

*Blackwell
Companions to
Philosophy*

A COMPANION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF ACTION



Edited by
TIMOTHY O'CONNOR AND
CONSTANTINE SANDIS

 WILEY-BLACKWELL

Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Blackwell Companions to Philosophy](#)

[Title page](#)

[Copyright page](#)

[Dedication](#)

[List of Illustrations](#)

[Notes on Contributors](#)

[Preface to the Paperback Edition](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Part I: Acts and Actions](#)

[1 Action Theory and Ontology](#)

[What are Actions?](#)

[What Are the Identity Conditions of Actions?](#)

[Agents and their Powers](#)

2 Basic Actions and Individuation

Basic Actions

Action Individuation

3 Trying to Act

Introduction

The Extent of Trying

Trying to Move the Body

Trying and Intending

4 Bodily Movements

Introductory

The Epistemic Advantage

The Ontological Advantage

The Phenomenological Advantage

5 The Causal Theory of Action

Action

Intentional vs Unintentional Action

Autonomous Action

Action for Reasons

6 Adverbs of Action and Logical Form

7 Refraining, Omitting, and Negative Acts

Ways of Failing to Do Something

Refraining

Omitting

Negative Acts: Inaction as Action?

8 Speech Acts

Introduction

Speech Acts, Acts of Speech, and Performatives

Acts and Their Contents

Speech Acts, What is Said, and Speaker Meaning

Misfires, Abuses, and How Saying Makes It So

Illocutions, Perlocutions, and Implicature

Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

9 Collective Action

Introduction

Observations on Collective Action

Approaches to Collective Action

The Personal Intentions Approach

The 'We-Intentions' Approach

The Joint Commitment Approach

Concluding Remarks

10 Habitual Actions

The Place of Habit in Human Life

Habits in Current Philosophy of Action

The Habit-Friendly Tradition

Analyzing Habit

Philosophy of Habit: Benefits and Challenges

11 Cambridge Actions

12 Pluralism about Action

Recent Work on Pluralism

Action and Process Control
Acknowledgments

Part II: Agency and Causation

13 Volition and the Will

Will as Faculty, Capacity, or Power
Will as an Attitude or Collection of Attitudes
Will and Free Will Theory
Volitional Disunity and Wholeheartedness

14 Intention

Intentions and Related States of Mind
Intention's Functions and Constitution
Intentions and Reasons

15 Desire and Pleasure

Action-Based Theories of Desire
Pleasure-Based Theories of Desire
Combined Action-Based and Pleasure-Based Theories
Holistic Theories of Desire
Natural Kind Theories
The Nature of Pleasure

16 Teleological Explanation

Reductionist Accounts of Teleology
Non-Reductionist Accounts
Prospects and Consequences

17 Reasons and Causes

Reasons as Not (Efficiently) Causal, Underwriting Irreducibly Teleological Explanations

Reasons as Efficient Causes

Reasons, Causes, and Physicalism

Causally Relevant, though Not Causes

Structuring Causes

Reasons, Causes, and Free Will

18 Triggering and Structuring Causes

A Triggering Causal Explanation

A Structuring Causal Explanation

19 Motivating Reasons

20 Humeanism about Motivation

21 Deviant Causal Chains

22 Action Explanation and the Unconscious

23 Mental Causation and Epiphenomenalism

24 The Explanatory Role of Consciousness

The Problem

Perceptual Consciousness and Action:

Experimental Dissociations and Commonsense

Connections

Awareness of Intentions and Action Initiation

25 What a Difference Emotions Make

26 Agency, Patiency, and Personhood

Introduction

Action and Passivity

Capability/Incapability and Need

Choice, Rationality, Freedom/Constraint

Independence and Dependency

27 Mental Acts

Mental Agency as Sensitivity to Reasons

Mental Agency as Voluntary Control

Mental Agency, 'Evaluative Control,' and
Metacognition

28 Agent Causation

Introduction

Why Agent Causation?

What Is Agent-Caused, and What Else (if
Anything) Causes It?

What is Agent Causation?

29 Bodily Awareness and Bodily Action

30 Agents' Knowledge

31 Practical Reasoning

Reasoning

The Conclusion of Reasoning

The First View: The Conclusion of Practical Reasoning Is an Action

The Second View: The Conclusion of Practical Reasoning Is an Intention

The Third View: The Conclusion of Practical Reasoning is a Normative Belief

Different Kinds of Practical Reasoning

32 Deliberation and Decision

The Decision-Theoretic Picture

The Decision-plus-Deliberation Picture

A Common Mistake

33 Motivational Strength

Background

MSI and Vacuity

Action-Desires and Ordinary Dispositions

MSI and Agency

34 Addiction and Compulsion

35 Akrasia and Irrationality

Part III: Action in Special Contexts

36 Rationality

Rationality as a Property and Rationality as a Source of Requirements
Rationality and Normativity
Requirements of Rationality
Reasoning

37 Motivational Internalism and Externalism

38 Free Will and Determinism

Freedom as a Power
Freedom and Determinism
Freedom and Action

39 Responsibility and Autonomy

The Concept of Responsibility
Responsibility and Autonomy

40 Virtuous Action

41 The Doctrine of Double Effect

42 Action and Criminal Responsibility

Actions and the Criminal Law
Objects or Conditions of Criminal Responsibility?
Actions and (Voluntary) Acts
Abandoning the Act Requirement?
An Action Presumption?

43 Intention in Law

44 Scientific Challenges to Free Will

45 Intentional Action in Folk Psychology

What Intentional Action Is

The Folk Concept of Intentionality

Development

The Judgment Process

Intentionality and Moral Judgment

Explanations of Intentional Action

Reason Explanations

Causal History of Reason Explanations

Enabling Factor Explanations

Synopsis

46 Attribution Theory

Introduction

Phenomenal Causality

From Classification to Dynamics

Interpersonal Motivation

47 Rational Agency in Evolutionary Perspective

Introduction

Rational Agents and the Conceptual Background

Homo economicus

Beyond *Homo economicus*

Informational Resources

A Poisoned Chalice?
What Is to Be Done?

48 Animal Agency

Prolegomena
Types of Rationality
Intentional Explanation
Acting for a Reason
Acting in the Light of Reasons
Reflecting on Reasons
Reasoning and Deliberation
Animal Action

49 Action in Cognitive Ethology

Introduction
Antipredatory Behavior in Western Evening
Grosbeaks and its Relevance to Action Theory
Social Play Behavior and Action Theory

50 Action in History and Social Science

51 The Prediction of Action

Introduction
Classes of Uncertainty
Our Argument
Predicting Other People's Action
Predicting One's Own Actions
Predicting Group Action
The Danger of Prediction

Part IV: Prominent Figures

52 Indian Philosophers

Action as Evidence for the Existence of a Self:
Effort, Mental Acts, Motion, and Cause

Action in the Context of Linguistic Use: Basic
Acts, Effort, Production, Aim, and Reasons

Moral Actions

Concluding Remarks

53 Plato

Introduction

The Metaphysics of Action

The Explanation of Action

The Psychology of Action

54 Aristotle

The Voluntary

Choice (*Proairesis*)

Conclusion

55 Stoics, Epicureans, and Aristotelians

The Hellenistic Debates

Action, Reason, and Assent

Alexander: Aristotle as an Indeterminist

Epicurus: Determinism Excludes Freedom

Epicurus: Argument against Determinism

Stoics: Fate without Fatalism

Stoic Causes

Assent as Principal Cause
A Stoic Defense of Compatibilism

56 Augustine and Aquinas

St Augustine (354-430)
St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

57 Duns Scotus

The Category of Action
Self-Motion and the Metaphysics of Freedom
The Relationship between Intellect and Will
The Two Affections of the Will

58 Thomas Hobbes

Introduction
Hobbes' Target
Human Action
Animal Action
Hobbes' Theory of Action and Freedom

59 Descartes

Efficient and Final Causation
Descartes' Account of Mental Causation

60 Locke

61 Berkeley

Introduction
Occasionalism versus Realism

[Affecting Other Minds](#)

[Solitary Actions](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[62 Thomas Reid](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Active Powers](#)

[Active Powers, Human Agency, and Liberty](#)

[Agent Causation and Volitionism](#)

[Conclusion: Agent Causation](#)

[63 Hume](#)

[64 Kant](#)

[65 Nietzsche](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Denial of Free Will and Moral Responsibility](#)

[Against the Causality of the Will](#)

[The Genesis of Action](#)

[A 'Persuasive \(Re\)Definition' of Free Will](#)

[66 Hegel](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Hegel's Critique of a Scientistic Philosophy of Action in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*](#)

[Hegel's Philosophy of Action: The 'Morality'](#)

[Chapter of the *Philosophy of Right*](#)

Hegel's Philosophy of Action in the Contemporary Systematic Context

67 Weber

Introduction

Verstehen Method

A Value-Free Sociology

Economic Methods and Ideal Types

Conclusion

68 Wittgenstein

Voluntary Action

Reasons and Causes

69 Ryle

The Normativity of Action Concepts

The Difficulties

A Diagnosis of the Error

Conceptual Cartography

70 Sartre

Introduction

Background: Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy

Sartre's Account of Action

Some Wider Background

Assessment: Internal Relations

Assessment: Human Beings and the Human World

71 Chisholm

Background

Chisholm's Theory of Action

Remaining Questions

72 von Wright

von Wright on Causality

Actions, Events, and Intentionality; Results and Consequences

Practical Inference and the Logical Connection Argument

Two Kinds of Explanation and Their Compatibility and Congruence

The Determinants of Action

73 Davidson

74 Anscombe

75 Ricœur

Introduction

Preliminaries: Thinking about Language

Oneself as Agent

Mistaken Dichotomies

Intention

Action as a Story about the Agent

Index

Blackwell Companions to Philosophy

This outstanding student reference series offers a comprehensive and authoritative survey of philosophy as a whole. Written by today's leading philosophers, each volume provides lucid and engaging coverage of the key figures, terms, topics, and problems of the field. Taken together, the volumes provide the ideal basis for course use, representing an unparalleled work of reference for students and specialists alike.

Already published in the series:

- 1.** A Companion to Business Ethics
Edited by Robert E. Frederick
- 2.** A Companion to the Philosophy of Science
Edited by W. H. Newton-Smith
- 3.** A Companion to Environmental Philosophy
Edited by Dale Jamieson
- 4.** A Companion to Analytic Philosophy
Edited by A. P. Martinich and David Sosa
- 5.** A Companion to Genethics
Edited by Justine Burley and John Harris
- 6.** A Companion to Philosophical Logic
Edited by Dale Jacquette
- 7.** A Companion to Early Modern Philosophy
Edited by Steven Nadler
- 8.** A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages
Edited by Jorge J. E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone
- 9.** A Companion to African-American Philosophy
Edited by Tommy L. Lott and John P. Pittman

- 10.** A Companion to Applied Ethics
Edited by R. G. Frey and Christopher Heath Wellman
- 11.** A Companion to the Philosophy of Education
Edited by Randall Curren
- 12.** A Companion to African Philosophy
Edited by Kwasi Wiredu
- 13.** A Companion to Heidegger
Edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall
- 14.** A Companion to Rationalism
Edited by Alan Nelson
- 15.** A Companion to Pragmatism
Edited by John R. Shook and Joseph Margolis
- 16.** A Companion to Ancient Philosophy
Edited by Mary Louise Gill and Pierre Pellegrin
- 17.** A Companion to Nietzsche
Edited by Keith Ansell Pearson
- 18.** A Companion to Socrates
Edited by Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar
- 19.** A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism
Edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall
- 20.** A Companion to Kant
Edited by Graham Bird
- 21.** A Companion to Plato
Edited by Hugh H. Benson
- 22.** A Companion to Descartes
Edited by Janet Broughton and John Carriero
- 23.** A Companion to the Philosophy of Biology
Edited by Sahotra Sarkar and Anya Plutynski
- 24.** A Companion to Hume
Edited by Elizabeth S. Radcliffe
- 25.** A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography
Edited by Aviezer Tucker

- 26.** A Companion to Aristotle
Edited by Georgios Anagnostopoulos
- 27.** A Companion to the Philosophy of Technology
Edited by Jan-Kyrre Berg Olsen Friis, Stig Andur Pedersen, and Vincent F. Hendricks
- 28.** A Companion to Latin American Philosophy
Edited by Susana Nuccetelli, Ofelia Schutte, and Otávio Bueno
- 29.** A Companion to the Philosophy of Literature
Edited by Garry L. Hagberg and Walter Jost
- 30.** A Companion to the Philosophy of Action
Edited by Timothy O'Connor and Constantine Sandis
- 31.** A Companion to Relativism
Edited by Steven D. Hales
- 32.** A Companion to Hegel
Edited by Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur
- 33.** A Companion to Schopenhauer
Edited by Bart Vandenabeele

A Companion to the Philosophy of Action

Edited by
Timothy O'Connor and
Constantine Sandis

 **WILEY-BLACKWELL**

A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication

This paperback edition first published 2013

© 2013 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

Except chapter 14 © Alfred R. Mele

Edition history: Blackwell Publishing Ltd (hardback, 2010)

Blackwell Publishing was acquired by John Wiley & Sons in February 2007. Blackwell's publishing program has been merged with Wiley's global Scientific, Technical, and Medical business to form Wiley-Blackwell.

Registered Office

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate,
Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, United Kingdom

Editorial Offices

350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19
8SQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell.

The right of Timothy O'Connor and Constantine Sandis to be identified as the authors of the editorial material in this work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book. This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A companion to the philosophy of action / edited by Timothy O'Connor and Constantine Sandis.

p. cm. – (Blackwell companions to philosophy)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4051-8735-0 (hardcover : alk. paper); ISBN 978-1-1183-4632-7 (pbk. : alk. paper) 1. Act

(Philosophy) I. O'Connor, Timothy, 1965– II. Sandis, Constantine, 1976–

B105.A35C65 2010

128'.4-dc22

2009053164

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

Cover image: Making corn stacks, fresco from tomb of Menna, Thebes, Egypt, © 1400–1390 BC, 18th dynasty.

Photo © The Art Archive / Gianni Dagli Orti.

Cover design by Workhaus.

This paperback edition is dedicated to the memory of two
wonderful contributors:
Paul Hoffman and Fred Stoutland

List of Illustrations

Figure 23.1	Epiphenomenalism
Figure 23.2	Parallelism
Figure 23.3	Interactionism
Figure 44.1	Modular epiphenomenalism
Figure 45.1	A model of the folk concept of intentionality
Figure 45.2	Four modes of explanation for unintentional and intentional behavior
Figure 49.1	Dog (right) performing a bow to initiate play with his friend (left)
Figure 58.1	Elicited actions and commanded actions
Figure 58.2	Passions and actions motivated by them

Notes on Contributors

Kieran Allen is Senior Lecturer in the School of Sociology in University College Dublin. He has lectured extensively on Weber and has written *Max Weber: A Critical Introduction* (London: Pluto Press, 2004). His latest book was on *Ireland's Economic Crash* (Dublin: Liffey Press, 2009).

Maria Alvarez is Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Southampton, UK. She has published widely on actions, reasons, and their relation. Her book, *Kinds of Reasons: An Essay in the Philosophy of Action*, will be published by Oxford University Press in 2010.

Kent Bach, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at San Francisco State University, was educated at Harvard College and University of California, Berkeley. He has written extensively in philosophy of language, theory of knowledge, and philosophy of mind. His books include *Thought and Reference* (Oxford University Press, 1987; expanded edition 1994) and, with Robert M. Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts* (MIT Press, 1979).

Annette Baier is currently Associate in Philosophy at the University of Otago, from which she first graduated. She has published on Hume, ethics, and philosophy of mind. Her most recent book is *Death and Character: Further Reflections on Hume*. She has books forthcoming on *Hume on Justice* (Harvard University Press) and on *How We Live* (Oxford University Press).

Marc Bekoff is Professor Emeritus of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Colorado, Boulder. His latest books are *Animals at Play: Rules of the Game* (a kid's book) and *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals* (written with Jessica Pierce). Marc's homepage is <http://literati.net/Bekoff>.

Stephen Boulter is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Oxford Brookes University. Prior to taking up his current post he was Gifford Research Fellow in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Glasgow in 1998–1999. He is the author of *The Rediscovery of Common Sense Philosophy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) and is currently working on a book on medieval philosophy.

John Broome is White's Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Oxford. He is the author of *The Microeconomics of Capitalism* (1983), *Weighing Goods* (1991), *Counting the Cost of Global Warming* (1992), *Ethics Out of Economics* (1999) and *Weighing Lives* (2004).

Randolph Clarke is Professor of Philosophy at Florida State University. He is the author of *Libertarian Accounts of Free Will* (Oxford University Press, 2003) and many articles on agency, free will, and moral responsibility.

Ursula Coope is Tutorial Fellow of Corpus Christi College and Professor of Ancient Philosophy at Oxford University. She is the author of *Time for Aristotle* (Oxford University Press, 2005) and of papers on Aristotle's *Physics* and his philosophy of action. She is currently writing about the development of the concept of the will in ancient philosophy.

Wayne A. Davis is Professor of Philosophy at Georgetown University. His publications focus on philosophy of language and philosophy of mind, and include *Implicature* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), *Meaning, Expression and Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), and *Nondescriptive Meaning and Expression* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

Sabine Döring is Professor of Philosophy at Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen. Her publications include 'Explaining action by emotion,' *Philosophical Quarterly*, 53 (2003), 'Seeing what to do: Affective perception and rational motivation,' *Dialectica* 61 (2007), and 'Why be emotional?' in Peter Goldie (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of the Philosophy of*

Emotion (Oxford University Press, 2009). She is also (together with Rainer Reisenzein) editor of *Perspectives on Emotional Experience*, a special issue of *Emotion Review: Journal of the International Society for Research on Emotion*, 1(3) (2009).

Fred Dretske is Senior Research Scholar at Duke University and Professor Emeritus at Stanford and at the University of Wisconsin. His publications include *Seeing and Knowing* (1969), *Knowledge and the Flow of Information* (1981), *Explaining Behavior* (1988), and *Naturalizing the Mind* (1995).

R. A. Duff has taught philosophy at the University of Stirling since 1970. He works on the philosophy of criminal law, especially on penal theory and on the principles and structures of criminal liability. He has published *Trials and Punishments* (1986); *Intention, Agency and Criminal Responsibility* (1990); *Criminal Attempts* (1996); *Punishment, Communication and Community* (2001); and *Answering for Crime* (2007).

Naomi Eilan is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Warwick and director of the interdisciplinary Consciousness and Self-Consciousness Research Centre. She has published papers in the philosophy of mind and has edited several interdisciplinary volumes, including *Agency and Self Awareness* with Johannes Roessler (Oxford University Press, 2003).

Laura W. Ekstrom holds an AB in Philosophy from Stanford University and a PhD from the University of Arizona. She is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the College of William and Mary, Williamston, VA. She is the author of *Free Will: A Philosophical Study* (Westview Press, 1999), and editor of *Agency and Responsibility: Essays on the Metaphysics of Freedom* (Westview Press, 2000). She has published articles in metaphysics, ethics, and the philosophy of religion.

Stephen Everson has taught at the Universities of Oxford; Cambridge; and Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is currently Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of York. Everson has published on various topics in ancient philosophy, ethics, and the philosophy of action, and he is the author of *Aristotle on Perception* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

John Martin Fischer got his BA and MA in philosophy at Stanford University in 1975 and his PhD from Cornell in 1982. He has taught at Yale University, visited at UCLA and Santa Clara University, and is currently Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at the University of California, Riverside, where he holds a UC President's Chair. His books include *The Metaphysics of Free Will* (Blackwell, 1994), *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility* (co-authored with Mark Ravizza, Cambridge University Press, 1998); *My Way: Essays on Moral Responsibility* (Oxford University Press, 2006) *Four Views on Free Will* (co-authored with Pereboom, Kane, and Vargas, Blackwell, 2007); and *Our Stories: Essays on Life, Death, and Free Will* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

Elisa Freschi works in the fields of linguistics, epistemology, and deontic logic, both western and Indian. After a *laurea* degree (BA and MA) in Sanskrit and a BA in western philosophy, she completed her PhD dissertation on Indian philosophy at Università Sapienza in Rome, Italy, where she is currently Research Fellow.

Margaret Gilbert is Melden Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of California at Irvine. Her books include *On Social Facts* (1989), *Living Together* (1996), *Sociality and Responsibility* (2000), *Marcher Ensemble* (2003), and *A Theory of Political Obligation* (2006).

Hans-Johann Glock is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Zürich and Visiting Professor at the University of Reading. His publications include: as author, *A Wittgenstein Dictionary* (Blackwell, 1996) and *Quine and*