INTENTION AND HUMAN ACTION

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By

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Precis: An examination of intention relative to human action is undertaken. A theory of human action is briefly sketched, based on the notion of rule-governed behavior, in order to give a framework for the discussion. It is argued that the notion intentional is not indigenous to the concept of human action; there are unintentional actions. One important point is that only actions of the agent are the proper objects of his intentions. The nature of intention, a mental state, is examined by studying how intention is connected with deliberating, deciding, trying, choice and belief. The close connection of intention, intentional action and the reasons the agent might have for doing the action necessitate a discussion of reason explanations of actions. It is decided that most often the link is a causal one; explanations in terms of reasons are of the causal sort. When they are not, the link might be seen as a logical one.

Preface

With the amount of literature on the subject of action theory which has appeared since 1949, it seems that no real defense of why this topic was chosen need be given. If one were necessary, however, even a thesis dealing with just an exposition of intention and human action would be, perhaps, acceptable. This paper goes beyond that somewhat and presents not only an outline of some important theories but also critical analyses of them. Certain positions concerning the subject are presented and defended using a number of examples. The strengths and weaknesses of the several theories are examined.

The language which has evolved along with the study of human action is relied upon throughout the paper. There is a reason for this. Often, problems arise through a misuse of language or a misunderstanding of it. By using this language in an intuitive way, however, I hope to go some distance in alleviating these problems by showing how the language can be properly used.

The starting point of the study of human action seems to be Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics. Perhaps too little time is spent on his views in this paper. But Aristotle did not spend as much time on intention as he explicitly spent on, say, the voluntary, choice, decision, etc. For that reason, the more contemporary classics, works of Anscombe and Davidson, and the material that has grown out of them comprised the bulk of the referenced work. The excellent study be Hampshire and Hart is an intuitive and straightforward approach and was exceedingly helpful.

As will be witnessed by the bibliography, the author owes a great deal to the writings and lectures (as well as more or less formal discussions) of Joseph Margolis of Temple University. He was the author's first Philosophy teacher and introduced him to the subject of this paper and much more. More recently, my advisor, N.L. Wilson, has proved so helpful, it is hardly expressible. Often, with his overall ability and specific knowledge of the important works used in the paper, he made sure I had my own views straight and would never stand for a less than honest exposition of another's theory. A few times he chased me back off limbs and away from tangents which were proved to be indefensible (or less defensible) and unrelated (respectively). His suggestions were always helpful and stimulating and his criticisms tactful and to the point. To him my thanks.

Albert Shalom read the entire manuscript and made many helpful comments. His philosophical expertise presented quite a challenge, provoking a re-thinking of some points. My thanks also to him.

Thanks to my wife, Marty, for encouragement when it was needed and (most of the time) solitude when it was wanted. Her editorial ability might have made a few lines easier to read but, of course, if the style is troublesome, it is my own; no one else can be blamed for that. She also typed the major portion of the final copy.

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Note on the Text

All references in the body of the paper occur in parenthetical notations. The uses of the bracketed abbreviations is more fully explained in the bibliography. The usual style is the following: (author's name [abbreviation of work] , page number). Where it is obvious to which author reference is made, only the abbreviation appears. Where it is obvious to which author and work reference is made, only the page number appears.

"The presumption of intention is not a proposition of law but a proposition of ordinary good sense."

Quoted without reference
by Williams, p. 226.

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Chapter One

Intention: its place in a Theory of Human Nature

There are many puzzles which have been raised by the Philosophical literature concerning human action. No small percentage of these works concern intention. The puzzles arise in the attempt to answer the question "What is it about the action of an agent which allows it to be described as intentional?" or "What allows an observer to ascribe to the agent an intention?" The main reason for the often irreconcilable differences of opinion concerning intention is the irreconcilable differences between theories of human action.

Part of the problem arises because a theory of human action seems very straightforward until a closer examination is made. An agent flips a switch; a light goes on and a room is illuminated. The light going on, however, also alerts a prowler. Are these actions? Some of them or all of them? Is there one action or more than one? (The example is from Davidson [Actions], pp. 68-69.)

Davidson asserts that there is one action under four different descriptions. Similarly, Anscombe, in her example, argues that " ... moving his arm up and down ... is, in these circumstances, operating the pump; and in these circumstances it is replenishing the house water supply; and ... is poisoning the household" (Anscombe [Bk], p. 46). Her conclusion also is that there is one action with four descriptions related as means to end.

But means and ends are usually connected with a purpose, i.e., an agent wanting to do something in order to do, or by means of doing, something else. See, however, how this affects the view. It cannot be disputed that pumping water physically causes the house water supply to become poisoned. But, if there is a means to end identity, the position is in trouble if, as in Davidson's example, the agent is unaware of the prowler. It was not his purpose or end to alert the prowler but to, say, only hold a meeting in the room. Anscombe and Davidson are on the same side of the fence concerning identity and yet it seems that their positions will not even support each other. One problem with the theory of action is that even people who agree with each other often do it for different reasons. This is acceptable only if Philosophers now permit the end of their theories, the formulation of them, to justify how they arrive at their theories.

More problems with such a view are pointed out by Goldman ([Theory], pp. 2 ff.). He argues that if X and Y are identical, then they must have the same properties; but the redescriptions of Anscombe's and Davidson's one action do not. For instance, if the descriptions are of an identical action, then it should be said that flipping the switch caused the light to go on, the illuminating of the room caused the light to go on and the alerting of the prowler caused the light to go on. The first one is true but the next two are clearly incorrect.

A counter theory might be something along the lines of different descriptions, different actions. That is, as many truthful descriptions as there are, that is how many actions the agent performed (cf. Cody [Descriptions]). But this view also has some apparent problems. For example, it would be difficult and no doubt wrong to say that "Oedipus' marrying his mother" and "Oedipus' marrying Jocasta" are different actions. But obviously the descriptions of the action are different. Or are they? This example is very different from both Anscombe's and Davidson's. The reason is that Oedipus could not have married Jocasta without having (or unless he) married his mother. In the other examples, however, it is quite possible that the agent flip the switch and not turn on the light, etc. He might have flipped the switch for the fan or the light

bulb might have been burned out. So what is the difference between these examples?

There is a kind of internal identity between "Oedipus' marrying his mother" and "Oedipus' marrying Jocasta" (since Jocasta = Oedipus' mother) that does not exist between flipping the switch and turning on the light. From the fact of the identity of these two elements in the redescriptions, it follows logically that Oedipus must marry his mother if he marries Jocasta. But if Jack flips the switch, it is not the case that, logically, the light must go on. Suppose, however, that the switch Jack flips is the second switch from the right as he enters the hallway of his home. If this is the case, then "flipping the switch" and "flipping the second switch from the right in the hall" or even "flipping the light switch" (if that, in fact, is what it is) are the same action. They are redescriptions but note that all of the changes which make the descriptions different center around the same switch (or earlier around Jocasta). This is the element internal to the description. The switch, no matter how it is described, is the same switch. Jocasta, no matter how she is described, is Oedipus' mother. This is the internal identity in the descriptions which permits different descriptions of the same act. But these redescriptions are very different from the earlier examples.

What does this do to the notion of different descriptions, different actions? It does not alter it but it does temper it somewhat. Different descriptions will refer to different actions unless there is an internal identity causing the descriptions to be different from each other. This internal identity is very important for intention because it now permits the statement of the well known dictum that an agent can intend an action under one description but not the same action under another description. For example, a man might be intentionally sawing a plank. Now, unknown to him, he is sawing one of Smith's planks which were mixed up with his own. The plank which he is sawing is Smith's plank; these are two ways of describing the same thing. Because of this identity which occurs internally in the descriptions, the two descriptions are of the same action (cf. Anscombe [Bk], pp. 11-12; she points out that sawing Smith's plank or sawing an oak plank is not something else which the agent does--it is what he does). But because the agent is unaware that the plank he is sawing is Smith's plank, he does not saw Smith's plank intentionally even though he is sawing Smith's plank. This shows how knowledge and more importantly belief are tied up with intention. This will pursued later.

The foregoing was meant to illustrate some differing opinions concerning certain aspects of action theory as

well as to preface one part of the theory that will be sketched below. Other problems arise when theorists try to answer questions like: What counts as an action? Does an action have to be intentional? (Also, if what the agent does is unintentional, is it, therefore, not an action?) Are actions caused? If so, what are causes for actions? Reasons? Wants? Are explanations in terms of reasons and causes incompatible or can they be construed as the same? Most of these questions about human action deal, in some degree, with more pointed questions about intention.

Ascription of intention can be accomplished in two ways: (1) first person reports of the agent (consider them sincere) and (2) third person reports. Statements of the latter sort are usually based on the empirical data derived from the movements of the agent; they can be considered more or less accurate depending, say, on the complexity of the action, the degree of familiarity the observer has with the situation and the agent, etc. First person reports are usually not construed as based on empirical data. It is very rare indeed that an agent will have to stop and look at his movements in order to answer the question "What are you doing?" This, along with the question "Why?" , seem to be the basic questions concerning intention. The answer, which will refer to an action, if it is correct or accurate, implies an intention, which should answer the question "Why?" Intentions either

concern a present (or immediately past) action of the agent or some future action of the agent. The discussion of this point will be given in Chapter Two.

Since actions themselves play so central a role in the analysis of intention, perhaps it will be best to start the discussion with a consideration of what might or might not count as an action. The basic theme which will be presented in the paper is (1) all actions need not be intentional (intention is not a necessary part of the concept of action; the agent could have done something he did not intend to do) and (2) only intentional actions of the agent are properly to be regarded as objects of intentions (using the locution "'intending' another to do an action" or "'intending' a state of affairs" seems more, perhaps, a euphemistic or stylistic way of giving a command or expressing a desire or a way of saying there is some, perhaps undetermined action(s) the agent intends to do in order for the person to do what is wanted or in order for the state of affairs to come about). The discussion of action will include, where appropriate, some preview of the analysis of intention which will be, more directly, the topic of later chapters. More will be said concerning the nature of intention than the epistemology of determining the agent's intention. That is, any agent's particular intention need not be known in order for an analysis of

intention to be given. Whatever the agent's intention is, it is an intention and that is the subject matter of this study. Consider all reports given in the examples to be sincere.

Action

What is an action? Again, what counts as an action? How is action ascribed to the agent? Consider the familiar violent exhalation of air due to an irritation of the nasal and/or sinus passages. Sneezing in the usual sense, that is a real sneeze, is usually not considered an action. It is usually not something the agent is thought of as performing but, more, something that happens to him. One point has to be made immediately. Although a sneeze is not an action, the agent can allow himself to sneeze in a certain way. For example, he can sneeze loudly or softly with some purpose in mind (or sneeze loudly or softly for no reason at all or out of habit). The sneeze itself is uncontrollable in the sense that the agent does not have the power to sneeze or not, just by sneezing or not (although some people can make themselves sneeze, i.e., really sneeze, and all people can usually learn how to prevent a sneeze; these cases will be discussed below). But he can control whether a sneeze is loud or

not and this is, perhaps, analogous to an agent speaking loudly or not in the appropriate circumstances. Hence, he can allow that the sneeze be loud or not and do this intentionally. The agent permits the exhalation of air to be more or less violent (i.e., allowing more air to escape more quickly) but he cannot intend the exhalation of air, the sneeze, in the same way. If this point is made, it seems to be made more by intuition than argument. But if intuition fails, some of the comments to be made below could prove helpful.

As mentioned, a sneeze is uncontrollable in one, very basic sense; this sense is in its happening. A sneeze, further, might well be disturbing or embarrassing (to the agent or, more important to the following discussion, to another). But what if the agent wanted to be disturbing or embarrassing? He could simulate a sneeze hoping to disturb those around him. But he does not really sneeze, just because it is simulated. Some people (of who I am one), however, have the ability to sneeze, really sneeze, by irritating the sinus passages by looking at the sun (it might be called a sun-sneeze). If the agent had this ability, it seems that he could make himself sneeze intentionally.

But does this show that a sneeze is intentional? It seems not because what the agent is, in fact, doing,

i.e., the action he is performing, is making himself sneeze. The sun-sneeze (a real sneeze) is a result of this action but is not itself an action; it is, rather, a bodily reaction. Unless a person has a very peculiar sneeze, he will usually not be asked what he is doing when he does sneeze. Most people are familiar with a variety of kinds of sneezes. But if a person is seen walking around looking at the sun, the observer might very well wonder what he is doing and ask him. He might answer by saying "I intend to sneeze". This would sound like a strange remark unless the questioner were familiar with sun-sneezing. (This is not to imply that the agent cannot use the locution "I intend to sneeze" as a more stylistic way of expressing a desire to sneeze and intending to do something in order that he might sneeze or as a report of what is going to happen.) A more accurate or correct account or answer, however, would be "I'm looking at the sun in order to make myself sneeze" and this is an action. The agent intends to make himself sneeze by looking at the sun. But even so, once the agent has irritated his nasal passages, the resultant violent exhalation of air is not an action even though he desired it to come about; rather, it is a bodily reaction.

The reason for this is as follows. It seems that an intentional action is the type of action that can be stopped just by stopping whatever is being done. That is,

when an agent intends to make himself sneeze, he can stop by just aborting the attempt: in the case of a sun-sneeze, he stops looking at the sun. But once the sun-sneeze process has reached a certain point (perhaps, the sneeze threshold), he cannot stop the sneeze by just looking away from the sun. This is because the sneeze is not his action; he has stopped making himself sneeze and (his body) is now sneezing. The sneeze can only be stopped by performing some other action like pressing a finger under the nose or pressing the tongue against the back of the roof of the mouth. A real sneeze (and a sun-sneeze is one of these) is not an action; further, it is uncontrollable by itself. A real sneeze can never be viewed as intentional in the way an action can be viewed as intentional. The intentional action in this example is the action of bringing about the sneeze. Another point here is that the agent can intend to sun-sneeze and be unsuccessful; even so, he still has or had the intention of making himself sneeze. He had the intention but the sneeze did not occur even though he did not change his mind about the intention.

A review of the foregoing can help make the point clearer. A simulated sneeze is not a sneeze at all and can be used by a more or less talented person for a number of purposes (disruption, attention, sympathy, etc.). In the first example, a person with some practice might be

able to simulate a sneeze very well and could do this when he intends to disturb someone. This is not sneezing at all even though he might get away with the ruse. A real sneeze is not an action but it too can be used for purposes other than clearing the head. A sun-sneeze is a real sneeze but an agent could sun-sneeze (or make himself sneeze by some other means) in order to disturb someone. The end result of these two actions (simulating the sneeze and bringing about a sneeze), if the agent is successful in doing what he wants, is the causing of a disturbance. The two examples differ, however, insofar as the first case the exhalation of air is fully caused by the agent who performs some more or less appropriate actions; if he changes his mind about the tactfulness of the sneeze, he can just stop. In the second case, the agent again causes an exhalation of air through the nose although he does not cause it in this same direct way. It is true that he brought about the irritation which in turn caused the sneeze but, since he no longer has anything to do with it directly (i.e., after enough irritation is done, the sneeze threshold is reached), he is in a very different position. Now he cannot just change his mind about the sun-sneeze and prevent the sneeze merely by stopping: it is not his action. To stop the sun-sneeze, he has to employ one of the home remedies

mentioned above. (This is not to give the impression that he cannot also stifle the sneeze somewhat but he would still sneeze uncontrollably, albeit restrainedly. On sneezing loudly and quietly, see above.) Moreover, the strange jerky motion of his body and the face he might have to pull might belie the sneeze and cause a disturbance anyway.

Again in the second case, the agent's intention is to perform the action of making himself sneeze; but the sneeze is real and itself not an action. The agent can want to sneeze or intend to allow himself to sneeze but what this really says is that he does not intend to stop the sneeze. Despite all this the sneeze is not intentional. But, in a sense, it is not unintentional either. The agent does have a means of preventing the sneeze but he might not because, say, he does not want to stop it. As mentioned earlier, it is a bit strange to say he intends to sneeze, unless it is used stylistically, without some further clarification. The intentional-unintentional distinction does not apply because sneezing is not an action. Now there can be unintentional as well as intentional actions; how this works will be worked out later on.

How far does this discussion go in setting up a theory of action as well as the connection between action and intention? It seems that a lot has been said about

the concept of an action although not very explicitly. So, perhaps, the time has come to enumerate some of the points mentioned above as well as give a further brief analysis of what an action is. After that, a further, more definitive connection between action and intention can be made which will pave the way for the more detailed examination of intention and intentional action which is the main topic of this paper.

Agents are usually held responsible for their actions but not for things that happen to them (like a sneeze). In the example of an agent simulating a sneeze, he hopes to disturb those around him but not be held responsible. He goes through certain actions: puts his head back, makes a slight noise mimicking the sound of a short vowel "a" and then forces air violently out of his nose and mouth. Those around him say "God bless you" and "Gesundheit" and he looks at them appreciatively. Now it is clear that without these movements, he could not have simulated the sneeze (just as with a real sneeze, there will be some similar movements). And the judgement that he sneezed, is arrived at by the others on the basis of this movement. They know what a sneeze is; if some person did not know what a sneeze was, he could not say that this is what the agent was doing. When they see the agent going through these physical movements, however, the people are able to

appeal to their knowledge of what a sneeze is in order to determine that "He sneezed". For many actions, and it seems predominantly for actions to which praise and blame are applicable, what the agent does is determined by the rules and norms of his culture. In these cases, the rules and norms determine, in part, what the action is.

A helpful distinction can be made between actions, deeds and movements. (These are all used in a technical sense which is especially important for deeds; deeds will not be used in the sense of do a good deed every day where deed is used to mean an action. Further explanation will be given below.) A movement need not be an action as in the time-worn example of a reflex knee jerk to the doctor's mallet. Deeds usually involve some movement but seem to be more than the movement alone. Deeds are not actions and are, in fact, closer to mere movements. A deed, in the technical sense, is what one does or, better, what happens to someone. Sneezing might be taken as a deed. A much better example of a deed, however, is bleeding. It is said that a person bleeds (in this sense it is something that he does) but it is not something that he performs. In bleeding, there are certain movements which occur but it is certainly not an action. An agent can make himself bleed but it is not anything over which he has direct control, much like a sneeze. He can control the bleeding

indirectly by applying a tourniquet but this is analogous to placing a finger under the nose to stop a sneeze and unlike just not simulating a sneeze.

In this paper, the most important of the three categories mentioned above is action. Actions are a subclass of deeds; some things which the agent does are actions, others are not. A distinction must be made because both are a subclass of mere movement. It cannot be denied that without some physical movements there would be no actions (except in those cases where the action is one of omission; but even there, some notion of movement is present in the sense that there was no movement). In the previous example, if the agent does not put his head back and go through the appropriate motions, he could not simulate a sneeze. But because the adjective "appropriate" applies so well here, it implies that there is some standard to which the motion is subjected in order to come up with what the agent is doing. As mentioned, a better example can be given.

An action is embodied in certain physical events. There is usually some movement or lack of it which occurs. This movement alone, however, is not enough to allow an observer to figure out what is going on. Like in the simulated sneezing example, if a person were unfamiliar with sneezing, he would not be able to tell what the agent was doing beyond giving a physical description. He could

describe the movements to another who might realize that it was a sneeze but what is it that enables the one person to realize that it is a sneeze and the other not? Whatever it is, it seems to be non-physical. Both see, or are told about, the same physical movements. What might it be?

As mentioned, the one who knows that what the agent is doing is sneezing, knows what a sneeze is. How did he come to have this knowledge? He was told by his parents, friends, etc. It is very difficult to work with this example because everyone learns what a sneeze is so early in life that it is doubtful if anyone remembers learning. But other things are learned later in life and how the knowledge was gained can be remembered.

Immediately upon being born, barring any tragic birth defects, an infant is able to make noise by passing air over his larynx. Later on, he will use the same maneuver when he <u>speaks</u>. But how is speaking different from a baby's babbling and cooing? There certainly seems to be a difference. For one thing, speech (consider it defined as coherent) is able to be understood; the agent is able to communicate when he wants to. The infant might want to communicate but is unable to say what he wants (1) because he does not have complete control of his speech faculties and (2) he does not know the rules of speech and grammar. Without getting into the question of whether there

were rules first and then speech or speech first and then rules or whether both evolved together (the last one seems most likely), it seems clear that if there were no rules, then there would be no speech as it is known to human beings.

A similar statement concerning rule-like control can be made about music and art. For there to be music, there must be physical tones but there must also be some sort of structure, however arbitrary, which enables a person, who knows what music is through knowledge of this structure, to determine that this is music. This notion might be viewed as an alteration of the idea of form on matter; the imposition of order is needed to make the noises music. Likewise, a painting is (traditionally) embodied in pigment and canvas. But these material parts will only be construed as art by someone who knows what art is. How this person knows what art is, is dependent on his having learned, through the standards (say, of his society), what art is. These standards allow interpretation.

One last example: persons are embodied (as they are known now) in flesh and blood (someday computers like HAL in "2001" might be considered persons and the embodying material of persons will have to be extended to metal). But persons are not inanimate automatons; they are, hopefully, vital progressing individuals existing in a culture with certain rules and norms however transitory these might

be. The change in these rules show the emergence of the culture and the emergence of the persons within the culture; each unavoidably affects the other. An example of a rule of a culture, and how it affects action, will be given below.

This digression was not a useless Philosophical exercise. Since persons are most often considered agents of actions, a basic understanding of them should give a better understanding of actions. The rules of a society often make an action out of what an agent does. Sometimes the person realizes this, sometimes not. But when he does realize that a rule governs behavior, in a certain context, this gives the agent the knowledge he needs so that he knows what to do in order to perform certain actions. The rule also gives an observer the ability, through his knowledge of the rule, to interpret what the agent is doing as an action and determine what it is.

One reason why this notion of rule-governed behavior (cf. Melden [Action] and [Free] on this notion of rules) is important is that, in many cases, it is possible that an action be done by using a number of different physical movements. A nail is usually driven into a piece of wood with a hammer. An agent, however, could just as easily lay the wood on the floor and drive the nail in with his heavy work shoes. However the action of driving the nail

is accomplished, one point remains the same: the nail must (somehow) penetrate the wood. Now there might be very technical actions which can only be (correctly) done through certain exact movements. But for a majority of actions, it seems that they can be done in a variety of ways.

Consider an agent waiting for someone. He is performing an action, i.e., waiting. But what does he have tc do in order to wait? Imagine seeing John pacing in his office in a clearly agitated state and being asked what he is doing. He answers, "I'm waiting for Jack and he's a half-hour late". There was nothing in his physical movements alone to show he was doing this. Now imagine the same situation forty minutes earlier. John is having a coffee, quite relaxed, and reading a book. Asked what he is doing, he says, "Oh, I'm waiting for Jack; I have an appointment with him in about ten minutes". There was nothing in his physical movements alone to show he was doing this. Some movement, or non-movement, must take place when the agent performs an action. But very often there is no necessary movement the agent has to make in order to perform an action. Because of the agent's ability to use any number of movements to perform an action, something must be applied to the movements to determine what is going on. Something must govern what movements an agent makes even though there is no necessary movement. Also, something must govern how an observer interprets what he sees

as an action and determine what action it is. Below an example of a rule will be given. For now, however, an examination of the situation surrounding the action will be discussed.

Suppose an agent is in his room playing his records and someone is near enough (perhaps asleep) to be disturbed and is, in fact, disturbed and awakened. The agent, in this case, is disturbing the other person whether he knows it or not as well as playing his records. If he did not know he was disturbing someone, it is usually assumed that that action was unintentional. Now this point need not have anything to do with Freudian subconsciousness intentions (if they exist) or pre-consciousness intentions (if they exist; cf. Margolis [Intention] where he argues that there are pre-consciousness intentions and also that an agent can perform an action and at the same time be unaware that he is doing it). Just as the same action can be intentional under one description and unintentional under another (as discussed earlier), an agent might know he is performing an action when it is described to him in one way but not when it is described to him in another way. (This was also mentioned above.)

Now since it is clear that an agent might intend to perform or know he is performing an action under one description but not under another, it seems quite likely

that he can intend to perform and know that he is performing some action totally unaware that he is, in fact, simultaneously performing another action. This is what happened in the record playing example above. He plays his records and disturbs his neighbor. One action is intentional; the other action is not intentional although it certainly is an action. But there is no extra physical movement he has to do in order to perform the other action. (Let this be taken as another argument in favor of an action being more than a mere physical movement.)

The importance that the situation in which the action takes place has for the determination of an action can also be seen through a related example. Imagine that John wants to disturb Jack and decides that one way to do it is to play his records when he gets in. Suppose, however, that Jack is not around to be disturbed; Jack is not in his room as John believes but went out just before John came in. In this case, John intends to disturb Jack and plays his records in order to do so. But since Jack is not in his room, John cannot disturb him. Even though John intends to disturb Jack, all he is doing is playing his records. He intends to disturb Jack but fails because Jack is not there. The earlier example showed how an action (i.e., the action of disturbing Jack) can be unintentional; intention is not a necessary "part" of an

action (both examples show the important connection between intention and belief which will be pursued later).

The foregoing examples were designed to show that an action must satisfy more conditions than a deed or mere physical movement. Several theories have been offered to set forth these conditions; in some cases they have gone out of style. It is clear that physical movement is a necessary part of a (physical) action but there is more to it. It has already been shown how important the situation is in the analysis of action. Without the movement in the situation, there would be no action. But, as mentioned earlier, it is up to the observers to interpret the physical movements as actions. Also, it is up to the agent, in some cases, to figure out what physical movements might best accomplish the desired action. (This is not to imply that the agent always does this. Consider walking. An agent who thinks about what physical movements he has to make in order to walk will still be able to walk but might really be wasting his time. Most people just walk. But a paralyzed person in therapy does think about what he has to do in order to walk.)

Perhaps, for some very important actions, the added conditions that have to be fulfilled deal with the rules and norms of the agent's society. Some movement, but sometimes no necessary movement, must take place. That is

why it is often difficult to determine what an agent is doing without asking him (cf. the waiting example above).

This shows the importance of Anscombe's insight ([Bk], pp. 7-9) when she says that the important question concerning intention (and also action) is "Why?" A number of actions have to do with this rule-following aspect especially, it seems, those actions which are most often open to questions of praise or blame. (Melden: only those things to which praise and blame can be ascribed are actions; [Action], section I.)

The example of signaling a turn is well known (Melden [Free], passim, cf. pp. 18 ff., 86 ff.). Extending the arm can be used to perform several actions besides signaling; one can use it, for instance, to gesture to someone or point to something. But in the situation of driving a car, because of the rules that cover the situation, extending the arm in a certain way is signaling. Again, however, the intention of the agent need not play a very large role in what he does. Often intention is very important especially in law and ethics; but as far as action goes, something need not be intentional in order to be an action (although only intentional actions of the agent can be objects of intention; see below). An example can point this up.

(Since this paper will not deal with subconsciousness intentions or pre-consciousness intentions, it could be said that, as far as this thesis will go in analyzing conscious intentions, actions that are not intentional are parasitic on actions that are intentional. The agent does something (consciously) intentional but might be performing another action unintentionally; the other action is unintentional because the agent does not realize he is doing it. Intentions other than those of which the agent is aware might cover these inadvertent actions. But since these intentions will not be examined, the notion of parasitic unintentional action is helpful.)

Now to get to the example mentioned above. Imagine an agent driving down a road with other traffic on it. He has a small bag of trash in the car and decides to get rid of it. He picks it up, extends his arm out the window and drops it. A driver in another car sees what is happening, sees the bag drop and complains to his companion about the litter bug. But another driver, perhaps further away (importance of the situation again), sees only the extension of the arm. He construes what the agent is doing as signaling.

Now as mentioned, the agent does not intend to signal but in fact (perhaps, better, in point of law and theory of action) he has signaled a turn. That movement of the arm, in that situation and under the given rules, is

signaling whether the agent intended it or not or realized it or not. If the second observer made a certain maneuver while driving on the basis of what he saw and caused or was involved in an accident, he would be no more or less blameworthy than the agent who signaled while (or even by) littering.

N.L. Wilson has objected to the notion that the agent in these circumstances has signaled; his objection is based on a point made in a paper on Grice's theory of meaning (Wilson [Grice], p. 299); he claims Grice's papers point out that

> ... it is the essence of signaling ... that the signaler intend that the signalee should recognize that the signaler <u>is</u> deliberately signaling and ... that the signalee should recognize that he is (primarily) signaling <u>this</u> and not something else.

Wilson claims that this is true and interesting. And it cannot be denied that his claim is correct if the agent is signaling intentionally. What Wilson seems to be implying, then, is that there is something about the action of signaling which makes it essential that the action be intentional.

Now there are some actions for which this implication holds, for example, murder. In order to murder someone, the agent must have had full realization of what he was doing and also the intention to do it. Wilson's

statement on signaling, as mentioned, is correct insofar as signaling can only be done intentionally; that is the question which will now be examined.

Melden points out that it is incorrect to say that when an agent raises his arm to signal, he will have only signaled if other circumstances are present, for instance, recognition of other drivers ([Free], p. 20). This can be countered by arguing that the agent is signaling for the recognition of any would-be-around drivers. But this does not get to the heart of the matter; the agent signaled whether or not someone is there to recognize it. Melden also argues against the view that "moving the arm" is a mere bodily movement but that "signaling" is an action because of a "something else". He contends that this view obliterates "the distinction between signaling inadvertently ... and signaling when this is an intentional action" ([Free], p. 21; he uses the example of a driver, who, when accused of signaling, does not argue that the accusation makes no sense but, rather, that he did the action unintentionally; he did not mean to do it). How another interprets and reacts to what an agent does, however, is an important consideration in ethics and law.

Melden argues against the view that an action is a bodily movement plus a motive ([Free], Chapter Nine) because of the problems he mentioned earlier. So he says

that "the action of raising the arm was indeed the action of signaling" ([Free], p. 88). This seems to do damage to the different descriptions, different actions thesis but it does not; it does not damage the claim because Melden puts in the condition of being in a certain circumstance. As mentioned earler, raising one's arm can be used to do a number of actions.

But to get back to Wilson's point. His thesis on signaling, it seems, only holds when the agent signals intentionally. It is, then, up to Grice and Wilson to show how and why signaling can only be done intentionally. Melden, obviously, does not support this view; nor is it the view to be supported here. In Melden's example, the agent points to something (on the road) and, thereby, signals. In the example in this paper, the agent puts his arm out the window in order to litter (intentionally) and, thereby, signals, albeit inadvertently. Signaling, unlike murder, though it is also highly conventionalized, can be done unintentionally

Actions as Objects of Intention

There are certain locutions involving the verb 'intend' which are neither wrong (except, as will be shown, in a more exact sense) nor misleading (in the sense that

others know what the agent means by such statements). The statements are those in which the verb 'intend' does not have the agent's own intentional actions as their objects. Examples of such statements might be President Nixon saying, "I intend the tapes not be released", a manager of a store saying, "I intend that two people be at these cash registers at all times", or an overbearing mother saying, "I intend you to become a doctor". These might be broken down by saying, respectively in each case, the agent intends events, states of affairs and actions of others (Meiland [Nature], pp. 35-36 mentions that these three cases along, of course, with actions of the agent comprise the four 'objects' of 'intention').

D'Arcy admits these uses of the verb exist but asserts that intention tells what a man means to do ([Acts], pp. 156-157), i.e., his own action. As mentioned earlier, statements of the above sort should not be counted as intention statements in the more strict sense to be used in this paper. It will be argued that the only objects of intentions are actions intended by the agent and that when an agent uses the locution in one of the three ways mentioned above (1) he is euphemistically expressing a command or, sometimes, a desire or (2) he is saying that there is some (perhaps, as yet, undetermined) action(s) which he intends to do in order for, say, the action of another to come about.

Even Meiland admits this point as valid when he says that even though the 'object' of an intention is not an action, the agent must intend some action(s) which he believes will bring about the 'object' ([Nature], p. 36). Even here, it seems that, ultimately, actions must be objects of intentions. A discussion of these other intention statements will now be given.

As mentioned, there are legitimate uses of the verb 'intend' which do not concern the actions of the agent. Sometimes these are more fitting than others but, even when more fitting, they seem to be used much more for rhetorical effect than as statements of the actual case. Meiland's examples of 'objects' of intentions which are not actions of the agent will be examined in support of this contention and of the thesis that only actions of the agent are objects of intentions.

Meiland's example of an event as an 'object' of an intention is "I intend to be the next U.S. Representative from this district" (p. 36). But this statement could be more correctly put, preserving the real meaning of the sentence, by saying "I want to become the next U.S. Representative from this district and intend to take all the necessary steps (i.e., appropriate or inappropriate actions) to see that this happens". In this case, what are ultimately intended are certain (unspecified) actions

of the agent. These actions, the agent believes, will bring about the desired event. As far as states of affairs go, they may be subsumed under either the notions of events or actions of others and can be similarly disposed of. These are not properly spoken of as intended but, especially with actions of others, as commanded. The statement "I intend you to do this" can only be used by an agent who has some sort of power or position above that of the other person as a euphemistic way of giving an order (or perhaps, stylistically, expressing a show of power or desire). But the agent can only intend his own actions in the sense in which intention will be used in this paper. One point: an expression of intention that another do something is more often a command than a desire as in the example of the overbearing mother, above. What she is, in a sense, saying is that her son is going to become a doctor and she is going to make sure that he does. As far as events and, sometimes states of affairs, go, it seems that the intention locution applied to them can be either a command or an expression of a desire.

Meiland almost admits this point when he discusses what is called the 'Second Actions Thesis'; it is almost tautologous; it reads:

> It is a necessary condition of the agent intending something, K, which is not an action of his own ... that the agent intend to bring it about that K ([Nature], p. 39).

He argues against this by trying to show, for example, that intending a state of affairs is not the same as intending to bring about that state of affairs. But what else could it be? His argument is based on his very curious principle 'different descriptions, different intentions' which he introduces with no supporting argument in a one line footnote (p. 8). No support is given but it would be very interesting to see some. Later there will be presented an argument to show that this contention is not as straightforward as Meiland would want. Since it seems that this notion concerning descriptions need not be the case and since his argument versus the 'Second Actions Thesis' is based on this principle, it might very well be the case that his argument against the 'Thesis' will fall.

That his argument against the 'Thesis' might not be valid does not, of course, show that the 'Second Actions Thesis' is correct. But it has been argued that the intention locution is not strictly applicable to anything other than the agent's own actions; hence, it would seem that 'intention' concerning 'objects' other than actions does imply the Agent's doing something to see that, say, the event occurs. In the example of the store manager 'intending' that two people be at the cash registers, nothing at all will happen if his intention is not vocalized (or communicated in writing). But as will be

shown, and what is also quite clear, an agent can have an intention and do what he intends without the intention having been vocalized or even verbalized subvocally. The 'intention' of the manager can only be acted upon when he expresses the 'intention'. But, in fact, what he is doing is ordering that two salespeople be at a certain spot at all times. Hence, he does do something in order to bring it about that the salespeople be there. With the overbearing mother, she will continue to be overbearing (and probably get quite ridiculous) for as long as her son puts up with it or until he is granted his M.D., whichever comes first. In order for Nixon to 'intend' not to release the tapes, he must, at the very least, not hand them over on his own initiative.

Meiland says that showing the 'Second Actions Thesis' to be accurate goes a long way toward showing that only actions (actions of the agent) are objects of intentions ([Nature], pp. 42-43). First, he does not adequately show the 'Second Actions Thesis' to be incorrect and, in the light of the foregoing discussion, the 'Thesis' seems to be true. One other use of the verb 'intend' needs to be mentioned. This is where the agent is asked, "What did you intend to accomplish by that action?" or "What did you intend by that word?" Again, both are legitimate and grammatically correct uses of the verb 'intend' but in

a very loose sense. The first sentence means "What did you mean (or want) to accomplish ...?" and the second means "What did you mean by that word?" But there is no such ambiguity when a person is asked, "What is your intention?" or, as will be discussed below, "What are you doing?" or "What did you intend to do?" He intended to perform an action. This is the unequivocal way in which intention will be used throughout this paper.

Chapter Two

Intention: Present Action
Future Action

How does one decide that an action is intentional? How is the intention of an agent determined? These two questions are closely related. Trivially, the agent having an (some) intention is a necessary and sufficient condition for that action to be an intentional action. (This does not mean that it is impossible for an agent to have an intention and, by mistake, be doing something other than the intended action; he has an intention but the action is unintentional because it is not the intended action. This distinction will have to be sharpened below.) But, as was argued, an agent can be performing some action by (or through) performing another action. One of the actions might be intentional and the other not. To alter the littering example somewhat: the agent could have intended to get rid of the trash and to have signaled too. Coming up to a corner he places his hand out the window, drops the bag of trash, brings in his hand

as he reaches the corner and turns the corner. He might be fined for littering but could probably make a pretty fair case if the policeman also tried to ticket him for not signaling his turn. How many actions were performed?

It is difficult in this example to follow Anscombe's and Davidson's line, as presented in Chapter One, and say that the two are different descriptions of the same action or that littering is signaling. Goldman, as mentioned, argues against these theories and in favor of the type of act individuation suggested here. In the example given, there are, at least, two actions, because of the situation in which the agent finds himself, and both of them are intentional. So did the agent have two intentions? It would seem so: getting rid of the trash and signaling a turn.

It could be argued that both intentions are fulfilled by the one action of putting the arm out of the window. This would lead, however, into a theory of basic actions; this notion is not really a necessary part of the theory sketched earlier although the theory could probably accommodate it. The notion of basic actions should, however, be mentioned.

Basic actions are those the agent cannot be said to have caused (Danto [Basic], pp. 255-256). But this point is raised immediately after Danto rejects agent causality; an agent cannot be said to have caused an action to happen.

Danto admits that there are actions that can be described as causing something to happen but argues that this account leaves it unclear whether an action has been performed or not: "performing an action cannot be one of the truth conditions for 'causing something to happen'." 'Performing an action' and 'causing something (not necessarily an action) to happen' are both "cut across" by saying that 'actions cause something to happen'; hence, his rejection of agent causality ([Basic], p. 255). Danto uses 'cause' in the "special sense ... that (the agent) had performed an action" and says that this is not the way the proponents of agent causality use the word 'cause' (p. 257). On this argument, all actions must be basic (i.e., stem from basic actions). No agent can cause an action as there is no agent causality.

The argument for basic actions seems fairly clear but the theory is, in a way, difficult to understand. It is not so clear whether there are basic actions or not because it is not so clear whether there is agent causality or not (using Danto's criterion). Also it is not clear as to what might count as a basic action. Goldman, whose theory of basic actions is admittedly different from Danto's, has a theory that accommodates an agent having an action as basic at one time and the same action as not basic at another time (Goldman [Theory], pp. 64-66). One usual

distinction is nicely countered by Miss Anscombe when she points out that the difference between an agent moving his arm and moving a salt shaker is not as great as basic action theorists would like to suggest. It is usually thought that an agent can move his arm at will (whatever that is; probably the alternative to Danto's causality) but cannot move a salt shaker in the same way. Anscombe's rejoinder: I can move the salt shaker.

It seems that there are actions that are more basic than others. For instance, the average person can move his arm whenever he wants and can move a salt shaker just as easily; but there has to be a salt shaker around for him to move. But even though there are actions more basic than others, this does not show that there are (what might be called "ultimate") basic actions. If there are, it was mentioned that the theory presented here could accommodate the notion. But until the idea of basic actions is clearer to the proponents of the view, it is better to leave it out. On the theory of action presented, and the arguments given in favor of it, there are two actions performed in the revised littering-signaling example. There are different rules and norms that apply to the same movement of the arm; these rules and norms, in part, help determine the action. (Remember, the movement of the arm alone need not be an action.) Margolis has an example of a man moving several

steps in a certain direction, his hand making a certain arch away from his body and contacting the chin of another man in a certain uniform. The agent could be resisting arrest, obstructing justice, assaulting a police officer, trespassing, endangering national security, perhaps all of them. In fact, it will turn out that the man has done as many actions as he can be held accountable in a court of law even thought his only intention might have been to punch a policeman. Yet for the agent to perform all those other actions, no extra physical movement was necessary, only the situation and different rules. As far as basic actions go, although he would not have been able to punch the policeman if he did not move his arm, the agent did not get ten years for moving his arm. Further, the protest "I was just walking by and moving my arm" raised in his defense could very well get him another thirty days for contempt.

Intention: Present Action

How might an agent's intention for some present action be determined? It is, first of all, helpful to figure out what the agent is doing. So the observer goes to the theory of action. Hampshire and Hart point out that the usual presumption is if a person does something, he does it intentionally; but:

> The primary point of saying that someone acted intentionally is to rebut a *prima facie* suggestion that he was in some way ignorant of, or mistaken about, some element involved in the action ([H & H], p. 211).

They are quick to point out, however, that performing an action intentionally is more than not performing it by accident or mistake (*Ibid.*). The expression 'He intends to do it' means more than 'He did not do it unintentionally' (p. 212). In this way, they are able to get over an unnecessary distinction raised by Meiland. A rejection of this distinction will be presented because it will show that a more exact analysis of intention and of what it is can be provided when the use of intention is restricted to actions only.

Meiland discusses two types of intention: intention$_1$ or non-purposive intention and intention$_2$ or purposive intention. Consider an agent hunting with a gun. He intends to shoot the gun for the purpose of killing game; for Meiland, this would be a prime example of intention$_2$. But whenever he shoots the gun, the cartridge explodes and makes a loud noise. The agent knows this is going to happen whenever he shoots. Meiland sees the agent making this noise as an example of intention$_1$. He admits that the two intentions are different. But on the strict interpretation given to the term intention in this paper, the two will be shown to be so different that one of them should not even be called intention.

Hampshire and Hart say it would be misleading to say that the agent intends to make the noise as he fires the gun. Meiland counters that, though misleading, it is not wrong. Obviously, he does not make the noise by mistake or accident which supports Hampshire and Hart's earlier claim concerning intentional and unintentional actions. Meiland even admits that his intention$_1$ is not purposive; what that means, as the word intention is used in this paper, is that it is not an intention. Meiland says that an intention$_1$ is not the kind of intention the agent can try to carry out ([Nature], p. 10). This leads Wilkerson in his review of Meiland's book (see bibliography under Meiland [Nature] for reference), to assert that intention$_1$ ought not to be construed as an intention. What would it be like for an agent to say "I intend to go to bed but I'm not going"? The point here is that an agent cannot be truthfully said to have or have had an intention unless he either acts on the intention or, subsequent to the statement of intention, changes his mind. On a strict interpretation of intention, intention$_1$ is no intention at all.

It is Meiland who is misleading when using the term intention$_1$. Anything that for Meiland would be the object of an intention$_1$ would not be given as an answer to the question "What are you doing?" This is a further example of why 'intentional' is not the same as 'not unintentional'.

It would be clearer, albeit a bit more pedantic, to use the phrase 'unmistaken, non-accidental, unavoidable aspects inseparable from the performance of the intended action' as what Meiland means by 'intention$_1$'.

There are intentions. What they are will be more fully discussed later. The object of the intention is the intended action; the action that answers the question "What are you doing?" In performing an intended action, the agent might be doing something else; he is still performing the other action but performing it unintentionally.

Hampshire and Hart point out two requirements for and intentional action: (1) the agent's having ordinary empirical knowledge of certain features of his environment and of the things affected by his movement, i.e., he must know what he is doing (or will do) and how he is doing (or will do) it and (2) he knows what he is doing in a sense which differentiates the act from non-accidental actions performed at the same time, as discussed above ([H & H], p. 212).

In one of Meiland's examples ([Nature], p. 7), if an observer asked Jack what he was doing as he left his house and went to his car and Jack said, "I'm going to wear down my crankshaft a bit", the best the observer might come up with is that Jack is a bit of a crank. People usually do not drive their cars to cause wear on their crankshaft even though they cannot drive it without causing certain parts to

wear (disregard, for example, a manufacturers' test of crankshaft durability). Requirement (2), above, seems to handle this case. This is not overlooked in Meiland's account but is presented in such a way as to be misleading. If Jack sticks to his answer, few alternatives are open to the observer: (1) Jack is eccentric; (2) Jack intends (solely) to wear down his car (specific reiteration of (1)); (3) Jack is telling him to mind his own business.

But suppose an agent is firing a gun and is asked what he is doing. He answers, "I'm exploding cartridges". Obviously, he is; but when this answer is given, the inquirer has a right to be irritated or ask for a further explanation (or both). If no further explanation were forthcoming, the more patient observer could then get irritated and leave (perhaps it is Jack firing the gun and being his usual cranky self). An example of a further explanation, however, might be "It's Independence Day" or "It's Confederation Day". The inquirer can then say to himself, "Ah, he's celebrating". Even after getting this further explanation and finally figuring out what the agent is doing, the answer 'I'm exploding cartridges' is still misleading and irritating. Based on the empirical facts and the answers of the agent, the best answer to the question "What are you doing?" seems to be "It's a holiday and I'm celebrating".

A friend was once having a bit of a feud with a neighbor. Now this friend is a gun collector and quite a gun man; he even makes his own cartridges for his shotgun. One Fourth of July a few years ago, he went into his yard with his shotgun and several rounds packed with extra pellets. He proceeded to fire the gun making sure the arch was such that the pellets landed in the neighbor's swimming pool. What was he doing? As he told the story, he was trying to cause his neighbor a little grief. His intention was to bother the neighbor.

Third person observers, however, might say that he is celebrating the Fourth. If he is confronted by his neighbor, he can apologize profusely, claiming it was an accidental result of his patriotism, and later laugh about it if the neighbor buys the explanation. In the example as presented, his celebrating is a pretense and is used as a cover-up. But, like the littering-signaling example, he could intend both to celebrate and to disturb his neighbor. The discussion would then proceed just as it did earlier regarding the former example. There are two intentions and there are two actions. (This is not to subscribe to Meiland's notion of 'different descriptions, different intentions' ([Nature], p. 8). The number of intentions and actions need not be the same as in the policeman example above. Further, it is possible

that different descriptions be given to an action and yet the agent only have one intention. Being arrested by the policeman, the agent intends to get away as best he can; he assaults the policeman, obstructs justice, etc. with the one intention of getting away.)

Another point raised by Hampshire and Hart is that an agent's truthful declaration of what he is doing can be mistaken but, since this is taken as a statement of his intention (as he believes it), it cannot be considered false. While holding a knife and shaving away at a long, cylindrical object, the agent might answer the question 'What are you doing?' by saying "I'm sharpening a pencil". It is then pointed out to him that he is whittling away on a pen. It would then be said "not that the agent's statement was false (though there would be occasions for that comment), but that he was doing something unintentionally or by mistake" ([H & H], p. 212).

The distinction as presented could get muddled unless it is remembered that what the agent uses truthfully to answer the question 'What are you doing?' is his intended action. It is true that the agent intends to sharpen a pencil and inadvertently shaves a pen. So his answer is not false. If this were not the case, Hampshire and Hart point out that this would amount to saying 'I am sharpening this pen but I am not doing it intentionally'

which they see as absurd (Ibid.). Usually a mistaken statement is equivalent to a false one. In this case, however, remembering the question is the paradigm for determining intention, the answer is not false; it is the agent's intention to sharpen a pencil although that is not, in fact, what he is doing.

What this shows is that intention and action cannot often be easily reconciled. For example, an agent can intend to perform an action under one description but, when some new information is added to the same action, not under another. This is because intention is tied up very closely with belief. (This will be pursued below.) Intention and belief are very close and are both concepts of the propositional attitude. Mary can intend to dance with the Duke of Windsor and yet not intend to dance with the worst dancer in the room, which the Duke is, whether she realizes this to be the case or not. Suppose she knows the Duke is a terrible dancer; she could still intend to dance with the Duke of Windsor and yet not intend to dance with the worst dancer in the room. Her dancing with the worst dancer in the room is not, however, unintentional; it is rather an 'unmistaken, non-accidental and unavoidable aspect inseparable from the intended action'. If asked "What are you doing?", Mary would not say, "I'm dancing with the worst dancer in the room" even though it is true and she believed it. That is not her intention. The connection

between intention and belief demands a fuller analysis which will be given below.

Imagine John kicking Jack. Kicking is likely to be construed as an action. Suppose, however, that John and Jack are together in a large crowd; there is a lot of pushing and shoving and John kicks Jack. Let it be assumed that he did not mean it; he had no purpose or end to attain by kicking Jack. So it should be said that John's kicking Jack is an action but it is not intentional; an agent <u>can</u> perform an action which is not intentional, by accident or mistake.

Say the large crowd, including John and Jack, is leaving a ball game. Jack is from the town of the visiting team but knows John very well and they go to the game together. Both are ardent fans for their home team. Jack's home team kicks the pants off John's home team. Being a fan, and a better winner than a loser, Jack really needles John during the game and as they are leaving. John gets so mad, he wants to kick Jack hoping (like the friend in the shot gun example) that he can plead an accident because of the crowd. But just then, John <u>is</u> pushed (or shoved) and kicks Jack. John had a purpose or an end; he fulfilled that purpose or end; but his action is not intentional.

Usually, wants, purposes, ends, etc. are the sorts of things that have something to do with the formation of the

intention of the agent for some action. Just how these work, along with some other factors, will be discussed more fully below. But now examples where kicking is intentional will be discussed.

Kicking is usually a pretty effective way of getting back at someone (example above) or to hurt someone (for, say, self-defense), etc. It is an agent's intention to protect himself from an assailant so he kicks him in order to do it. It would be said that his action is intentional. In this example, kicking <u>is</u> protecting himself unlike the littering-signaling example. In the latter example, different rules apply; further, even in the revised example, where the agent intends to litter and signal, the agent is not littering in order to signal. But the agent is kicking in order to defend himself. (This is not to imply that the agent could not have protected himself in another way. He could have punched the assailant and still have been protecting himself.)

Suppose, again, that John kicks Jack. Ask him "Why?" and he might say, "I just <u>wanted</u> to kick him". It would probably be assumed that John is a compulsive kicker. It could not be said that he lost control of himself because the statement he used to answer the question would be no longer operative unless it is assumed that he lost control of himself and gave way to an uncontrollable desire to kick

Jack. But even then, a better answer would be, for example, "I lost control of myself". (This might be getting into the realm of subconscious intentions which will not be discussed in this paper. Allow that the agent becomes aware that he lost control even though he cannot say why.) If this were the case, it would most likely be said that the action was unintentional (spontaneous, etc.) even though John might still be expected to pay any medical costs.

But suppose John sticks to his answer 'I just wanted to kick him'? It would then be said that the action is intentional; it fulfilled a certain conscious want (although that is not the single criterion). The action is said to be intentional because, as will be elucidated in Chapter Three, John was in a certain mental state with regard to the physical movement that took place in the given situation. It would sound quite strange for John to make the claim "I unintentionally kicked him because I wanted to (unintentionally kick him)". An agent can want something unintentionally (say, a subconscious desire in which case the answer could be "I don't know why I kicked him"); but an agent really cannot intend a want at all. Neither can he unintentionally want something especially if he claims he wanted it. Wants are just not proper objects of intentions. This is fine on the theory of intention in

this paper which states that only actions are objects of intentions. No one can say "I intend to want this or that"; a want, by definition, is the sort of thing that comes upon an agent whether he wants it or not.

Intention: Future Action

Two notions that are often closely tied up with the intention of the agent to perform a future action are deliberating and deciding. These two will be examined in turn. The discussion will include their relation with the intention to do a future action. What discussion there will be of this kind of intention per se will follow.

Deliberating

Deliberating is a mental act which occurs antecedent to deciding. Deciding and deliberating are closely related and it is usually thought that if there were no deliberating of some sort there would be no deciding. A decision to do this or that action means that the agent has taken one of two (or more) alternatives as the thing to do in this situation. How else could he have come to be in this position if he did not think about the alternatives beforehand, no matter how briefly. Meiland ([Nature], pp. 55-58) says that this

need not always be the case. His point seems quite trivial (as well as inaccurate) so it will be handled briefly.

Say an agent is deliberating about what to have for dinner and at the same time arranges to send his girl friend some flowers. This is an intentional action. He goes to the florist and orders the flowers to be delivered. This leads Meiland to say that to decide is to form an intention after deliberation; this would mean "as soon as the agent has once deliberated about one thing, every subsequent formation of an intention will count as a decision even if . . . (it) is completely unrelated" to the deliberation ([Nature], p. 57). But what does this have to do with the other intention (to send flowers)? Nothing. Perhaps the agent had been thinking about sending flowers all day and had only stopped to think about what to have for dinner. Or maybe he just intended to do it without deciding. (It is his girl friend's birthday and he always gives her flowers on her birthday.) It can only be said that Meiland must think very little of the possibilities of the human stream of consciousness.

Meiland does not prove that the agent can decide without deliberating. It would probably be difficult to find many people who would think his analysis of deciding and deliberating adequate. It is quite possible to have an intention without deciding (see below). But if there is a decision, something must have brought about the decision. Even

if a new factor brings about a 'spur of the moment' decision, the new factor is either weighed against previous deliberation (although the decision could be made in spite of the previous deliberation) or an intention made on the spur of the moment is not the product of a decision. The process of weighing the new factors is done through deliberating.

Some further points on deliberating. In order to be able to deliberate, there must be at least two alternatives open to the agent. (This might seem to be stepping into the realm of choice but is not; choice will be more fully discussed in Chapter Three.) If there were only one course open to the agent, he might still deliberate about whether to do it or not but then there would be alternatives and it would not be said that there were only one course open to him. He decides to do it after deliberating only if there were the possibility that he not do it.

A soldier given an order to attack might better be seen not as deliberating about and then deciding whether to attack or not but, rather, whether to obey the order or not (although whether he attacks or not depends on whether he obeys the order or not). He does not deliberate about attacking (if he deliberates about anything at all in that situation). He either follows orders and does it or not. Deliberation is possible only where there are alternatives.

If he obeys, there are no alternatives (except, perhaps, how to attack). If he disobeys, there are alternatives: stay still, run and hide (desert), shoot the commanding officer, etc. The soldier does not deliberate about whether to attack or not (except insofar as he obeys the order or not).

Deciding

Deciding is also a mental act and, as argued (in part) above, follows deliberation. There is not as much trouble or as many distinctions to be made about deliberating and deciding as Meiland would like to make. Deciding to do some action can be called the onset of the state of intention, the formation of an intention. Trivially, in order to be able to perform the action of deciding to do an action, the agent cannot yet have made up his mind, i.e., have formed an intention.

Some points should be mentioned about deciding. Above it was pointed out how an agent can have an intention without having decided upon that intention. John intends to have dinner when he goes home but might never have thought about other possibilities and not have decided to do it. (Cf. Meiland's example of a man who decides to catch a commuter train at a specific time when he first starts his job

and takes the same train every day thereafter ([Nature], p. 55); he does not, however, make the decision every day although he takes the same train intentionally every day.

Now, although it is the case that an agent can have an intention without having decided to perform that action, it is not possible to decide to perform an action unless you intend to perform it. An agent decides to go to a certain restaurant for dinner; he, therefore, intends to go. But he could change his mind. There would then be an alteration in his decision and intention. At 6:45, an agent intends to take the 7:15 train; he intends, then, to take that train. Dismiss the case where he accidentally falls back asleep. If he does not intend to act upon his decision (and eventually do it), either he is lying about the decision or else he changed his mind. No one can seriously say, "I decided to do it but I'm not going to do it intentionally".

There are a number of things that can count as the objects of deciding. When the object is an action, the decision brings about the intention to perform the action. An example of something that cannot be decided, however, is a want. If an agent said, "I've decided to want some candy", his conception of wanting would probably be questioned. An agent can decide to act on his want or not ("I want this and I'm going to get it"); but wants themselves just come

often whether the agent wants them or not. There is never deliberating and then deciding about wants.

Future Action

Intention to perform a future action, like intention to perform a present action, can be determined by first person reports or by third person observation. There are, however, some very real differences between the two, more than the differences between the two reports concerning present action. Third person reports will be dealt with first.

The easiest way for a third person to become aware of the intention of an agent to perform a future action is to be told so by the agent. But more often, as with his reports of the agent to perform a present action, the observer will base his statement on some other sort of evidence which might be quite sketchy. The observer could be questioned about his evidence and, on this basis, it can then be determined how much credence should be placed on his claim. Basically, an observer would have to have some familiarity with the actions of the agent; especially helpful would be previous actions in similar circumstances. At best, it would seem that the claim of an observer concerning the intention of the agent to perform a future action is a prediction when it is based on anything less than the agent's

own statement. If based on the agent's own statement, however, the third person report is always open to the possibility that the agent was lying or later changed his mind without the observer knowing it.

The announcement of the agent, however, is not a prediction about what he intends to do. Hampshire and Hart point out that there is a kind of certainty about the agent's intention to perform a future action that makes the claim of it being a prediction rather awkward ([H & H], pp. 213-214). The agent's knowledge about what he intends to do is not based on observation or evidence. The agent could say to himself, however, that in given past situations similar to the one he expects in the future, he did a certain action and admits that he will probably do the same thing again. But in this case, it seems that the agent has not yet formed an intention and is, in a way, admitting that he is not certain as to what he will do. In these cases his statement is more a belief that he will perform the action. It is still different from a prediction. The type of deliberative process, when it ends with a decision to perform a future action, i.e., an intention, can usually only be ended by a decision and intention when there is some certainty that the agent will do what he says (Cf. [H & H], p. 214).

When the agent uses the locution "I believe I will do such and such", he is making his claim explicitly weak. He is saying, in effect, that it is quite possible that something will occur to stop him or else he sincerely believes something might occur. When the intention locution is used concerning a future action, there is always the possibility that the agent will be prevented from doing it or change his mind about what he intended to do. But the possibility of something happening is seen as minimal and this is why the conditional is left implicit. It is this faith that things will go right which gives the practical certainty of intention even though the agent might not eventually act in the intended way. This does not mean the agent lied (although this might be the case in some instances).

Suppose the agent does not lie about his intention but does not, ultimately, act on it; this never means that what the agent said about his intention was wrong; if the agent did not lie and does not act on his intention, he is said to have changed his mind. The reason for the inability of the agent to be wrong in his sincere statement of intention is that it is a statement of his present disposition toward a future action, not a future action itself. It also shows the closeness of intention and ordinary belief; like a sincere statement of intention, a sincere statement

of belief cannot be wrong although what is believed may not be the case.

To review the foregoing briefly, when the agent has an intention to perform some future act, it can be said that the agent has some sort of certainty that he will perform that action at that future time. On the other hand, if the agent qualifies his announcement with 'probably', 'most likely', 'I guess I'll . . .', etc., this certainty is obviously missing. The agent cannot be said to have an intention to perform the action but rather the belief that he will do the action: " . . . if the agent thus leaves open the possibility of a change of mind, he does not yet really intend to do the future action" ([H & H], p. 213, my italics).

The agent's belief that he will perform a future action is different from ordinary belief because, like intention, it is not based on evidence. If an agent says, "I believe it will rain", he can be asked "Why do you believe that?" This question is inapplicable when the agent says, "I intend to do such and such at a future time" and often inapplicable when an agent says, "I believe I will do such and such". One answer that might be given in this last case is, for example, "I've done it in similar situations in the past". This seems to be one of the few ways in which there can be an appeal to evidence. Usually, however,

belief concerning a future action, like the announcement of an intention and unlike ordinary belief, is not open to debate or in need of proof. Hampshire and Hart equate confident belief about future action with what they call practical certainty (p. 214). This confident belief can also be called intention and is what distinguishes intention from a belief to perform a future action.

It could be said that the agent's statement of intention is based on evidence. An agent says "I intend to do such and such". This could, perhaps, be rephrased as "I know I will do such and such". Now since a claim of knowledge is made, the agent could be asked to supply a reason. But remember, intention to perform an action gives practical certainty, not epistemological or critical certainty (= knowledge). So in answering the question, "How do you know you will do such and such?", the agent would be being polite in answering "Because I've made up my mind to do it". But, as was shown, making up your mind, or deciding, to do an action is the formation of an intention. If the agent wanted to be a bit more unfriendly to his questioner, he could (and would have the right) to say "I know I'm going to do it because I intend to do it" which can be seen as his earlier answer, correctly, rephrased. Hopefully, this would show the interrogator the circularity of his queries since they are now back at square one. If

he continues to press the agent and asks "How do you know you intend to do it?", the agent should just leave.

Meiland criticizes this view ([Nature], pp. 114-115) but the criticism rests on an equivocation of ordinary belief and belief to perform a future action. Ordinary belief is always based on some sort of evidence (otherwise the belief would have never come about; this might even include guessing). "Why do you believe it will rain?" "Well, there is a great deal of instability in the upper atmosphere because of an oncoming low pressure system containing cooler air than we've been having". Belief in the performance of a future action might be based on a sort of evidence: "I've always done it in the past". But often it is not. Meiland wants an explanation of why a belief based on evidence prevents the belief from becoming an intention. Obviously, he is ignoring Hampshire and Hart's very clear distinction between practical certainty of confident belief (intention) and the belief of the agent that he will perform a future action (explicit statement of the conditional contained in all intention statements concerning future action) and ordinary belief.

Ordinary belief is based on evidence (or faith, but let that be dismissed). The agent's belief that he will perform a certain future action is usually not based on evidence; in a way it is similar to intention except that

it is not confident and lacks practical certainty. Even if belief to perform a future action is based on some evidence, it is still not intention because the agent is expressly leaving open the possibility that he might not do it. The claim "I believe I will do it but might not" seems more acceptable than the statement "I intend to do it but might not" unless there is some further qualification of the latter statement. Intention has more strength to it than the agent's belief in his future action. The first statement is more explicit about the possibility of a change in situation, attitude, etc. whereas in the latter statement the possibility is implicit. But, then, all intentions to do a future action are usually conditional in this way whether expressed or not; i.e., all intentions are (at least) implicitly conditional. But this does not mean that the agent's belief should be construed as an explicit conditional intention. An agent's belief that he will perform a future action is not an intention at all. And intention itself, even though it is closely tied up with the notion of ordinary belief, as will be pursued below, is different from ordinary belief because of the certainty of the agent. As in the case in epistemology, where knowledge claims need more certainty than belief claims, claims of intention concerning future action have a practical certainty that belief concerning future action does not. If there is practical cer-

tainty present, there is no need to use the belief locution.

Now an agent has an intention to perform a certain action. How does this differ from the intention to perform a present act? The intention to perform a future action does not have the link with the action that the intention to perform a present action has. That is, the agent can have the intention to perform a future action and yet never do it (change of mind, etc.). But, if an agent has the intention to perform a present act, he does act on that intention (even though there might be some problems as outlined above). The intention to perform a present action, just because of the way it is structured, includes the present performance of the action.

If an agent says, "I'm going to do it <u>now</u>" and does not do it, the best bet is that he lied; he did not have the intention at all. On the other hand, if an agent says, "I'm going to do it in a few hours" and does not do it, he might very well have meant what he said and have even been certain that he would do it. He can exonerate himself from the charge of lying by proving, for example, that something came up that changed his mind or that he was prevented.

Chapter Three

Intention: its Relation to other Mental States and Events

Thus far, there has been a general discussion of action centering upon those action which are called intentional. An intentional action is that action which the agent reports when honestly answering the question 'What are you doing?' ([H & H], p. 212) and to which the question 'Why?' is applicable (Anscombe [Bk], passim). The latter question solicits a reason. It makes no sense to ask for a reason if it has been established that the action was not intentional. An agent can perform an action unintentionally without being aware of what he was doing--the pen shaving example above--or he might perform an action unintentionally with some (or even full) awareness of what he was doing--the being pushed and kicking someone example above. If the question 'Why?' were applied to these situations, the first might be answered "I didn't realize it" and the second might be answered

"I didn't mean to; I was pushed". These are not so much reasons as they are what might be called, perhaps, excuses.

Usually, it is much more difficult for a third person to determine the intention of the agent. For instance, since the third person can only base his comments on empirical data, he might say (in the pen shaving example) that it was the agent's intention to destroy a pen; but that is not the agent's intention. With first person reports, there is always the possibility that the agent is lying. It is difficult, and unnecessary, to find a general analytic definition of what it is for an agent to do something with a certain intention. Further, an analysis of intention can be carried out making some, perhaps naive, suppositions concerning honesty, etc., without going into how another can have accurate knowledge of an agent's intention. The problem is hard enough without adding epistemological considerations.

It is also difficult to determine the nature of intention. No book has yet met the standard set by Miss Anscombe although her style is often difficult and the reading hard going. In assessing intention, objectivity is difficult to achieve. An examination of intention will be the topic of this part of the paper. To help with the analysis, there will be a discussion of the nature of intention and then an examination of intention

intention with respect to trying, choosing and believing. Ordinary belief, as mentioned above, is somehow different from the belief of the agent that he will perform a future action. Belief is, however, extremely important for intention; it will be dealt with carefully. First there will be the discussion of intention itself.

Intention

There have been a number of theories concerning what intention is in the literature of Philosophy and Law. Some works have been a combination of both disciplines, a fruitful approach. The two main theories will be presented below. Earlier in the paper, the discussion centered on what is needed to have an action modified by the word intentional by way of reports, etc. Trivially, it is supposed that an action (i.e., a present action) is intentional if the agent had the intention to perform the action at the time he did perform the action and acts on the intention. This might seems to be countered by the accidental kicking example cited earlier, but this can be circumvented.

In the example, John wants to kick Jack and intends to kick him in order to get back at him for his joking. He has the intention to perform the action. It might be debatable whether he had the intention when he did kick Jack;

for example, he might have been more concerned with regaining his balance. But even if it could be determined that he did have the intention when he performed the action, it is clear that he did not act on the intention (see Goldman's example [Theory] , p. 54).

But just what is this intention? It has been called a mental act the verbalization of which occurs in oblique contexts (Geach [Acts] , passim). It has been called a mental state (D'Arcy [Acts] , Margolis [Kn. Ex.] , Meiland [Nature]); an attitude in which the agent finds himself disposed toward the action. Of these two prominent positions, it seems that viewing intention as a mental state has less problems. Of course, on this view, belief would also have to be construed as a mental state (contrary to Geach). In arguing in favor of the mental state theory, the two cases can be handled quite similarly.

Geach begins by defining a report of a mental act as a report of what a human being thought, felt, saw or heard ([Acts] , p. 1). He concentrates on judgements which are verbally expressed (Ibid., p. 11) because he views the concept of judging as an extension of the concept of saying (Ibid., p. 75). The term concept is used to mean that anyone who has a concept can perform a mental act of a specified sort (Ibid., p. 15). It seems, then, that mental acts are thoughts, feelings, beliefs, intentions, etc. since the

report of one is the report of the other. But Geach makes what is not necessarily an accurate observation concerning the concepts of judging and saying. On his definitions, he is able to say:

> if somebody puts his belief into words, . . . then there occurs a mental act, of the sort I call an act of judgement (Ibid., p. 9).

This seems circular because of the way Geach stacks the cards in his favor. He concentrates on acts of judgement and argues that the concept judging is analogous to the concept saying. He can say this because of the close link he makes between concepts and mental acts (it does seem that judging is a mental act and, perhaps, saying, or at least what leads up to it, is a mental act too). Since they are both mental acts, they have related concepts. From these statements, he presents the above definition. But note that he had already said judging and saying are analogous concepts; an act of judging and an act of saying, it seems, cannot be separated. Hence, his basic argument that a belief or intention, when put into words, is a mental act, might be absolutely correct and must follow because he views a statement of belief as an act of judgement. But what does this say about belief itself? It seems to say very little.

There were allusions earlier to the possibility that subconscious and pre-conscious intentions may exist. These

topics are not central to the whole of this paper but it seems that Geach completely disregards even the possibility of their existence; if his account is to be fully accurate, it is clear that he, at least, has to deal with these notions even if he eventually rejects them. It is not so clear that all intentions must be conscious. An agent "may be said to believe (or intend) this or that without there ever having been formulated in the mind a suitable expression expressing the imputed belief (or intention)" (Margolis [Kn. Ex.], p. 13; the additions concerning intention are my own). It seems that Geach pushes the issue one step too far. As mentioned, his theory seems to say nothing about the belief itself, only the verbalization of it.

Moreover, he gives no account of what it is that brings about the belief's being put into words. Could what brings it about be another mental act, and so on ad infinitum? If the belief were not put into words could it be said that the agent did not have the belief? This does not necessarily have to be the case. The belief does not exist until it is verbalized; but what brings about the verbalization? It seems that the only thing Geach has to bring about the mental act would be another mental act which seems troublesome. Further, if believing, like deciding, were a mental act, it should be able to be adverbially modified. It makes sense to ask "How quickly did he decide?" but no

one should ask "How quickly did he believe such and such?" (This was pointed out to me by N.L. Wilson; it could be asked how long the belief lasted but this type of modification is applicable to states as well as an action.)

Something in Geach's account must produce the verbalization. He cannot say that the belief produces the verbalization because, according to his view, the belief is a mental act when it is put into words. It would be circular if a mental act produced another mental act. An adequate account can be given of belief, as well as intention, as a mental state; the two are importantly linked. Being in a mental state need not be put into words. But does that mean that there is no belief or intention unless it is put into words? No; the belief or intention has to exist beforehand in order to be put into words.

Geach's account might be correct as far as it goes; there are often explicit sub-vocal formulations of beliefs and intentions. But Geach has not shown that belief and intention cannot exist if they are not verbalized and it seems that the only method he has to do this is viciously circular. Also, if belief and intention had to be vocalized, then animals could not be said to have any beliefs; no one has yet shown this and quite the contrary seems true. What Geach's account leaves out is (1) the possibility that belief and intention exist as psychological states before verbalization

and (2) that these psychological states must be present before verbalizations can ever take place. These points can be added to Geach's account without problem. His account is correct, perhaps, as far as it goes but it is not complete without these additions.

The best reason for holding that belief and intention are mental states is that the theory bases the content of the belief on the psychological state of the agent rather than on logical connections which do not hold for belief and intention (Margolis [Kn. Ex.], p. 22). An example of how belief does not hold in a logical way is the following: Oedipus believed that he was to marry Jocasta; Jocasta is Oedipus' mother; therefore, Oedipus believed . . . ? The blank cannot be filled in by 'he was to marry his mother' unless it were shown that he believed (or knew) that Jocasta was his mother (which was not the case). Similarly, for intention, Oedipus intended to marry Jocasta; Jocasta is Oedipus' mother; but Oedipus did not intend to marry his mother because he did not know (or believe) that Jocasta was his mother. It seems that nothing is lost by construing belief and intention as mental states but something is gained: an explanation of what might allow the verbalization of belief and intention to occur without circularity.

Now for a more explicit look at intention as a mental act rather than a mental state. An action can be intentional

without an explicit formulation of the intention having been made. For instance, an agent intends to go home after a day's work but might never have decided this or formulated it verbally to himself. Intention, however, can be verbalized. As mentioned, this verbalization might be a mental act. This seems especially clear when the agent has gone through a deliberative process and has reached a decision. It is fair to say that, often, an agent coming to form an intention performs a mental act; but that does not show that intention is a mental act. An agent might say to himself that he has finally decided to do such and such (perhaps out of sheer relief more than anything else) and then does it. He performs the actions intentionally because he has the intention and acts on it.

An agent can perform some action intentionally; thus, he has the intention and is acting on it. But when he is asked, 'What are you doing?', often he might not be able to come up with the answer even though he is in the process of performing the action. For example, it might happen that an agent goes into the kitchen to turn off the light. On the table, however, is a tempting piece of pie which he takes, forgetting about the light. Then he gets a sort of funny feeling: "I've forgotten something". It would be safe to say that he has the intention together with the realization that he has not acted on the intention when he wanted; this

is what gives him the funny feeling.

These terms are not very Philosophical and hardly very exact but there is really no other way to deal with these aspects. He knows he wanted to do something. He cannot remember it. Often it helps if the agent puts himself in the same place as when he first thought of what he wanted to do. When and if the realization of what he intended to do does come, it might very well be verbalized. But what produced the verbalization? The realization of the intention which he had all along even while he could not remember it.

Basically, and most simply stated, the foregoing was presented to show that the statement "An agent intends to do such and such" reports a state of the agent concerning the action. The most important property of the agent's state is that he <u>believes</u> that he is performing that action which he intends. It was shown that an agent can intend to perform an action but, in fact, be doing something else by accident or mistake (and whether he realizes it or not). It was argued, then, that the action he is actually performing is unintentional even though he has an intention to perform an action and believes he is doing so. It might also be said that the agent is acting on the intention but this is not as clear as the other facts mentioned. It seems, at any rate, that for an action to be intentional

the agent must have the intention to perform the action, be acting on the intention (these two yield his belief in what he is doing) and, most importantly, be performing the intended action. If any of these are missing, the action is not intentional.

Trying and Choosing

In this section, the notions of trying and choosing will be elucidated as they relate to intention. Trying might be an action that must be done intentionally. Choosing is usually thought of as deciding or picking between alternatives but that sounds a bit redundant. If an agent can deliberate about alternatives and then decide to do one or the other, then it is obvious that there had to be alternatives. The view to be developed here is that it is better to construe choice as an attribute of the act so that an agent acts "choosingly" as he might act voluntarily or carefully.

Trying

Trying seems to be able to be looked at in one of two ways: (1) a statement of the agent's attitude toward a given action; more explicitly, his attitude when the possi-

bility of failure is present; (2) since an agent often might respond to the question "What are you doing?" with "I'm trying to do such and such", trying might also be viewed as an action done intentionally. Perhaps these two cannot be separated from one another. It surely seems that "he is trying . . . " leaves open the possibility of failure and does so explicitly; this is what effects the attitude of the agent. It is not so clear, even though the locution "trying to do . . . " is used to answer the question "What are you doing?", that when an agent tries to do something, he is performing a different action from the one he is trying to do. In trying to perform an action, the agent must be doing it intentionally or taking certain steps toward doing it intentionally.

If an agent tries to climb Mt. Everest, he must be doing something that will bring about completion of the action. Further, he must be making his attempt on Everest. If he were on another mountain and mistook it for Everest, he would not be trying to climb Mt. Everest. He would still have, however, the intention to climb Everest while he is climbing the other mountain. This is because he believed the mountain he was on to be Everest. He believed he was trying to climb Everest but, obviously, was not. This is similar to the agent who believed he was sharpening a pencil while he was really destroying a pen.

An agent can try to perform an action, e.g., climb Mt. Everest, and yet not succeed. Even so, he is (or, better, was) trying to do it and he would answer that he was trying to climb Mt. Everest if someone asked him, say, how he broke his leg. Now consider that the agent is successful. That is, he climbed Mt. Everest. But on the way down, he broke his leg. In answering a question about the broken leg, it would be said that he broke it when he climbed (or conquered) Mt. Everest. (More accurately, it might be said that he did not break it while climbing Everest but while coming down after a successful (or unsuccessful) climb. But the fall, and resultant broken leg, did not hinder his climb down and, as a matter of fact, might have sped it up a bit.)

The above discussion raises this further question about trying. It is usually said that a person tries to do something when the possibility of failure is thought to be present. That is, the agent who tried to, and successfully did, climb Mt. Everest would usually not be said to be <u>trying</u> to climb the small hill behind his house. Usually, it is not said of most people that they try to walk; rather, they just walk. But it is said that toddlers and people with some sort of paralysis try to walk. (After a while, the toddler is usually said to <u>be</u> walking and <u>trying</u> to maintain his balance; but that is a different case.)

What happens when an agent tries to do something and succeeds? For instance, the agent tries to, and successfully does, climb Mt. Everest. Now he is said to have climbed the mountain. (Often, by way of praise, it might be said he attempted the near impossible and did it.) But is that the case? Is trying to climb Mt. Everest different from climbing Mt. Everest? It might be said that the agent tries to climb Mt. Everest and, if he is successful, also climbs Mt. Everest: i.e., there are two actions, the trying and the doing. If there are two actions, they must be differentiated in some way. Further, this differentiation must be, in some way, laid out. So what is the difference between climbing a mountain and trying to climb it? Trivially, an agent can try to climb a mountain and fail but he cannot climb it and fail (to climb it). This shows that there might be some sort of difference between the two but does not show what the difference is. If there is anything to differentiate trying from doing, it would seem to have to be the situation in which the agent finds himself as well as the capabilities of the agent.

This is not to imply that trying is a state of mind. But an agent can have all the confidence in the world and still be actually trying to do some difficult task although he will not admit it. Further, an agent with little confidence (or ego) could admit to be only trying to do something difficult even though he has done it successfully several

times before. Trying is not a state of mind but an agent is in a certain state of mind (believing failure to be possible) when he is trying to do an action. Problems arising with third person reports have been mentioned. Similar problems arise here. An observer would not say that an agent is trying to do something unless he had a reason for mentioning the idea of attempt. For example, he knows the task is a difficult one and, perhaps, the agent is new at it; he has been watching the agent for a while and the agent is having trouble, etc. This discussion of reports seems to show that one main difference between a report of "trying" as opposed to a report of "performing" is on the side of the observer, not necessarily the agent.

It seems that the notions "He is trying . . . " and "He is performing . . . " are very closely linked. But there do seem to be differences. Trying to perform an action means, at least, taking some steps toward accomplishing that action; performing an action implies accomplishing it. Perhaps the demarcation between "tries" and "does", as far as the agent is concerned, is the attitude the agent has concerning the possibility of failure (regardless of whether the attitude is correct or not). Concerning third person reports, the reporter will use "tries" when he does not want to commit himself to the success (or even the failure) of the action but is implying failure to be an explicit possibility.

Perhaps "tries" and "does" are different locutions concerning the same action. There are too many difficulties with the identity view of, say, Davidson (as mentioned) to be able to say that they are different descriptions of the same action. If trying and doing were taken as two different descriptions, some notion, similar to the internal identity mentioned earlier, could be invoked since the same action is tried and, if successful, performed.

If viewed as two different descriptions, the case would be analogous to the redescription of the agent throwing a punch (and protecting himself) as opposed to the example where the agent litters and signals at the same time. In the latter example, it could not be said that the agent littered in order to signal the same way in which he throws a punch in order to protect himself. The two examples are very different: the agent could have signaled without littering but the agent could not have protected himself unless he threw a punch (kicked the other, hit him with a stick, etc.).

Similar to the punching-protecting example, it could be said not that trying and doing are two different actions but that the agent tries to perform the action in order to perform the action. Usually an agent does not just try; he tries with reference to, and hope of,

success. Further, the notion of more basic actions is helpful here. An agent performs one action (moves his feet in a certain way) in order to perform a more complicated action (climb Mt. Everest). He is trying to climb Mt. Everest but not trying to move his feet.

One last example should show that "tries" and "does", though different, are not different actions. Meiland ([Nature], p. 72) argues that the agent performs two actions: the agent (1) is trying to swim out to the float and (2), if he is successful, is swimming out to the float. This is incorrect. The agent might be trying to swim out to the float but when he is successful he swam out to the float. While trying to swim out to the float, he is swimming out to the float (it is a continuous action in present time); further, he is swimming out to the float, it seems, whether he makes it or not. There is very little difference between "I tried to swim out to the float but got a cramp and couldn't make it" and "I was swimming (past tense of 'is swimming') out to the float but got a cramp and couldn't make it."

"He tries" and "he does" are differentiated not by being viewed as different actions but by the fact of the attitude of the agent toward the action or the attitude of an observer toward the agent doing some action.

Choosing

As mentioned above, it seems better to regard choice as an adverb rather than a verb. When certain conditions, to be mentioned later, obtain, an agent performs an action "choosingly". It was shown that "tries" sometimes is best seen as an attitude of the agent or the observer concerning the action; but it also seems that "tries" has some authentic (as opposed to rhetorical) use as a verb, albeit most often in the past tense. For example, "He tried and failed". It will be argued in this section that the use of 'chooses' as a verb is dispensible and, hence, should be dropped (Occam's razor).

For Aristotle, choice is a species of the voluntary but it is different than appetite, anger, wish and opinion ([N.E.], 1111b-1112a). He uses "chooses" as a verb, saying that one chooses this or that based on the opinion one has toward it. When used as a verb, the word seems to imply that there are alternatives. But this is just how the mental act of decision was defined above. After deliberation, the agent comes to an opinion concerning some action and decides to do it. Aristotle mentions this closeness (even identity) of decision and choice but analyzes them as if they are both operating together.

It seems that "decides" can be substituted for

"chooses" but the reverse is not true. Is there a lot of difference between "I decided to go home" and "I chose to go home"? It seems not. But note that "I decided to have supper" sounds all right while "I chose to have supper" has a strange ring to it. At any rate, it seems that decision can replace choice in most contexts and that choice is not applicable in many cases where decision is.

Now, what is it about an action in virtue of which it is done "choosingly"? First, there have to be alternatives upon which the agent decides, he must be aware of the alternatives and capable of attaining them (Daveney [Choosing], p. 83). Daveney uses these to define "choosing" but they seem again not much different than decision. Perhaps performing an action "choosingly" is more comparable to a sort of stage direction appearing in parentheses before an actor's lines. It is the modification of an action in such a way as to draw attention to the agent's having alternatives as opposed to deciding on doing it. Similarly, "I chose . . . " has an air of haughtiness about it that "I decided . . . " does not. The main difference might be in the opinion or attitude of the agent (mostly toward himself) concerning the action.

"I chose . . . " could be seen as rhetorical and linked to "I decided . . . " in a manner similar to the way in which "I intend . . . " (where the blank is filled

in by something other than the agent's action) was shown to be linked with "I want . . . " or "I order that . . . " It was argued that this use of the verb "intend" is rhetorical. Similarly, actions are done "choosingly" while "I chose . . . " is merely a more stylistic way of expressing a decision.

Intention and Belief

The importance of ordinary belief for intention has been mentioned throughout this paper and has already been touched on earlier in this chapter. It was argued that it was best to view intention and belief as mental states that are very closely linked. A more explicit formulation of this link will be the subject of this part of the paper. One point before beginning: throughout, it will be asserted that belief rather than knowledge is important for intention. This might not necessarily be the case but on the basis of the foregoing discussions, it seems that belief and intention are more closely linked than knowledge and intention. The reason for this is that, although the agent has knowledge of what his intention is, he need not have knowledge of what he is doing, especially if the usual line that knowledge entails truth is employed, in order to have the intention to perform that act. In fact, it was pointed

out that the agent can have the intention to perform an action and actually be doing another action (by mistake or accident). Hence, it could not be said that he had knowledge of what he was doing even though he knows his intention. But he did believe that what he was doing was the intended action.

This is what is important for an agent when he is acting on an intention: he must believe that what he is doing is the intended action. The only time the agent might employ a statement like "I did that intentionally but I didn't believe I was doing it" is if he performed some amazing feat incredible even to himself. But this is not the belief that the agent had concerning his intended action. That belief is the one that what he is doing is what he intends to do. He can be mistaken about what he is doing; i.e., he can intend to perform an action and, hence, believe he is performing it but be performing something else unaware of it. But he cannot be mistaken about his intention (unless, of course, it is subconscious if there are intentions of that sort; there might very well be but they will not be dealt with in this paper).

Another way in which intention and belief are very close is in the relativity of the descriptions to which the states are applied. More simply, an agent can believe something under one description but not under another just

as he can intend to perform an action under one description but not intend it under another if he is unaware that the descriptions are of the same thing. (Historians say that, for example, Cicero is Tully. Metaphysicians and epistemologists tell about all the problems this claim of identity raises. The problems are well-known and this is the only mention that will be made of them. Allow such identities to be acceptable and disregard the problems for a moment.)

Although Geach's analysis outlined above leaves something to be desired as to the nature of belief and intention, it does seem that he is correct in saying that the contexts of belief and intention are opaque. Verbs like believing, intending, knowing, etc. are verbs of the so-called propositional attitude. It is true that 'Oedipus believed he was to marry Jocasta' but false that 'Oedipus believed he was to marry his mother'. Even though 'Jocasta is Oedipus' mother' is also true, it is not the case that Oedipus believed this. Intention works in a very similar way. Oedipus intended to marry Jocasta (and believed he was going to do so) but did not intend to marry his mother because he did not believe (or know) that was what he was going to do; he did not believe (or know) that Jocasta was his mother. The parallels seem very clear cut.

If an agent does not believe he is performing, is going to perform or is able to perform some action, then

he cannot intend to perform that action. The last case seems obvious. An agent cannot intend to do anything he sincerely believes is impossible. As argued in Chapter Two, it would seem strange for an agent to say, "I intend to do it later but I don't believe I will". If he does say that but does not add that there are possible conditions under which it is true he might not do it, he is lying either about his intention or his belief. It was pointed out above that an agent has to believe that what he is doing is his intended action in order to be said to have the intention to perform that action. The locution 'I did that intentionally but don't believe I did it (or am doing it)' was discussed earlier in this section.

Explanation of Actions

If an agent has the intention of performing a certain action, he must believe that he is performing that action in order to be said to be acting on that intention. And this, as was pointed out, is one of the requirements of an intentional action. It does not, however, seem that this idea of 'acting on' an intention need be of the causal sort. Daveney ([Intentions]) argues that the connection is logical rather than causal; logical in the sense that the intention and the resultant action cannot be separated

from each other. His argument seems strong especially if it is remembered that cause and effect are usually seen as being separable.

But, on the other hand, there would be no effect if there were no cause just as there would be no intentional action if there were no intention. So, some sort of intention is necessary so that the related action is intentional. One main proponent of the theory that explanation by reasons is a sort of causal explanation is Donald Davidson ([Actions], passim). His point seems to be that whenever an explanation in terms of reasons is applicable to an action, the explanation is of the causal sort. Davidson has argued elsewhere ([Reaction]) that a subclass of actions referred to as intentional is unnecessary. This would seem to imply that all actions are intentional.

What effect does this claim have? Intentional actions were shown to be those to which the question "Why?" is applicable. That question, when answered truthfully, provides the basis for discovering the agent's reason. That an action is intentional usually means the agent had a reason for doing it and that the reason was, at least part of, why he did it. Now, for Davidson, all actions are intentional. It seems that this claim will have some distressing repercussions.

Davidson's famous example is: 'he flipped the

switch', 'he turned on the light', 'he illuminated the room' and (unknown to him) 'he alerted a prowler' ([Actions], pp. 68-69). Contrary to the position argued in this paper, Davidson (as mentioned in Chapter One) argues that there is one "thing done" of which four descriptions have been given. But in a footnote (p. 68, footnote no. 2) he says that "we would not call my unintentional alerting of the prowler an action" but still it is not different from flipping the switch. This is a very subtle move that is difficult, perhaps impossible (by way of it being counter-intuitive), to see much less agree with.

There are some strong points in favor of the thesis which Davidson argues. After all, it seems that the agent did do only one thing, i.e., flipped the switch. Further, he says that this "thing done" is an action. Some aspects of the thesis which are troublesome (the causal aspect) were mentioned above and now Davidson has supplied another. All actions have to be intentional; there is one action to which four descriptions (that seem perfectly accurate) apply; but when the "thing done" is redescribed in a certain way (as alerting the prowler), it is no longer considered an action because it was unintentional. If, indeed, flipping the switch is the same as alerting the prowler (since it is one thing), then Davidson has given a redescription of an action which is not an action. This is the problem. In the Oedipus example discussed earlier, it was

shown how the same action can be intentional under one description and unintentional under another; but it was always considered an action whether intentional or not. Since the alerting of the prowler is unintentional, it is, on Davidson's thesis, not an action. So Davidson is forced to conclude that the "same thing" is at one time an action and at same time not an action.

What the agent did when he alerted the prowler was an unintentional action, dependent on his intentional action of flipping the switch. Davidson argues it is not an action because it is not intentional. It seems, however, that intention is not the defining quality of what is or is not an action. So the "same thing" which the agent did is always an action. Under one description it is intentional, under another description it is not. On the thesis presented in this paper, the agent does one thing but several actions come about (flipping the switch, alerting the prowler, etc.). This analysis seems perfectly straightforward and intuitive, as well as correct, when compared with the abstruse and subtle maneuvers Davidson must make to preserve his thesis that all actions must be intentional. But, again, it points out the problems inherent in Davidson's identity claim.

The two main points which Davidson is defending are: (1) the identity thesis of action and (2) rationalization

as a species of causal explanation. There are favorable and unfavorable results with both points. But what is most unfavorable is the argument used in support of them. If any number of things are identical, it is usually assumed that they will have the same properties. Davidson's redescriptions of the same thing (i.e., an action, although he never explicitly mentions what the action is; most likely it is flipping the switch but then that should not count as a re-description) have been shown to have some very different properties: (1) on a causal account (from Goldman [Theory] outlined in Chapter One, above), it was shown how flipping the switch causes the light to go on but alerting the prowler (the same thing) does not cause the light to go on; (2) on an account of Davidson's own view toward the redescriptions (the action and non-action problems, above).

Davidson calls the thesis of rationalization being a species of causal explanation an "ancient--and commonsense--position" ([Action], p. 67). He admits that his arguments call for a redeployment of the thesis which amounts to his arguing that if an explanation in terms of reasons is present, then it will be of the causal sort. This point is a rather weak claim but it is important and, perhaps, accurate. A main problem is that the subtleties of Davidson's arguments go no great distance to advancing his thesis.

An argument against this "commonsense" position is

given by Elizabeth Anscombe. She argues that rationalization is not a species of causal explanation:

> But intentional actions are not marked off just by being subject to mental causality, since there are involuntary actions from which mental causality is not excluded (p. 24).

She argues that the question "Why?" applicable to intentional actions does not have that sense when the answer given is evidence or states a cause; she includes in this mental causes (Ibid.). Intentional actions, those which "I did so in order to . . . ", are not always backed up by "I desired to . . . ", "I wanted to . . . ", etc. Sometimes an agent will just perform an action and perform it intentionally; the agent "simply hear(s) a knock . . . (and goes to the door) to open it without experiencing any such desire" (Ibid., p. 17).

This desire would be viewed as a mental cause. Since intentional actions are those actions to which the agent is ready to supply a reason, and since intentional actions, on Anscombe's account, do not always permit mention of mental causality, she concludes that explanations in terms of reasons cannot be a species of explanations in terms of causes. This is contrary even to Davidson's weakened claim. What is the solution, if any, of the problem?

Davidson argues that whenever there is a reason explanation, it is of the causal sort. On his view of all ac-

tions being intentional, all actions can be explained in terms of reasons and, hence, causes. Anscombe argues that often a reason explanation is applicable but nothing which might correspond to a mental cause occurs. Further, her claim, as it is argued need not follow; the causes of actions need not be only of the mental sort. For her, any intentional action can be explained in terms of reasons; sometimes these explanations are of the causal sort but often they are not. A point in favor of Davidson's position is the strict definition Anscombe has given to causality. Her claim is also weak: some reason explanations are not of the causal sort. Of course, this "causal sort" is as she defines it and, as mentioned, it might not be the case that only causation of this sort is applicable to action.

It was mentioned earlier in this paper that there are three conditions that must be satisfied for an action to be intentional: (1) the agent must have the intention; (2) he must be performing the intended act; (3) he must be acting on the intention. The agent flips the switch in order to turn on the light; it can often be assumed that the agent wanted to turn on the light and believed that flipping the switch would do it. But "it also implies that his having this want and having this belief caused or resulted in his flipping the switch" (Goldman [Theory], p. 78). So for Goldman, like Davidson, the

link between the action and the intention (and, hence, the reason) is a causal one.

The way Anscombe states her thesis, by defining the causality connected with action in a very specific way, does little damage to Davidson's claim that an explanation of an action in terms of reasons yields an explanation of the causal sort (even in its weakened form as mentioned above). In Anscombe's account, for there to be a cause for an action, there has to be something (wants, desires, etc.) inside the agent moving him to act that way. Further, she seems to imply that these will be conscious ([Bk], pp. 23-25). But this need not be the case. An agent might perform an action intentionally without wanting to do it (cf. Aristotle's example [N.E.], 1110a, ff.: the captain in a storm at sea does not want to jettison the cargo but does so in order to, i.e., intending to, save the ship). Davidson's account is still applicable.

Consider also the example of driving a car. The actions here <u>seem</u> almost reflexive: no one ever says to himself, "The car is drifting to the right; if I want to maintain my position in the middle of the road, I must turn the steering wheel slightly to the left", and then turns the wheel. The driver, a good experienced driver at any rate, just straightens out the car. There is no conscious mental cause here and yet the action of

straightening the car (driving the car) is intentional. There is a reason for straightening out the car and this reason, when it explains the action, explains it in a causal manner. A reason for an action can be a cause for an action (cf. also Margolis [Puzzles]; he argues that explanations in terms of reasons are not of the causal sort, arguing with Davidson in mind, but seems to attribute to Davidson a much stronger position). It does not seem that Davidson's claim need be made any stronger in order to be effective; when there is a reason explanation given, it is of the causal sort.

As mentioned above, Daveney says the link between intention (and, hence, reasons) and the action is of the logical sort, not causal. Part of the argument is that only the intended action can satisfy the intention to do that action. Unfortunately, he does not give an adequate account of what the link will be like but gives these following arguments:

> Yet if it is held that the relationship . . . is causal, and therefore contigent, there should exist in principle the possibility of another action counting as candidate ([Intention], p. 24).

Further:

> It is more than a mere matter of fact that causes do not logically determine what effects they will be connected with . . . The causal relationship is a contigent one, and if one event identi-

> fies another as a term in which it is in relation, then that relation cannot be causal (Ibid.)

He also argues that the identity of the intention, as discovered through the question 'What are you doing?', and what the agent is doing (his intended action) cannot be handled by a cause-effect relationship. The basis of his argument is the necessary relationship between intention (reason) and intended action and the contigent nature of a causal relationship. He does not mention, however, that causal relationships do have a kind of necessity when the ceteris paribus clause is added.

For instance, an agent could taste a piece of sugar and it might not taste sweet if, say, he had a bad head cold. Does this mean that the statement 'If someone were to taste a piece of sugar, then it would taste sweet' is false? No; not if it is allowed that there are no circumstances which will alter the usual state of affairs; i.e., other things being equal, sugar will taste sweet when it is tasted. As far as intention and intended action go, some of the things to be kept equal are that the agent act on the intention and do the intended act, he not change his mind, etc.

But this is, in fact, just what Davidson's weakened claim does seem to take into account: if there is a reason explanation, then it will be of the causal sort,

ceteris paribus. The addition that all things will be kept equal, i.e., the agent does act on the intention and performs the intended action, makes the usually contingent aspect of the causal claim into a necessary one. Since it was argued that an agent has to be acting on his intention in order for the action to be intentional, and it would usually be assumed that he does this in a "characteristic way" (cf. Goldman [Theory], pp. 60-63), this "characteristic way" is what can be taken as the ceteris paribus which makes the causal connection a necessary one.

So it seems that Davidson's claim concerning the causal aspects of explanations by reasons does, when it is realized that these conditions are added, yield a viable way to look at the link between intention (and reason) and the resultant action. If an account in terms of reasons is given, then it will be of the causal sort.

Conclusion

Several points have been raised and defended in this thesis. First, a theory of action was sketched which was based on rule-governed behavior; the notion of the identity thesis of action was brought to task and the position that "different descriptions refer to different actions" was defended, revised by the notion of

internal identity. Second, it was argued that (1) there are unintentional as well as intentional actions, actions being a subclass of the things men do (deeds); i.e., intentional is not one of the defining characteristics of action; (2) only actions are objects of intention; the intention locution when used with anything other than the agent's actions was shown to be more rhetoric than fact, actually implying some intentional action of the agent.

Two important questions concerning intention were discussed: (1) "What are you doing?" which determines the agent's intention and (2) "Why?" which solicits the agent's reason(s) which almost always accompany an intentional action. In order to get a clear understanding of what intention is (a mental state), it was compared and contrasted with other mental states, mental acts and psychological attitudes. The importance of the connection between intention and ordinary belief was examined in Chapter Three; its importance was mentioned throughout the paper.

Because of the important connection that was shown between intentions and reasons, a study of explanations in terms of reasons was undertaken. Davidson's thesis seemed weak but headed in a fruitful direction; Goldman's theory was close to Davidson's and Anscombe argued that not all reason explanations need be of the causal sort.

Davidson's and Goldman's theories, if amended somewhat, seem compatible with Anscombe's: some, but not all, reason explanations are causal explanations. For the several circumstances that might not be causal, Daveney's notion of a logical connection between intention (reason) and the action seemed useful.

The purpose of this thesis was to examine intention and its relation to human action. The approach was to present critical analyses of some classic positions on intention, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses and coming to what seemed to be a more adequate conclusion on the topics covered. Examples were used in a straightforward manner to illustrate the utility of the theories defended and show, it is hoped, that the conclusions reached are, for the most part, quite intuitive.

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39. Taylor, Richard [Action]. Action and Purpose. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966. Actions can often be intelligibly explained by reference to goals, aims, etc. without reference to cause; argues that explanations in terms of reasons are not explanations in terms of causes and that reason explanations of actions are more typical

40. Williams, Glanville L. "Intention in the Criminal Law" from Criminal Law: the General Part. Reprinted in Morris, 218-226.

41. Wilson, N.L. [Grice]. "Grice on Meaning: The Ultimate Counter-example", Nous, IV (1970), 295-302. Important here because of the notion of signaling, derived from Grice, which is presented.