, but are not necessarily caused by prior intentions. But the Intentional content of the intention in action is not that it should cause the action, but rather that it should cause the movement (or state) of the agent which is its condition of satisfaction, and the two together, intention in action and movement, constitute the action. So it wasn't quite right to say that an intentional action just is the

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condition of satisfaction of an intention; it was wrong for two reasons: actions don't require prior intentions and though they do require intentions in action, the condition of satisfaction of the intention in action is not the action but rather the movement or state of the agent as caused by the intention in action. An action, to repeat, is any composite event or state that contains the occurrence of an intention in action. If that intention in action causes the rest of its conditions of satisfaction, the event or state is a successfully performed intentional action, if not, it is unsuccessful. An unintentional action is an intentional action, whether successful or not, which has aspects which were not intended in it, i.e., were not presented as conditions of satisfaction of the intention in action. However, lots of things I do unintentionally, e.g., sneezing, are not actions at all, for though they are things I cause, they contain no intentions in action.

Second, we now have a very simple explanation of the Chisholm-style counterexamples to the view that actions which are caused by intentions are intentional actions. In the uncle example, the prior intention caused the killing of the uncle but the killing of the uncle was unintentional. Why? In our analysis we saw there are three stages: the prior intention, the intention in action, and the physical movement. The prior intention causes the movement by way of causing the intention in action, which causes and presents the movement as its condition of satisfaction. But in the uncle example this middle stage was left out. We did not have the death of the uncle as the condition of satisfaction of any intention in action, and that is why he was killed unintentionally.

Davidson's example is formally just like Chisholm's: the reason the climber's loosening of his hold is unintentional in the case as described is that he has no intention in action of loosening his hold. There is no moment at which he could say, "I am now loosening my hold", as a way of articulating the content of his intention in action, i.e., as a way of making explicit the conditions of satisfaction of his intention, even though he might say just that as a way of describing what was happening to him. Even if on the basis of his belief and desire he formed a secondary desire to loosen his hold and this desire caused him to loosen his hold it is still not an intentional action if he does not have an intention in action to loosen his hold. In an intentional action, on the other hand, the

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standard way the sequence of Intentional states would work is as follows:

I want (I rid myself of weight and danger)
I believe (the best way to rid myself of weight and danger is to loosen my hold).

And by practical reason this leads to a secondary desire

I want (I loosen my hold).

And this leads, either with or without a prior intention, to an intention in action: the climber says to himself, "Now!" And the content of his intention in action is

I am now loosening my hold.

That is,

This intention in action causes my hand to loosen its hold on the rope.

The whole structure is both Intentional and causal; the sequence of Intentional states causes the bodily movement. Bennett's example is genuinely different from the other two because the would-be killer actually does have an intention in action to kill the victim and it actually does cause the death of the victim. Why then are we at all reluctant to say the intention was satisfied? I think the reason is obvious: we assume that the killer had a complex intention involving a specific series of by-means-of relations. He intended to kill the victim by means of shooting him with a gun, etc., and these conditions were not satisfied. Instead the victim was killed by an unintended stampede of wild pigs.

Some people have thought that the problem in all these cases has to do with the oddity of the causal sequences, but the oddity of the causal sequence only matters if it is part of the Intentional content of the intention in action that it should not be odd. To see this we can vary the above example as follows: The killer's assistant, knowing about the pigs in advance, tells the killer, "Shoot your gun in that direction and you will kill him". The killer does as instructed with the death of the victim as the ultimate result; and in this case the killing is intentional, even though we have the same causally bizarre sequence as in Bennett's original example.

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Could we find similar counterexamples where something gets between the intention in action and the event so that, though we could say the intention in action caused the physical event, the action was not intentional? One class of potential counterexamples are cases where some other intention in action intervenes to bring about the event. Thus, suppose that unknown to me my arm is rigged up so that whenever I try to raise it, somebody else causes it to go up, then the action is his not mine, even though I had the intention in action of raising my arm and in some sense that intention caused my arm to go up. (The reader will recognize this as essentially the occasionalist solution to the mind-body problem. God does all of our actions for us.)

But this class of potential counterexamples is eliminated by simply construing the relation of intention in action to its conditions of satisfaction as precluding intervention by other agents or other Intentional states. And that this is the right way to construe intentions in action is at least indicated by the fact that, when my intentions in action make explicit reference to the intentions of other agents, then in general the actions become the actions of those agents. Thus, suppose I know how my arm is rigged up and I want it to go up. My intention in action then is *getting the other agent to raise it*, not *raising it*. My action is getting him to raise it, *his* action is raising it.

But as long as there is no intervening Intentionality and as long as its functioning is regular and reliable, it doesn't matter how weird the physical apparatus might be. Even if unknown to me my arm is rigged up to a whole lot of electrical wires that go through Moscow and return via San Diego and when I try to raise my arm it activates this whole apparatus so that my arm goes up, all the same, I raise my arm. And indeed for some complex action types we even allow that one can perform an action by getting others to perform it. We say, for example, "Louis XIV built Versailles", even though the actual construction was not done by him.

The counterexamples we have so far discussed then are easily accounted for by a theory of the Intentionality of intention and action, and especially by an account of intentions in action. However, this account is still incomplete because there is a class of possible counterexamples I have not yet discussed, cases where the prior intention causes something else which causes the intention in

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action. Suppose, for example, Bill's intention to kill his uncle causes him to have a stomachache and his stomachache makes him so angry that he forgets all about his original intention but in his rage he kills the first man he sees whom he recognizes as his uncle. The elimination of these counterexamples, along with some other counterexamples concerning the Intentionality of perceptual experiences, will have to wait until we can give an account of Intentional causation in Chapter 4.