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Comparing Perspectives on Cause and Reason in Intentional Action:
Elizabeth Anscombe's Intention
and Donald Davidson's "Actions, Reasons and Causes"

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ABSTRACT

Comparing Perspectives on Cause and Reason in Intentional Action:
Elizabeth Anscombe's Intention
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As seen in light of Anscombe's cause and reason in Intention, Davidson's "Actions, Causes and Reasons", offered in large measure as a response to Anscombe's ideas, suggests a philosophical 'causal' alternative to her original defense of the priority of reason in actions which she coined as "intentional". Davidson's introduction of reason-as-cause in (intentional) action differs in fundamental respects from the intentional action of Anscombe (despite his public admiration for Intention, the ideas of which he puts on a par with Aristotle's thoughts on action). Herein, we offer general comments regarding Davidson's approach to cause and reason in action. We briefly review causal theory in Davidson's and Anscombe's thought respectively. We compare to various degree thematic inquiries in Anscombe and Davidson: the description/qualification of intentional action; the role of such as belief and desire in intentional action; objects and intentional action; mental cause and practical reason in intentional action; and the linguistic semantics of 'cause' and 'reason'. We close with a defense of Anscombe's positions on the limited, if even that, role of cause in intentional action. We conclude that Davidson's summary arguments, while broadening the discussion in the abstract, do not provide sufficient or effective—whether comprehensive or specific— 'causal' alternative(s) to Anscombe's prior assignment of reason as chief in intentional action.

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1. Introduction and Abstract

As seen in light of Anscombe's cause and reason in Intention, Davidson's "Actions, Causes and Reasons", offered in large measure as a response to Anscombe's ideas, suggests a philosophical 'causal' alternative to her original defense of the priority of reason in actions which she coined as "intentional". Davidson's introduction of reason-as-cause in (intentional) action differs in fundamental respects from the intentional action of Anscombe (despite his public admiration for Intention, the ideas of which he puts on a par with Aristotle's thoughts on action). Herein, we offer general comments regarding Davidson's approach to cause and reason in action. We briefly review causal theory in Davidson's and Anscombe's thought respectively. We compare to various degree thematic inquiries in Anscombe and Davidson: the description/qualification of intentional action; the role of such as belief and desire in intentional action; objects and intentional action; mental cause and practical reason in intentional action; and the linguistic semantics of 'cause' and 'reason'. We close with a defense of Anscombe's positions on the limited, if even that, role of cause in intentional action. We conclude that Davidson's summary arguments, while broadening the discussion in the abstract, do not provide sufficient or effective—whether comprehensive or specific— 'causal' alternative(s) to Anscombe's prior assignment of reason as chief in intentional action.

2. General concerns and comments relating to textual comparisons of the two works

First among our concerns for textual comparability is that Davidson does not specifically critique the most central idea of Anscombe's Intention. He neither adopts nor directly works with the force of Anscombe's definitive idea of 'intentional action' as *prima facie* and irreducible. He chooses instead to use the more generic "action", from which Anscombe's necessary co-descriptor, 'intentional', is generally absent. Also, Davidson's orientation towards his 'action' is strikingly exterior while being abstract. His stance is one of looking back at (evaluating), externally, an action, and is largely from the point of view of results and/or objective influences on the action. In contrast, Anscombe's position affirms an internal knowingness¹ and so is a perspective of 'inside-out' in intentional action. Davidson might ask his 'why?' not of the actor of the (intentional) action, but of the observer of the same. He seems to think that a given (intentional) action may be interpreted and understood by any observer of that action. Whereas, Anscombe's 'why?' is always asked of, and to be answered only by, the person/doer of the intentional action. The Anscombian 'description' of the intentional action, therefore, is the actor's description; or, better, it is his/her answer—if forthcoming—to 'why?' Hers is thus not a description of intentional action based upon, as in Davidson, observation(s) of many proposed 'sorts' (causes). (Davidson 685-686)

Also, with Davidson's avoidance and/or modification (see 'quasi-intensional', to follow) of the Anscombian essential "intentional" in a defined action—which avoidance may be deliberated to advance his own perspective—we do not have a strictly level playing field to compare cause and reason in (intentional) action between the two philosophers. Even

¹ "But isn't there an act "peculiar to the will" which is nothing but a turning towards doing something, an act which proceeds from an interior starting point of cognition?" (From Plato to Wittgenstein 167)

so, given that Davidson is clearly attempting an antidote to Anscombe's rejection of causation *per se* (as inherent in intentional action), his proffered *cause-as-reason*, or *reason-as-cause*, for (intentional) action can be discussed in light of its relevance to Anscombe's claims. For purposes of argumentative and comparative coherence, we will necessarily adopt "intentional action" to be also read for "action" in Davidson's treatment. Further, we note that our discussion of Anscombe's ideas is necessarily more extensive, as hers is the original, longer and more detailed study of intentional action.

3. Anscombe and Davidson: Differences in Causal Theory

We stipulate that, in order to advance Davidson's thesis of cause-as-reason in intentional action, his causal theory itself must be defended. As such defense is not our charge here, we simply point out that the central causal theses which Davidson advances in his work are generally not accepted by Anscombe. In her paper "Soft Determinism", Anscombe says, "Davidson believes that freedom to act is a 'causal power'. A causal power is 'a property of an object such that a change of a certain sort in the object causes an event of another sort.'" (Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind 163) She further suggests that Lehrer's legitimate illustration *re* water solubility, taken up by Davidson for his own purposes, cannot be used to bolster such as Davidson's cause and freedom to act thesis:²

² *Freedom to Act* by Donald Davidson, 2001: This essay defends the view that freedom to act is a causal power. Davidson believes that an agent is free to act if he can act intentionally, and he can so act in virtue of having beliefs and desires that rationalize and cause his action; thus, freedom of act is a causal power necessarily defined in terms of intention, even though the agent could not have caused the causal conditions of so acting viz. his desires and beliefs.
<http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/0199246270.001.0001/acprof-9780199246274-chapter-4>

There is, I think, no indication in Lehrer's article that he would want to apply his argument so as to fault the hypothetical analysis of solubility and similar properties. Nor is this to incur Schopenhauer's stricture on philosophers who treat an argument like a cab—take it as far as you want to go, and then pay it off. It is not so clear as Goldman and Davidson think, that if Lehrer's argument is valid it applies to the analysis of dispositional properties. For there is a quite different application of it to the case of water-solubility, which is the real parallel...It might be thought that "A has free will" is analogous to "A is soluble". But this cannot be right "A is soluble" has a certain relation to "A (here and now) can get dissolve. What stands in the same relationship to "A (here and now) can Ψ " would be a proposition like, say, "A has a general capacity to Ψ ". For example, let " Ψ " = "walk". Then "A can walk" may express A's competence to walk; he knows how' he is not a cripple; he has not broken a leg. Freedom of will, or even freedom of will in respect of walking, is thus not the analogue of water solubility. (Ibid 165-166)

Above, Anscombe points to a faulty analogue— between an action of a person and that of a chemical reaction between objects—which serves, for Davidson and others, in part to defend causation in human action.

A further theoretic difference between the two philosophers on cause can be found in "Causality and Extensionality", in which Anscombe references, among Quine and others, Davidson's "Causal Relations" (Journal of Philosophy 69, 1967). She concludes:

Reverting (,however,) to the substantive topic of this paper: note that the proof of truth-functionality given by Quine does not bear just upon causal statements in which two propositions are connected, i.e. causal statements of a form such as

p because q ...

The proof concerns *any* context $F(p)$ in which a proposition is embedded. Thus it concerns

A brought it about that p

--whether "A" is the designation of an event or of a substance, for example, doesn't matter. If this context is extensional, i.e. if designations of the same object in p are intersubstitutable *salva veritate*, then it is truth-functional; i.e. p can be replaced by any proposition of the same truth value. This monstrous consequence shows that we must either take the context as

intensional, or, adopting Davidson's way out, say that it too "falsifies the logical form of causal statements".

As I have indicated, I find it harmless to say that causal statements are intensional... {But} what is at stake in maintaining or denying that an effect is properly described or presented in a *proposition*? (Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind 179)

Here, Anscombe resists any propositional form—including that of Davidson's presumption above of a causal statement's logical form—that is used to bolster the inevitability of *effect* for personal intentional action.

She argues elsewhere against theses which attribute a singular causal proposition to imply a universal statement—the position on cause which says, "Always when this, then that." (Ibid 147) She explains thusly: "{It is} often assumed that true singular causal statements are derived from such 'inductively believed' universalities... Even a philosopher acute enough to be conscious of this, such as Davidson, will say, without offering any reason at all for saying it, that a singular causal statement implies that *there is* such a true universal proposition³—though perhaps we can never have knowledge of it." (Ibid) To Anscombe, such a causal position, which universalizes from a singular causal statement, cannot be included as part of intentional action, which action is practically reasoned on its own merits and therefore is not eligible to be causally *universalized*.

In contrast to the difficulties presented for causation in Anscombe's discussion of the truth values of propositions, Anselm Müller, formerly a pupil of Anscombe, describes her positive resolution for the logic of practical *reasoning*, which connects practical reasoning to the wanting and the doing of an intentional act:

The following position seems to solve these problems {those of practical premises}: Practical reasoning terminating in an action is more or less like

³ "Causal Relations", *Journal of Philosophy*, 64 (November 1967).

theoretical reasoning terminating in a judgment or belief. But the (mental) performances or states of the reasoned which are involved in a theoretical reference are not what we consider when the logical relations between premises and conclusion are in question: A belief follows from beliefs not in the sense that one believing follows from others; rather what is believed as a result of correct reasoning follows from what is believed as given. Similarly, we need not worry whether an action can be a conclusion and a want figure as a premise; the logic of practical reasoning relates to what is believed, what is wanted and what is done. (Intention and Intentionality 95)

Anscombe describes limits upon causation in intentional acts in her discussion of the truth values of propositions, as well. To her, temporal and causal connectives pass outside truth-functions; thus, truth-value is—in contradiction to Leibnitz—affected by extensionality. By analogy, chains of causality—when one asks, ‘how does this effect that’ or ‘how does that work’— present problematic gaps in the explanatory causal ‘chain’. To ascribe a causal relation to an act and its intention is mistaken. While one can say that various things happen as a result of an intention, intention is not the cause of an action; nor is priority sufficient to call intention cause; nor can one equate ‘being caused’ with ‘being determined’. ‘Being determined’ implies necessity, which is rejected by Anscombe as a causal feature in intentional acts. (Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind 173-179)

Now we turn from cause to Anscombe’s alternative to cause in explaining intentional acts. How does Anscombe account for the string of answers associated with her ‘why?’ question in the pump scenario, relating to intentional action? Again, using the starting point in a piece of practical reasoning as ‘something wanted’, Anscombe suggests using the same sort of propositional logic as in theoretical reasoning. What distinguishes the practical (for intention) from the theoretical is “the different uses to which logical structures can be put” (Ibid 55): the practical, the investigatory and the theoretical.

In Anscombe's famous pump scenario⁴, the practical form of propositional logic allows one to derive a course of action from a supposed aim. The water can be poisoned, the intention can be fulfilled, and the steps leading to that fulfilled intention are just that: practically reasoned steps. As we have seen, both human agency and practical reasoning are responsible for intentional action: intentional action *is* rational human action. We cannot then say, after Anscombe's analysis, that the 'motive' for an action is the reason for it, or cause of it, using cause here as contextually synonymous with reason: "Motives may explain actions to us; but that is not to say that they 'determine', in the sense of causing, actions." (Intention 19) Again, she presents motivation as what explains a man's actions; whereas, what causes a man's actions "is perhaps then thought of as an event that brings the effect about—though how it does...is of course completely obscure." (Intention 18) In any event, practical reasoning can provide the explanatory logical terms of an intentional action (as practical reason in logic is shown by Anscombe to allow—see Müller, above).

4. Qualifications of Intentional Action and Suitability of Mental Cause to Intentional Action: Davidson and Anscombe

Davidson qualifies some actions as "quasi-intensional" :

Let us mark this quasi-intensional* character of action descriptions in rationalizations by stating a bit more precisely a necessary condition for primary reasons:

C1. *R* is a primary reason why an agent performed the action *A* under the description *d* only if *R* consists of a pro attitude of the agent towards *actions with a certain property*, and a belief of the agent that *A*, under the description of *d*, has that property. (Davidson 687) (My emphasis)

⁴ "Let us then ask: is there any description which is *the* description of an intentional action...? And let us consider a concrete situation. A man is pumping water into a cistern which supplies the drinking water of a house. Someone has found a way of systematically contaminating the source with a deadly cumulative poison..." (Intention Section 23)

Seeing Davidson's 'quasi-intensional' in light of Anscombe's intentional action, we point to several departures, bearing in mind that Davidson later will assert 'reason' as 'cause' in intentional action. When Davidson speaks of "actions of a certain property" he seems to be pre-classifying (intentional) actions into general (sub) classes, and saying that such a class is looked on positively, relative to the action, by the performer subsequent to the action. (Yet, how can this backward-looking rationalization, or reason, be reconfigured as a cause?) For Anscombe, intentional actions are in a sub-class of their own, a sub-class of 'things known without observation', and cannot be further segmented by property, or by anything else. Additionally, Davidson's position is not one which Anscombe would adopt. Her clear allegiance is to intentional action as it proceeds directly from the decision/choice of the agent, on a *case by case* basis. In the Anscombian process, there is no suggestion of the type of class, or sub-class, of action(s) with properties to be evaluated by the agent/observer either beforehand or afterwards and *as distinguished from the intentional action itself*. Anscombe's Intentional action stands irreducible and wholly on its own.

We turn to this class of 'things known without observation'⁵ by Anscombe's example of 'I am going to take a walk', as an expression of intention. We have at first glance very much the same thing as seen in her reference to Wittgenstein's imagined leaves blown about by the wind; that is, an instance of supposed arbitrariness or randomness. (In a lecture, Wittgenstein imagines aloud some leaves blown about by the wind and the leaves 'saying': 'Now I'll go this way...now I'll go that way.' Wittgenstein's image is in furtherance of his denial of free will.) Yet, Anscombe says, picking up (and arguing against) his analogy for her own purposes:

⁵ Intentional actions fall within the class she coins as non-observational and which she describes thusly: "{There is} a particular class of things which are true of a man: namely the class of things which he *knows without observation*...{this} class is of general interest to our inquiry because the class of intentional actions is a sub-class of it." (Intention, Section 8)

People do in fact give accounts of future events in which they are some sort of agents; they do not justify these accounts by producing reasons why they should be believed but, if at all, a different sort of reason; and these accounts are often correct. This sort of account is called an expression of intention. (Intention 7)

The 'reason' for the intentional action is not in the class of possible observed reasons; the reason, expressed or unexpressed, is subjective/interior and unobservable.

What can be gathered of the difference in value in the two philosophers' respective qualification of intentional action? It appears that Davidson tends to see 'quasi-intentional' action as evaluated by its generically-identified (type of) results or objectives. In contrast, Anscombe says that intentions need not always result in (or be manifest by) action⁶, yet do nevertheless remain intentional when qualified as such. Yet, obviously, one cannot even pretend to *externally* identify *another person's* intention without an action, which identification Davidson seems pressed to make. However, in Anscombe, the intention can be unmanifest yet legitimate, remaining as a personal, internal awareness; this aspect of intention is unsuited to Davidson's presentation.

Davidson's 'actions with a certain property' would imply that this "property" is an additional feature of an intentional action, which additional feature Anscombe does not permit. In respect to the question of 'why' and intention, she explains that an action is not called 'intentional' by virtue of any extra feature which exists when it is performed—to call an action intentional is to assign it to the class of intentional *actions*. It is only the *something* that is actually *done* that is intentional (as against the Cartesian view of intention as strictly interior—which view she argues against elsewhere). There are many possible

⁶ "And suppose one's action is inaction—in some situations one votes by doing nothing, saying nothing, making no movement of the hand, for example. One knows this, but does not have to be thinking of it so to vote." (From Plato to Wittgenstein 167)

descriptions of the same intentional action. Only answers to the question 'why?' which give reasons for acting are intentions. (Intention 23)

To continue with Davidson's "necessary condition for primary reasons" as outlined above, he may come here, as closely as anywhere, to Anscombe's "mental causes", for which mental causes she finds no application—she also finds none for necessary conditions—in intentional action. One of the distinctions which Anscombe chooses to make in her elimination of what intention is *not*—as she proceeds towards discussions of what intention *is*, positively— is that of 'mental cause'. Characteristically, she offers definitions/illustrations of mental cause and notes the similarities between mental cause and intention before asserting their critical distinctions. She defines mental causes as possible for actions, feelings or thoughts. Within this 'action', she distinguishes between mental cause and motive (an intention being a type of 'forward looking' motive); and in feelings, between mental cause and object of feeling. (Hume, she notes, does not introduce these objective aspects of causation into his considerations; whereas, Wittgenstein does, e.g. in the latter's observation that while the object of fear may be the cause of fear, yet it need not be, *as such*, the cause of fear.) Mental causes *may*—as intentions *do*— serve as answers to the question why? She wants, however, to distinguish the answer(s) to this mental cause's 'why?' from that of the 'ordinary sense of 'motive' and intention'. (She notes, by contrast to mental cause, 'motivation' as what causes a man's actions; in turn, what 'causes' motivation is thought of as an event 'that brings the effect about', though "how it does is of course completely obscure." (Intention 18))

Anscombe takes exception to philosophy's frequent discrimination between 'motive', as what determines aim or choice, and 'intention', as what is aimed *at*. In popular thought, she says, there is no such distinction. Yet, despite "the confusions involve in radically

distinguishing between motives and intentions, and 'in defining motives, so distinct as the determinants of choice, (one) may easily be inclined to deny...mental causality.' (Intention 19) She reaffirms that this denial is nevertheless incorrect: mental causality, as she has illustrated, is of a different order than either motive or intention (which two share aspects). Further, a mental cause need not be a mental event. A mental cause is what "someone would describe if he were asked the question: what produced this action or thought or feeling on your part: what did you see or feel or hear, or what ideas or images cropped up in your mind, and led up to it?" (Intention 18) So, mental causality is real but it is neither motive nor intention. Mental causality exists; it can provide an answer to a particular kind of 'why' question; it is of wide application—to those things which do not reference one's observations— and it does include *some* involuntary actions. She expresses her main interest with mental cause as in its difference from the "ordinary senses of motive and intention, rather than because it {mental cause} is in itself of very great importance; for I believe that it is of very little." (Ibid)

In contrast to Anscombe's setting-aside of mental cause from intentional action, we can fairly describe Davidson's reasons (for why an 'agent did something') as mental causes, e.g. when he says:

Whenever someone does something for a reason...he can be characterized as (a) having some sort of pro attitude towards actions of a certain kind, and (b) believing (or knowing, perceiving noticing, remembering) that his action is of that kind. Under (a) are to be included desires, wanting, urges, promptings, and a great variety of moral views, aesthetic principles, economic prejudices, social conventions, and public and private goals and values in so far as these can be interpreted as attitudes of an agent directed towards actions of a certain kind. (Davidson 685-686)

We leave aside the difficulties in Davidson's introduction of such a trans-categorical menu of diverse abstractions (from desires to values, etc.) to provide reasons (*qua* causes), which menu lacks the rigorous discrimination of Anscombe's approach to argument. Nevertheless, we see that the need, in Davidson, for "interpretation {of} attitudes of the agent" falls outside the parameters of Anscombe's intentional action: e.g. Davidson's 'public and private goals', read as 'objectives', does not do for Anscombe's reasons for intentional action. Anscombe derides as 'absurd' the thesis that a person's intended action is only described by describing his/her *objective*. That is to say, one cannot answer 'why?' by 'I did what I did because it was my objective to do it' as an intentional description. Also, it is a mistake, she says, "to look for the fundamental description of what occurs...and then think of something, perhaps very complicated, which qualifies this. The only events to consider are intentional actions themselves, and to call an action intentional is to say it is intentional under some description that we give (or could give) of it." (Intention 29)

While not accepting Davidson's mental or observable causes as reasons for intentional action, we note that Anscombe also would not accept Davidson's equivocal modification, i.e. his "quasi-intensional" *vis à vis* intentional action. In the opening page of Intention, Anscombe lists three kinds of statements about what 'intention' means, and concludes: "But in fact it is implausible to say that the word {intention} is equivocal as it occurs in these different cases...Where we are tempted to speak of 'different sense' of a word which is clearly not equivocal, we may infer that we are pretty much in the dark about the character of the concept which it represents." (Intention 1)

5. Descriptions of Intentional Action: Qualitative Differences in Anscombe and Davidson

Some philosophers call a “word” also a “term”; or, “words” are “terms”. One can speculate endlessly about why this is so: but it seems one reason lies in the anticipated exercise of more strategic control over a ‘term’ than over a ‘word’. Words generally are self-defined; true communication requires that a word be what it means and we generally know, without further elaboration, what that word means. Both Anscombe and Wittgenstein are interested in the philosophical integrity of semantics; both require precision in philosophy’s use of language. In that vein, can ‘reason’ also be ‘cause’? Each sees a word as the descriptive clothing for a concept. ‘Cause’, when seen as a concept, or word or grammar, is distinct from ‘reason’—also being its own concept, word or grammar. Every concept, in this understanding, e.g. ‘cause’ and ‘reason’, is different *in essence*, as Anscombe (following Wittgenstein) indicates in “The Question of Linguistic Idealism”: “If there had never been any humans around talking about horses, that is not the slightest reason to say there wouldn’t have been horses. These essences, then, which are expressed by grammar, are not created by grammar.” (From Parmenides to Wittgenstein 114) We offer that, by Anscombe’s account, Davidson’s ‘rationalization {reason} as a species of ordinary causal {cause} explanation’ is—by reducing the meaning/essence of the respective word (concept), ‘reason’ to that of the other word (concept), ‘cause’—a violation of the grammar of both ‘reason’ and ‘cause’.

Davidson agrees to an extent with Anscombe about the irreducibility (even while qualifying the same, mysteriously, as “somewhat anemic”) “in which every rationalization {reason for action} justifies: from the agent’s point of view there was, when he acted, something to be said for the action.” (Davidson 690-691); this may serve for him as an alternative description to Anscombe’s ‘desirability characteristic’. In that regard, Davidson footnotes:

Ms. Anscombe denies that the practical syllogism is deductive. This she does partly because she thinks of the practical syllogism, as Aristotle does, as corresponding to a piece of practical reasoning (whereas for me it is only part of the analysis of the concept of a reason with which someone acted) and therefore she is bound, again following Aristotle, to think of a practical syllogism as corresponding to a judgment, not merely that the action has a desirable characteristic, but that the action is desirable (reasonable, worth doing, etc.) (Davidson 690-691)

Here, Davidson says that practical reasoning is only 'part of the analysis of the concept of a reason', yet, what are the other parts? And, indeed, which part does practical reasoning play, if among many others? These questions go unanswered. (Possibly we need refer to his very inclusive list of 'rationalizations'⁷, or 'pro attitudes towards an action', as discussed above?) He presents his summary of Anscombe's practical reasoning immediately before introducing his idea of "rationalization (as)...a species of causal explanation". (Ibid) The impression is that he prefers to dispatch Anscombe's use of practical reason in advance of the introduction of his reason-as-cause idea. Yet, does his rendition of Anscombe's practical reasoning do justice to the force of her argument for intentional action, and does it clear the field for his reason- as-cause?

Looking at Intention in view of intentional action, we find Davidson's summary treatment of Anscombe's use therein of practical reasoning to be arguable. In fact, Anscombe devotes Section 42 of Intention, following a lengthy, discriminative discussion of the applicability of practical reasoning, to discussion of the "absurdity of setting practical reasonings out in full. The point is to describe not what (psychologically) goes on but an

⁷ "Whenever someone does something for a reason...he can be characterized as (a) having some sort of pro attitude towards actions of a certain kind, and (b) believing (or knowing, perceiving noticing, remembering) that his action is of that kind. Under (a) are to be included desires, wanting, urges, promptings, and a great variety of moral views, aesthetic principles, economic prejudices, social conventions, and public and private goals and values in so far as these can be interpreted as attitudes of an agent directed towards actions of a certain kind." (Davidson 685-686)

order; the same order as I described in discussing what the 'intentional action' was." (Intention viii) The *order* of intentional action is what is of concern to her. Again, Davidson's focus is not on the infrastructure, to include order, of an intentional action, but rather, as he says, on the "interpretation" of "why someone acted as he did" (Davidson 691); this is a backward-looking.⁸ In contrast, Ascombian intentional action is forward-looking in its nature.

Davidson's backward-looking focus goes a way towards explaining his thesis that "rationalization is...a species of causal explanation." (Ibid 685) Surely, subsequent interpretation of an action may lead to broad causal suppositions, or guesses; however, in no reliable sense could 'interpretation' of an action provide the reason *of the agent*, as choice or decision, for an intentional action. Anscombe might not disagree with Davidson when he asserts that "Central to the relation between a reason and an action it explains is the idea that the agent performed the action *because** he had the reason." (Davidson 691) (We say she *might* not disagree because Anscombe insists that agents of intentional actions need not provide reasons, or explanations, to legitimize the action as intentional. (Intention 7)) However, there is another difficulty in word usage above, in Davidson's transformation of the uses of the conjunction "because"*—a part of speech very different in facility from the inherent uses of "cause" and/or "causation", especially in philosophy—cannot fairly do double-duty as 'reason' in argument.

Davidson goes on to say, "When we ask someone why he acted as he did, we want to be provided with an interpretation" (Davidson 691) Anscombe, in contrast, says that such questions, *qua* needs for 'interpretations', rarely arise from intentional actions. Davidson's justification for such interpretation is expressed here: "When we ask why someone did

⁸ 'Backward-looking motives, like revenge, are not intentions.' (Intention 20)

what he did, we want to be provided with an interpretation. His behavior seems strange, alien, outré, pointless, out of character, disconnected; or perhaps we cannot even recognize an action in it" (Ibid) This descriptive selection, standing in stark contrast to the *value* of intentional actions in Intention, offers a slew of negative behaviors possibly associated with a person's action. In the Anscombian context (along with Aristotle), intentional action is generally for some good.⁹ For Anscombe, "some desirability characterization is required" (Intention 76) for an intentional action. And, she continues, "(Whereas) when we are explaining truth as a predicate of judgments, propositions, or thoughts, *we have to speak of a relation to what is really so, not just of what seems so to the judging mind.* (Ibid) (My emphasis) Davidson's requirement, above, for an "interpretation" of someone's action would fall into her "what just seems so to the judging mind".

6. Reason- as-Cause: Davidson vs. Anscombe

In "The Causation of Action", Anscombe argues against reason-as-cause in intentional action:

The explanation of the coming about of actions by volition and intention is what thinkers of modern times call 'causal' explanation. And similarly for reference to what someone believes, when this comes into explanation of his action.

Not that the existence in a man of a belief, a desire, an aim, an intention, may not be causes of things that later come about...{Rather,} the mistake is to think that the relation of being done in execution of a certain intention, or being done intentionally, is a causal relation between act and intention. We see this to be a mistake if we note that an intention does not have to be a distinct psychological state which exists either prior to or even contemporaneously with the intentional action whose intention it is. (Human Life, Action and Ethics 95)

⁹ "*Bonum est multiplex*: good is multiform, and all that is required for our concept of 'wanting' is that a man should see what he wants under the aspect of some good." (Intention 75)

When Davidson introduces causal explanations for (intentional) actions, the picture he paints is of the sorts of 'distinct psychological states' which Anscombe denies, above, as being critical or even necessary for intentional acts:

Any serious theory for *predicting* action on the basis of reason must find a way of evaluating the relative force of various desires and beliefs in the matrix of decision; it cannot take as its starting point the refinement of what is to be expected from a single desire. The practical syllogism exhausts its role in displaying an action as falling under one reason; so it cannot be subtilized into a reconstruction of practical reasoning, which involves the weighing of competing reasons. The practical syllogism provides a model neither for a *predictive* science of action nor for a *normative account* of evaluative reasoning... Ignorance of competent predictive laws does not inhibit valid causal explanation, or few causal explanations could be made. (Davidson 697) (My emphasis)

Yet, how can one be always sure that a given action has more than one reason, or more than 'a single desire'? Davidson does not offer an answer (*n.b.* his "normative account" of evaluative reasoning is, naturally, predicated upon his own philosophical preferences for 'normative'). Moreover, Anscombe distinguishes, in her account in Intention, between prediction and intention—as both being essentially connected to the future yet dissimilar (she provides an illustration¹⁰), thusly: "(This example shews that)... the indicative (descriptive, informatory) character is not the distinctive mark of 'predictions' as *opposed* to 'expressions of intention', as we might at first sight have been tempted to think." (Intention 3) If, as she says, expressions of intention *in themselves* describe and/or inform, in indicative mood¹¹, why need Davidson's 'weighing of competing reasons' be also requisitioned for this task?

The absence of an expressed 'reason for' the walk in Anscombe's walk example (of answering the question 'Why?' to the statement "I am going to take a walk.") can be

¹⁰ "E.g., when a doctor says to a patient in the presence of a nurse 'Nurse will take you to the operating theatre.'" (Intention 3)

¹¹ Verb inflections that express how the action or state is conceived by the speaker. (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/indicative+mood>)

wrongly interpreted as randomness—or a variety of the ‘weighing of competing reasons’ which Davidson puts forth. Rather, for Anscombe, often people do not try to justify (retrospectively) accounts of intention by providing reasons even if such often exist: “They do not justify these accounts by producing reasons why they should be believed but, if at all, by a different sort of reason; and these accounts are very often correct.” (Ibid) This argument agrees with Anscombe’s subsequent account of practical reasoning, which she ties to intention as being non-inferential.

For Anscombe, a single reason—vs. Davidson’s ‘competing reasons’— or, an answer to the question ‘why?’ is adequate for an intentional action. As to the question ‘why?’ and intention, Anscombe explains, as we have said above, that an action is not called ‘intentional’ by virtue of any extra feature which exists when it is performed (including a causative feature—my note): to call it intentional is to assign it to the class of intentional actions. It is only the something that is actually *done* that is intentional. Only answers to the question ‘why?’ which give *reasons for acting* are intentions.

One of Anscombe’s restrictions on ‘why?’ for intention is: the question ‘why?’ does not normally arise as to whether a man’s proceedings are intentional (as the intention is generally presumed in the apparent action) even or especially if they *are* intentional. Also, we call an action ‘intentional’ only by way of some description we give of it. However, the very same proceedings may be intentional under one description that we give of them, and unintentional under another description (but a caution here: intention is not a style which marks an action). Finally, and most importantly for ‘reasons for’ intentional action: “There would be no such thing as our question ‘Why?’ or intentional action if the only answer were: ‘For no particular reason’”. (Intention 30)

In further variants on the question 'why?' for intentional acts, Anscombe distinguishes intentional 'backward-looking motive', e.g. "I am going to kill him. Why? He killed my father." from non-intentional mental causes, e.g., "This is going to make me angry". (Intention 22) Yet another aspect of 'why?' applied to intention is in some future state of affairs which answers the question 'why?', that is, if the answer to the question 'why?' simply mentions something future, e.g. "Why are you crossing the road? I am going to look in the window." (Intention 34). In these instances, the question of cause vs. reason in intentional action "simply does not arise". (Ibid)

What of untruthful responses to 'why?' regarding an intention? Anscombe says that there can be a 'certain amount of control {knowing} of the truthfulness of the answer'; a man cannot, for instance, profess to have not had the intention of doing the thing that was a means to an end of his; in that, Anscombe references Wittgenstein: 'roughly speaking, a man intends to do what he does'. Anscombe derides as 'absurd' the thesis that a man's intended action is only described by describing his objective. That is to say, one cannot answer 'why?' by 'I did what I did because it was my objective to do it' as an intentional description, as such response only begs the question and, where it may vaguely provide a sort of 'cause of', certainly does not provide a 'reason for'.

When Davidson says that reason is cause in intentional action, he may be trying a sort of unilateral reversal of practical reason as operating in intentional action which Anscombe diligently outlines, and indeed justifies, in Intention. An overriding bias for causation may occasion Davidson's largely unexamined treatment of cause and reason here— although perhaps his paper's brevity accounts for that perception. However, even from a strictly semantic point of view, "reason" and "cause" are, in language and in philosophy, of

different natures and basic uses; it hardly clarifies any perspective to mix them up with each other.

In Intention, only causes in the class of things “known without observation”ⁱ—or mental causes—are those wherein difficulty exists in distinguishing between cause and reason. Yet, as discussed, mental causes are denied application in Anscombe’s intentional action. Even her illustration of those instances where cause may come close to reason does not allow the two concepts a comparable, or interchangeable as in Davidson, identity:

But as we have already noted, an answer to the question ‘Why?’ which does not give reason for thinking the thing true does not therefore give a reason for acting. It may mention a cause, and this is far from what we want. However we noticed that there are contexts in which there is some difficulty in describing the distinction between a cause and a reason. As e.g. when we give a ready answer to the question ‘Why did you knock the cup off the table?’—‘I saw such and such and it made me jump.’ (Intention 16)

Again, Anscombe’s example above is one of a mental cause and thus excluded from intentional action; as, for her, a reason differs from a mental cause. She describes a mental cause as what “someone would describe if he were asked the question: what produced this action or thought or feeling on your part: what did you see or feel or hear, or what ideas or images cropped up in your mind, and led to it?” (Intention 18) Her choices of content, with the exceptions of ‘thoughts’ (probably meaning associative thoughts rather than reasoned ones), e.g. feelings and sensations and images, etc., relate more nearly to the sense of mental reactions than to that of reasoning.

As we have seen, a cause may determine an intention but does not exactly provide a reason for an intention. For a person might, and does, think over what he/she ‘saw or felt or heard’ before forming an intention. To put forward a new example: I saw my husband

talking to a person at the bank, both involved in intense discussion. This sight causes me anxiety: are we in debt? If so, why has he not told me? I intend to talk to the bank, tomorrow, and find out if my husband has applied for a loan. To discover why he is there at the bank is my intention; my reason for this intention is concern about what I am speculating on relative to debt, such concern having been caused by seeing my husband in earnest confab with a bank person who I guess might be a loan officer. (Note that my anxiety, as cause, came in response to what I saw, but my intention, as action, is the reason for my next move in regard to what I saw and its resultant anxiety.) Perhaps the reason that Anscombe assigns “little importance” (Intention 18) to mental cause is because of its wide, general and necessarily ambiguous mental application. When one thinks of all of the interior reactions I might have had at the sight of my husband at the bank, and how many, if not all, of them would have resulted in no further occurrence, *e.g.* I think maybe he knows that person from some other setting and they are talking about golf or I don’t really care why my husband is talking to that person, etc. These latter ‘mental’ examples, unlike my intentional decision to go to the bank to find out my husband’s purpose there, are speculative ruminations and cannot be specifically attributed to my visit to the bank.

Davidson says, “In this paper I want to defend the ancient—and common sense—position that rationalization is a species of ordinary causal explanation.” (Davidson 685) Yet, his “ancient position’ we cannot justly describe as falling squarely within either classical or medieval philosophy (so, in what period, ‘ancient’?); and, ‘common sense’ would more likely be in agreement with Anscombe on his stipulation of rationalization as including causation. Anscombe says in “Practical Reason and the Logic of Requirement”:

I have always objected to accounts of practical reasoning which reduce it to the theoretical, i.e. to the argument from the truth of premises to the truth of a conclusion implied by them. This is an example, mediated by a definition.

My own view is that the conclusion of a practical syllogism is an action or decision—that a man draws this conclusion shows that he wants to have or avoid something mentioned in the premises, and the premises show what the point of the action or decision was. (Practical Reason 19)

There is no application for “ordinary causal explanation” (Davidson 685) in Anscombe’s view of practical reasoning and intentional action. Standing in the place of Davidson’s ‘ordinary causal explanation’, which, ancient or not, he leaves largely unexplained in his paper, is *the person* who makes the action or decision. This Anscombian person, exercising his or her will in the context of practical reasoning, may present as the chief antagonist in the causalist approach to intentional action. Yet, as Anscombe says, the topic of causality remains in great confusion in philosophy. (Intention 10) Davidson’s use of causation, in failing to clarify this confusion, does not convince as an alternative to Anscombe’s positions on cause and reason in intentional action. (It can be suggested that a good deal of similar muddying of the Anscombian analytical waters results in the current epistemological adoption-by-distortion of her idea of intentionality¹², to suit its own ‘normative’ explanatory preference, following science, for causality. Whether this extraordinary analytical reversal is a deliberate falsification of Anscombe’s original, much-admired definition of intentional action awaits the judgment of history of philosophy.)

Practical reasoning, not motive, is at the root of Anscombe’s intentional action. Her practical reason starts with wanting (or, wanting *qua* willing—the only legitimate sense of

¹² “In contemporary philosophy of mind and action, the Standard View of intentional actions holds that they are identical to bodily movements that are caused in the right way by an agent’s mental states and that the type of action an agent performs in making a movement is determined by the actual consequences of that movement.” Ian Nance. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, 2011
<http://udini.proquest.com/view/intentional-actions-explanation-and-pqid:2527679821/>

the latter in discussion) something. In speaking of her pump scenario and the answer there to 'what are you doing?' and in reference to the difficulty in distinguishing the sort of knowledge which comes from observation (here, causality) from the knowledge which serves intention, Roger Teichmann offers this:

The solution of the difficulty {i.e., the paradox of knowing—knowing 'straight off' and knowing on the basis of observation} lies with Theophrastus' principle¹³. Knowing what you are doing is not any species of contemplative knowledge. Your knowledge of what you are shopping for can be expressed in a shopping list; and the same list, if compiled by the detective, would also express (his) knowledge of what you had shopped for. Theophrastus' principle in effect distinguishes the different functions of the two lists; and we might also speak of the different functions of the two knowledge claims... Non-observational knowledge of one's actions, Theophrastus' principle as applied to those actions, and the stating of one's intentions thus all connect with one another. (The Philosophy of Elizabeth Anscombe 25-26)

This "non-observational" knowledge, as practical reasoning, does not include causation—*qua* the derivativeness of an effect from its causes— in intentional action; whereas, intention and action are in direct connection with 'non-observational knowledge of one's actions', or practical reasoning.

Were Davidson to be speaking of *voluntary causation* in intentional action (which cannot be so, as his rationalization itself is cause), Anscombe might agree with him. She cites the Thomistic voluntary causation: "Now for Aquinas, will essentially consists, not in a peculiar quality of experience, but precisely in the peculiar sort of causality expressed by 'knowingly giving rise to'. A voluntary act takes place as the fulfillment of a tendency that arises from the agent's consideration of the goal of the tendency." (Three Philosophers

¹³ The principle, from the *Magna Moralia* (1189b, 22) of Theophrastus, is in regard to mistakes in performance not in judgment; a principle, for Anscombe, which "applies to expressions of intention and to one's descriptions of what one is doing; its application to the latter provides the clue to the phenomenon of non-observational knowledge of one's actions." (Intention 22)

107) Were Davidson to look for an actual instance of his “ancient position” for causation, he need go no further than voluntary causation; yet its provenance, while agreeable to Anscombe, probably would not agree with Davidson’s philosophy.

7. Further Constraints on Cause in Anscombe’s Intentional Action

Anscombe rejects that part of the heavily- subscribed- to Humean tradition of causation which says that “the cause from some effect must either necessitate it or else be connected to it by some law”. (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/anscombe>) If we regard ‘some effect’ in this statement as ‘some action’, we see that Anscombe does not follow Hume in saying that action is necessarily connected to a cause. Hursthouse confirms thusly: “Intention stands as an account of intentional action totally opposed to any causal account and not in need of radical development or improvement.” (Logic, Cause and Action 83) A causalist defines intentional actions as actions (or movements) caused, “perhaps in a certain way, by certain mental states or events, whose occurrence explains the occurrence of the action (or movement).” (Ibid 84) Where Anscombe does not deny mental events or even that mental events may or may not precede intentional actions, yet her intention does not refer to a particular mental event or state (for our purposes, read, ‘cause’) which precedes or accompanies an intentional act and makes it intentional. (Ibid 85) Evidence of cause(s) may be out and about, but are not thus connected to, as in responsible for, the intentional action.

Anscombe says, in speaking of verbal expressions of intention such as ‘I am going for a walk’: “An expression of intention is a description of something future in which the speaker is some sort of agent”. (Intention 6) It is important here to see that the ‘agent’ stands in the place where cause, for others, might be; note well, this is not to say that the agent is

separate from the action but is rather the instigator of the action. Anscombe implies that cause for the walk lies within the speaker; or, to the speaker-as-agent can be attributed the cause, as an intention, of taking a walk. Again, note that cause is interior to the human subject of the (prospective) action or caused by the agent of the (prospective) action, as, in this scenario, there is no reason as such included for the walk, and its cause is thus limited *prima facie* to/within the speaker/agent. The role of cause here is really the role of agency, or agent; thus, effectively, outside of the agent, there is no role for cause at all.

For Anscombe, causality is the derivation of an effect from its causes and, as such, distinguished from necessity. (Necessity is more comfortably associated by Anscombe with the laws of nature.) Under this definition, causality is not necessary for an intentional act. Even simple physical effects, for Anscombe, are not always necessitated by their causes. (Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind 136-140)

We see that Anscombe's interest in causation evidently lies in its pragmatic and complex human aspects; specifically, in her focus on causation relative to human actions and decisions. Here, a working definition of causality, which excludes or rejects certain features such as Hume's single sort of cause and Leibnitz' *salva veritate* (in our case, to align an intentional action with an exactly corresponding cause) intersects with intention. Tellingly, she calls the question of holding deterministic views in relation to human causality, "entirely open". (Human Life, Action and Ethics 106) Causation is problematic, generally. Despite arguing that causation is difficult to understand, Anscombe does not argue for the independence of causality from action. Rather, she discriminates between intention and causality *in action*. In any event, Anscombe demurs to attribute cause to

anything other than the determined or causally necessitated, as instances such as those reported in scientific research¹⁴, although even these she qualifies considerably.

Causality as a psychological feature in intentional acts, a feature which Davidson clearly admits in his paper (11, above), is rejected by Anscombe. In "The Causation of Action", she says, "The mistake is to think that the relation of *being done in execution of a certain intention, or being done intentionally*, is a causal relation between act and intention. We see this to be a mistake if we note that an intention does not have to be a distinct psychological state which exists either prior to or even contemporaneous with the intentional action whose intention it is." (Ibid 95)

Another constraint on cause relative to intentional acts is, again, seen in Anscombe's classification of intentional actions as those in the "class of intentional actions is a subclass; the class of things known without observation," (Intention 14). Intentional actions are ones done for some reason, actions about which it makes sense to ask "Why?" and expect an answer that is not merely causal but explains what significance the action was taken to have for the agent. The intention is not itself a cause because causes (for example, a brick's striking a window) are distinct from their effects (for example, the window's breaking), whereas intentional actions are not distinct from the intentions they embody. (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/anscombe>) Causes for Anscombe are generally observable. If I throw a plate and it breaks, my throwing the plate is the cause of the plate's breaking up; the illustrations are daily and numerous, and observable. By contrast, the agent of an intentional action "knows what he is doing in a way that his observers do

¹⁴ "Empiricists have tended to believe that there are no reliable methods for testing singular causal claims directly. But this is a mistake. The one-shot experiments of physics provide an obvious counterinstance. In the one-shot experiment we can bootstrap from knowledge we already have—including singular causal claims about what is going on in the apparatus we have designed—to new causal information about the individual objects being experimentally investigated. (Logic, Cause and Action 57)

not" (Logic, Cause and Action 97) Here again, we see the interiority in intention that suits practical reason but does not suit cause as such.

Are motivations reasons, in intentional actions? Anscombe says that while motives may explain intentional actions, they do not cause, or 'determine', such actions. She says that, popularly, motivation and intention are not treated as distinct in meaning, yet that much of philosophical usage treats the two as separate: "A man's intention {in philosophical usage generally} is what he aims at or chooses; his motive is what determines the aim or choice; and *I suppose* {my emphasis} that 'determines' must here be another word for 'causes'." (Intention 18) Anscombe's reluctance ("*I suppose*") is supported by her acknowledgement of the general difficulties of cause for intention, as well as "confusions involved in radically distinguishing between motives and intentions." (Intention 19) A motive may be an interpretation of an intentional action but not a reason for it. Whether they be 'causes', 'motives', or 'determinations', they are to be distinguished from 'aims' or 'choices', for 'a man's intention is what he aims at or chooses'. (Ibid) These 'aims' and 'choices' are 'reasons for' not 'causes of'. Where Davidson categorically admits motivation as a type of cause of (intentional) action¹⁵, Anscombe does not.

Anscombe describes cause of a certain kind as "explained as what one is after if one asks the agent what led up to and issued in an action" (Intention 23), after the case of 'Q: Why did you do it? A: Because he told me to.' She goes on with the case of 'Why did you do it?' and concludes, "Roughly speaking—if one were forced to go along with the distinction {between cause and reason}—the more the action is described as a mere response, the more inclined one would be to the word 'cause' (Intention 24) Reason, she continues, is

¹⁵ "Whenever someone does something for a reason, therefore, he can be characterized as (a) having some sort of pro attitude toward actions of a certain kind and (b) believing (or knowing, perceiving, noticing, remembering) that his action is of that kind" (Davidson 685)

better described as a response “to something as having a significance that is dwelt on by the agent in his account”. (Ibid 23) The consideration and description of an intentional action falls here to its agent, and not to Davidson’s observer of the (intentional) action.

8. Conclusion

Anscombe ties the importance of intention to the common human curiosity to know why people, as agents, do the things they do (Ibid 83); not to knowing why people think the things they think, nor to what causes people to think what they think in order to do what they do; to know the latter, one must first have a clear picture of what it is that they are thinking, and/or what causes their thoughts, which problematic inquiry, while approached by Davidson in his paper, is not under discussion in Intention. Causation can be held as implicit but not as an analytic priority (in either philosophical or popular application) in discerning the nature of intention. As the cause will not be the reason to act, the reason to act is what is of primary interest.

To return to Anscombe’s example, “Why did you do it? Because he told me to.” (Ibid 23), the conversation continues: “You did it because he told you to? But why do what he says?” To these questions, she cites answers like ‘he has done a lot for me’ or ‘he is my father’ as ‘full blown cases’; that is, those cases where one can rightfully consider the differences between reason and cause in intention. “Roughly speaking, it establishes something as a reason if one argues against it...in such a way as to link it up with motives and intentions...but it is worth noticing that what is so commonly said, that reason and cause are everywhere sharply distinct notions, is not true.” (Ibid 24) Anscombe’s comment here is important to our thesis, as we clearly see that she herself ascribes no

hard and fast distinctions between cause and reason, yet clearly does not attempt to equate them as does Davidson.

Anscombe says of causation: “Causality consists in the derivativeness of an effect from its causes. This is the core, the common feature, of causality in its various kinds. Effects derive from, arise out of, come of, their causes.” (Logic, Cause and Action, Makin, 71) This ‘derivativeness’ is in contrast to necessity. There is neither necessity nor reason in Anscombe’s characterization here of causality. By this definition, we can stipulate perhaps some mental cause *e.g.* as associated with the state of mind of the poisoner at the pump; however, this is not to say that his intention was predicated upon or even connected to his putative mental state (and, at what point in time?). Yet there are restrictions on reason, too, for intention. In her “The Question of Linguistic Idealism”, Anscombe remarks: “Reasons, like explanations, justifications, interpretations of a rule, come to an end—and then one is convinced, or one acts, goes this way.” (From Parmenides to Wittgenstein 127) This act, this ‘goes this way’, is an intention.

In summary, reasons for action and causes of action are both on occasion involved and even closely related in Anscombe’s treatment of intentional action—with reservations, as practical reason operates essentially within intentional action while cause may play a supporting, or influencing, role. Neither is paramount. It is the decision or desire of the doer that is the driver in intentional action. Anscombian intentionality can be characterized as reasoned, subjective, interior (by virtue of its subjectivity) and active; its actions are to an extent products of practical reasoning; and while ‘causes of’ may be associated with ‘reasons for’ intentional actions, as background or influence, cause does not predominate over practical reason in intentional action. These characterizations roughly fall within the

framework of an analytic, by her own admission somewhat Thomistic¹⁶, original interpretation of intention. This suggested philosophical provenance, being largely unempirical (see Anscombe's 'known without observation'), may account for some hostility (though not always sustained—see Hursthouse on Intention) in philosophy's reaction, to include that of Davidson, to Anscombe's prioritization of reason in Intention.

We have evaluated and confirmed the strength of Anscombe's positions on cause and intentional action within a comparative review of the associated but dissimilar positions put forth by Davidson in his "Actions, Reasons and Causes". We do not find his positions to pose adequate alternative to those of Anscombe. Finally, we conclude that while practical reason plays an essential role in intentional actions, cause only (but not always) plays a supporting or influential role in the same. As such, Anscombe significantly downgrades the erstwhile prominence of causation associated with action in philosophy of mind. At the same time, Anscombe recognizes even 'reasons for' in intentional actions with some reservation: while reason is more prominent than cause, *e.g.* in discussion of the practical-knowledge steps of an intentional act, intentional acts speak for themselves—as, again, 'roughly speaking, a man intends to do what he does'.

¹⁶ "If we put these considerations {of executed intentions} together, we can say that, where a) the description of an event is of a type to be formally the description of an executed intention b) the event is actually the execution of an intention (by our criteria) then the account given by Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, I IIae) of the nature of practical knowledge holds. Practical knowledge is 'the cause of what it understands'." (*Intention* 87)

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