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11

The Concepts of Suicidology

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Suicidology is the branch of health science that is concerned with suicide, self-injurious behaviour, attempted suicide, and like phenomena. One focus of suicidologists is the formulation of explanations of these target phenomena, more particularly, explanations of *why* individuals commit suicide and perform other self-injurious acts. The explanations that have been formulated thus far have quite frequently involved the concepts *intention*, *motive*, and *reason* (Hjelmeland and Knizek, 1999), but, as Hjelmeland and Knizek have documented, these concepts are employed by suicidologists in equivocal, contradictory, and incoherent fashions. While conceptual confusion is commonplace within the social, behavioural, and health sciences, the suicidologists response to the conceptual confusion inherent to his line of investigation is not. For the suicidologist has both correctly identified certain of the problems that have impeded scientific progress within this line of investigation as *being* conceptual in nature and endeavoured to resolve these problems (see Hjelmeland and Knizek, 1999).

Unfortunately, the means by which the suicidologist has sought to resolve the conceptual confusions that undermine his empirical work are themselves confused. For although a resolution of conceptual confusions of the sorts that are of concern to the suicidologist can be achieved only through a careful analysis of the linguistic rules that fix the meanings of problematic concepts (cf. Baker and Hacker, 1982; Bennett and Hacker, 2003; Schulte, 1993; ter Hark, 1990), the suicidologist has turned for guidance to various of the causal theories of meaning that have arisen in psychology and philosophy.

These theories of meaning presuppose profound misconceptions about language; most particularly about the *nature* of concept meaning itself. In consequence, they manifest both confoundings of empirical,

conceptual, and metaphysical issues and a systematic *disregard* for the linguistic rules that must be clarified in a clarification of a concept's meaning. The suicidologists installing of these theories as the foundation for attempts to resolve the conceptual problems indigenous to this research area has, therefore, ensured lack of progress in that regard.

In this chapter, I will endeavour to provide clarifications of the concepts *intention*, *motive*, and *reason*, an understanding of the meanings of which has, by his or her own admission, eluded the suicidologist. Because these concepts have been especially problematic in their roles as ingredients of explanatory accounts of the phenomena investigated by suicidologists, these clarifications will, of necessity, have to be meshed with a satisfactory description of the phenomena themselves.

The organization of the chapter will be as follows: first, I will provide a (necessarily spartan) account of the conceptual problems endemic to the area; second, I will provide a description of the phenomena the explanatory accounts of which contain the problematic concepts; third, I will deal with the problematic concepts and, in particular, address the issue of their legitimate roles within explanatory accounts of these phenomena.

11.1 Conceptual problems

The concepts *intention*, *motive*, and *reason* frequently appear in the explanations that are formulated by suicidologists of phenomena of interest to them. Unfortunately, suicidologists employ these concepts in equivocal, contradictory, and incoherent fashions. As documented by Hjelmeland and Knizek (1999), this state of affairs is perhaps most salient in the tacit synonymizing of these and other concepts. Thus, Lukianowicz (1972) equates the concepts *aim* and *motive*, Bancroft, Skrimshire, and Simkin (1976), *reason* and *motive*, Birtchnell and Alarcon (1971), *intention* and *motivation* (whose relation to *motive* they do not explain), and Kovacs, Beck, and Weissman (1975), *reason*, *goal*, *desire*, and *motive*.

Against this backdrop of rampant synonymizing, there have been offered up a great many definitions, the justifications for which are unclear, and the agreement among which is, to say the least, lacking. The analysis of Hjelmeland and Knizek (1999) reveals suicidologists as frequently taking the synonymized *intention*, *motive*, and *reason* as standing, in a vague, unresolved fashion, for '...something the patient wanted to happen in the future, something they wanted to achieve by their act...' (p. 276). Whatever be the merits of this view, it does not square with either Alicke, Weigold, and Rogers (1990), in which it

is claimed that '...motives supply the reason for the desire', or Maris, Berman, and Silverman (2000, p. 37), on whose account a motive is '...the cause or reason that moves the will and induces action'.

On the one hand, Beck, Schuyler, and Herman (1974, p. 45) define suicidal intent as '...the *seriousness or intensity of the wish* [italics added] of a patient to terminate his life'. On the other hand, Maris, Berman, and Silverman (2000, p. 37) claim that an intention is '...the purpose a person has in using a particular means (e.g. suicide) to effect a result.' Whatever be the merits of *these* accounts, they square with neither the view of *intention* described by Hjelmeland and Knizek (1999) as being the standard within suicidology, nor the oft-cited treatment of Trevarthen (1982), in which intentions are described as being *causally brought about* by motives, before going on to *generate* intentional acts that satisfy these motives.

All told, perhaps the most forthright assessments come from the papers of Hjelmeland and Knizek (1999) and Velamoor and Cernovsky (1992), each of which contains a simple admission of uncertainty as to the meanings of *intention*, *motive*, and *reason*.

11.2 Conceptual clarifications

The role that a concept can legitimately play in an explanation of a particular explanandum is a function of: (1) the meaning of the concept (i.e., the linguistic rules that fix its correct employments); and (2) the nature of the explanandum. An explanation of *why* an individual performed an involuntary act σ , hiccoughing or some such, cannot legitimately involve a citation of the individual's *reasons* for having performed σ , because an individual *can have no reasons* for having performed an involuntary act. Causes are, instead, the legitimate ingredients of such explanations (Bennett and Hacker, 2003). An individual's *reasons* are, on the other hand, frequently the legitimate and relevant contents of an explanation of why he performed an act φ , in the case in which φ is an intentional act (e.g. the act of choosing a certain brand of shampoo).

The aim of the chapter is, indeed, to provide clarifications of the concepts *intention*, *motive*, and *reason* that suicidologists have identified as problematic. However, within the area of suicidology, these concepts are problematic in the context of their being ingredients of explanations of the phenomena that suicidologists investigate. This fact necessitates that I clarify the concepts that denote the phenomena that are the explananda of these explanations. I will focus my attentions on two explananda important to the area of suicidology: committing suicide

and attempting to commit suicide. The clarifications that I present in this section of the chapter are organized as follows: first, I deal with the explananda; second, with the problematic concepts *intention*, *motive*, and *reason*; and, third, I bring what has been learned to bear on the issue of the formulation of coherent explanations involving the concepts *intention*, *motive*, and *reason*.

11.2.1 Natures of the explananda

In the social, behavioural, and health sciences, the phenomena to be explained are very often the *doings* of humans. Committing suicide and attempting to commit suicide are doings. The task at hand, then, is to clarify the *kinds* of doings they are. To this end, I will depend heavily on the superb treatment of the topic of volition and voluntary movement that is found in Bennett and Hacker (2003) and a useful analysis of intentional acts by Kenny (1966).

Doings can be exhaustively classified as *acts* or *non-acts*. Acts are doings that humans perform (e.g. brushing teeth, picking up a phone, throwing a ball) or fail to perform (e.g. omissions, abstentions, refrainings) (Bennett and Hacker, 2003). Doings that are non-acts include such things as falling asleep, passing out, getting sick, dying, and tripping.

Acts can, in turn, be exhaustively classified as *voluntary* or *nonvoluntary*. Among other things, a voluntary act: (a) involves the exercise by the performing agent of a two-way power to perform or refrain from performing (this being the chief point of contrast between them and acts that are not voluntary); (b) involves the control by the performing agent of the act's inception, continuation, and termination; (c) can be engaged in at will; and (d) is an act that an agent can *try*, *intend*, or *decide* to perform (Bennett and Hacker, 2003).

Voluntary acts can be exhaustively classified as *intentional*, *unintentional*, or *neither intentional nor unintentional* and acts that are nonvoluntary, as *intentional*, *involuntary*, or *neither intentional nor involuntary* (Bennett and Hacker, 2003). Before fleshing out *these* distinctions, it will prove advantageous to review certain elements of Kenny's (1966) analysis of intentional acts. Following von Wright (1963), Kenny distinguishes between an *act a*, the *result a'* of act *a*, and a *consequence b'* of act *a*. The result of performing the act of closing the door is the door's being closed. One consequence of doing so may be that the cat cannot get into the room. The relation between an act *a* and its result *a'* is internal (cf. ter Hark, 1990, p. 47); that is, to be able to identify *a* is to be able to identify *a'*. The relation between an act *a* and one of its consequences *b'*, on the other hand, is empirical; *a'* brings about the state of affairs *b'*.

Let *A* be a human agent; *a* and *b* be acts; *a'* and *b'* be their results; $a' \rightarrow b'$ represent the state of affairs that *b'* is brought about by *a'*. On Kenny's analysis:

- Ki) If Agent *A* performs *a*, he also performs *b*;
- Kii) An act *a* performed by Agent *A* is an *intentional act* if *A*: (a) knowingly performs *a*; and (b) wants to perform *a* for its own sake or in order to perform *b* (1966, p. 647);
- Kiii) An act *b* performed by Agent *A* is an intentional act if *A*: (a) knowingly performs *a*; (b) knows that in performing *a* he is performing *b*; and (c) wants to perform *b* (1966, p. 647);
- Kiv) Agent *A* intends the result of any intentional act he performs;
- Kv) Agent *A* foresees the result of any act he knowingly performs (hence, foresees the result of any intentional act he performs).

For analytical purposes, Kenny (1966) considers a number of scenarios in which are situated intentional acts. His scenarios 1, 2, and 9, which I will now review, would appear to be especially relevant to the discipline of suicidology:

Scenario 1. Agent *A* knowingly performs *a*, wants to perform *a*, knows or believes that he is performing *b* by performing *a*, and wants to perform *b*.

Scenario 2. Agent *A* knowingly performs *a*, knows or believes that he is performing *b* by performing *a*, and wants to perform *b*, but does not want to perform *a* for any other reason than to perform *b*.

Scenario 9. Agent *A* knowingly performs *a*, wants to perform *a*, but does not know that he is performing *b* by performing *a*, and does not want to perform *b*.

On Kenny's analysis, then: (a) the act *as* of Scenarios 1, 2, and 9 are intentional; (b) the act *bs* of Scenarios 1 and 2, but not of Scenario 9, are intentional.

Let us now flesh out the category of voluntary acts:

- Vi) A voluntary act *a* performed by an agent *A* is *intentional* if it satisfies (Kii);
- Vii) A voluntary act *a* performed by an agent *A* is *unintentional* if *A* does not knowingly perform *a*;
- Viii) Else, a voluntary act *a* performed by an agent *A* is *neither intentional nor unintentional*.

And the category of nonvoluntary acts:

- NVi) A nonvoluntary act *a* performed by an agent *A* is *intentional* if *a* is an intentional act that *A* performs under duress or out of obligation;
- NVii) A nonvoluntary act *a* performed by an agent *A* is *involuntary* if *a* could have been performed voluntarily but was not (Bennett and Hacker, 2003);
- NViii) Else, a nonvoluntary act *a* performed by an agent *A* is *neither intentional nor involuntary*.

With the foregoing as background, let us return to the question of what kinds of doings are those of committing suicide and attempting to commit suicide. Now, the concepts that denote these doings can reasonably be seen as technical concepts whose meanings are informed by ordinary language concepts such as *want*, *know*, and *believe*. In my view, this makes them well suited to being described in the style of Kenny's scenarios. To this task I now turn.

11.2.2 Committing suicide

Let: *A* be a human agent; *a* be some act performed by *A* and *a'* its result; *b'* be the result 'A is dead' and *b* the corresponding act; and $a' \rightarrow b'$ represent the state of affairs that *a'* brings about *b'*.

Now, when *A* performs act *a*, he performs act *b*, the result of which is 'A is dead.' However, to perform act *b* is not to perform the act of committing suicide unless certain psychological ingredients are present, for, of course, if *a* were, for example, the act of touching a high-voltage wire (or ingesting sleeping pills), the situation, as described, would leave open whether *A*'s death were an accident or a suicide.

Committing suicide is an *intentional* act. Thus, it makes no sense to claim that Agent *A* committed suicide unless he: (a) *knowingly* performed act *a*; (b) *knew* that in performing act *a* he was performing act *b* (foresaw consequence *b'* of act (a)); and (c) *wanted* to perform act *b*.

The most bare-bones varieties of the act of committing suicide are those that can be described *in toto* as either a Kenny 1 (in which *A* *wants* to perform act *a*), or a Kenny 2 (in which he does not want to perform act *a* for any other reason than to perform act *b*) scenario. I will, then, use like terminology and call these types of suicides Scenario 1 and 2 suicides. I note that: (a) on Kenny's analysis, each of the acts *a* and *b* of Scenarios 1 and 2 suicides is an intentional act; and (b) one says that

Agent *A* committed suicide (i.e., performed *b*) by performing *a* (e.g. shooting self, taking an overdose, jumping off of a building).

Although the act of committing suicide is always an intentional act, it can be performed either voluntarily or nonvoluntarily. Moreover, it can be performed either partly or completely for the sake of performing some set of consequent acts. Clearly, then, at least for the purposes of psychological research, there is no sense in portraying the act of committing suicide as unitary. Distinct types of suicides must be distinguished on the basis of Agent *A*'s knowledge, beliefs, and wants in respect to his performing of acts *a*, *b*, and any acts related, and consequent, to these.

This is an important point to note when the issue at hand is the formulation of explanatory accounts of *the* act of committing suicide, and, in particular, the employments of certain of the concepts that appear in these accounts. The proper formulation of an explanatory account of the act of committing suicide depends, in part, on the nature of the explanandum, and it turns out that there are manifold types of suicide, hence, manifold potential explananda. I will elucidate two sub-species of the act of committing suicide.

An intentional, nonvoluntary, act is an intentional act that is performed under duress or out of obligation (Bennett and Hacker, 2003). Certain suicides fit this bill. Let: *A* be a human agent; *a* and *b* be acts and *a'* and *b'* = 'A is dead', their results; $c' = \{c_1', \dots, c_k'\}$ be a set of consequent states of affairs (results) and $c = \{c_1, \dots, c_k\}$ the corresponding acts; and $a' \rightarrow b'$. Then, Agent *A* committed a nonvoluntary act of suicide if: (a) he *knowingly* performed act *a*; (b) *knew* that in performing act *a* he was performing act *b* (foresaw consequence *b'* of act *a*); (c) *knew* (in which case $b' \rightarrow c'$) or *believed* (in which case $b' \rightarrow c'$ may or may not have been the case) that in performing act *b* he was performing *c*; (d) *did not want* to perform either of acts *a* or *b* for any other reason than to perform act *c*; and (e) was compelled to perform *c*. I will call *this* type of suicide a Scenario 3 suicide.

The acts $\{a, b\}$ of a Scenario 3 suicide are related in the manner described in Kenny's Scenario 2. Provided that $b' \rightarrow c'$ was the case, so too are the acts $\{b, c\}$, the only modification being that, in a Scenario 3 suicide, Agent *A* was *compelled*, rather than merely *wanted*, to perform *c*. If $b' \sim \rightarrow c'$ was the case, then *A* believed mistakenly that in performing *b* he was performing *c*.

Thus, it may be concluded that the acts *a* and *b* of a Scenario 3 suicide are intentional acts, and act *c* is an intentional act only if it *was*, in fact, performed; equivalently, if, in fact, $b' \rightarrow c'$ was the case (i.e., *A* knew

or believed correctly that, in performing act *b*, he was performing *c*). Example: a failed samurai commits suicide (*b*) by disembowelment (*a*) in order to fulfil the code of seppuku (*c*).

Naturally, an individual's having performed an act of committing suicide will bring into existence a great many states of affairs. Many of which the individual will not have foreseen or wanted. But those that were, if there are any such, are psychologically relevant to an individual's having committed suicide, and, hence, are relevant to a description of such an explanandum. Let: *A* be a human agent; *a* and *b* be acts and *a'* and *b'* = 'A is dead' their results; $c' = \{c_1, \dots, c_k\}$ be a set of consequent states of affairs (results) and $c = \{c_1, \dots, c_k\}$ the corresponding acts; and $a' \rightarrow b'$. Then, Agent *A* committed a voluntary act of suicide (partly or completely) for the sake of *c'* if: (a) he *knowingly* performed act *a*; (b) *knew* that in performing act *a* he was performing act *b* (foresaw consequence *b'* of act *a*); (c) *knew* (in which case $b' \rightarrow c'$ was the case) or *believed* (in which case $b' \rightarrow c'$ either was or was not the case) that in performing act *b* he was performing act *c*; and (d) *wanted* to perform act *c*.

If acts *b* and *c* are related in the manner described in Kenny's Scenario 1, the suicide was *partly* for the sake of *c'*. If they are related in a manner described in Kenny's Scenario 2, the suicide was *completely* for the sake of *c'*. I will call these types of suicide, Scenario 4 and 5 suicides, respectively. Once again, on Kenny's analysis, acts *a* and *b* are intentional acts, and act *c* is an intentional act if it was, in fact, the case that $b' \rightarrow c'$ (i.e., *A* knew or believed correctly that, in performing act *b*, he was performing act *c*). Examples: a man kills himself (*b*) by taking poison (*a*) because he is sick of living, wants to die, and believes that, in killing himself, he will punish the object of his unrequited love (*c*), and wants to do so (Scenario 4); a man whose criminal ways have been detected shoots himself (*a*), fatally (*b*), in order to avoid suffering shame (c_1) and being prosecuted (c_2) (Scenario 5).

11.2.3 Attempting to commit suicide

What kind of doing is that of *attempting suicide*? When an Agent *A* has decided to perform an act of committing suicide, perhaps bringing to a close a period of indecision, he has formed an intention to commit suicide (cf. Bennett and Hacker, 2003). He *knows* what it is to perform this act (foresees the result of the act he intends to perform) and *wants* to bring about the result 'A is dead.' Of course, the fact that *A* has formed an intention to perform the act of committing suicide does mean that he will do so. He must not only take initiative, but actually *succeed* in performing the act.

As with the sentence 'A will, next Sunday, attempt to break four minutes for the mile', the sentence 'Agent *A* will attempt to commit suicide tomorrow at 5:00 p.m.' heralds the performance of an act while acknowledging the possibility that *A* might not succeed in its performance. On the other hand, the sentence 'Agent *A* attempted suicide' indicates a *failed* performance of the act of committing suicide, or, in other words, the failure of *A* to bring about a particular state of affairs.

Let: *A* be a human agent; *a* be some act and *a'* its result; *b'* be the result 'A is dead' and *b* the corresponding act; and $a' \sim \rightarrow b'$ represent the state of affairs that *a'* does not bring about *b'*. Then Agent *A* attempted suicide if: (a) he *knowingly* performed act *a*; (b) *believed* (mistakenly) that in performing act *a* he was performing act *b*; (c) *wanted* to perform act *b*.

We say that Agent *A* attempted suicide by performing act *a*, or, equivalently, that act *a* was an attempted suicide. Now, save for Agent *A*'s mistaken belief that in performing act *a* he was performing act *b*, the logical structure of attempted suicide is identical to that of suicide itself. Thus, the act *a* of attempting to commit suicide can be performed: (a) voluntarily or not; (b) partly or completely for the sake of performing some set of acts that Agent *A* knew or believed he would be performing in performing the act of committing suicide. Common to the manifold types of attempted suicides are the facts that: (a) act *a*, the attempted suicide, is an intentional act and (b) neither act *b*, nor any acts that Agent *A* knew or believed that he would be performing in a successful performance of act *b*, were, in fact, performed.

11.3 The problematic concepts

Let us now return to the focal problem of the chapter, the conceptual confusion that attends the employments of the concepts *intention*, *motive*, and *reason* in the context of the formulation of explanatory accounts of the phenomena of suicidology. Two of these phenomena, explananda of the explanatory accounts formulated by suicidologists, are the acts of committing suicide and attempting to commit suicide. As we have seen, each of these explananda is actually a manifold class of acts.

In the case of committing suicide [attempting to commit suicide], the act *b* [*a*] (the act of committing suicide) [the act of attempting to commit suicide] that must be explained is, for scenarios of types 1, 2, 4, and 5, a voluntary, intentional act, and, for a scenario of type 3, a nonvoluntary, intentional act. Thus, the task will be to clarify the correct employments

of the problematic concepts when they are ingredients of explanations of why an Agent *A* performed either a particular voluntary, intentional act or a nonvoluntary, intentional act.

The grammars of psychological concepts are ramifying, and the meanings of the concepts *reason*, *intention*, and *motive* are linked in complex ways to the meanings of other concepts. A clarification of the concept *reason* begs for a contrasting of it with the concept *cause*, a clarification of *motive* requires clarity in respect to the meanings of the concepts *emotion*, *appetite*, and *agitation*, and the concepts *intention* and *intentional act* (as we have, in the latter case, already seen) are related in complex ways to the concepts *aim*, *want*, and *knowledge*. I will find it most convenient to order my clarifications of the problematic concepts in the following way: (a) reason (and cause); (b) motive (and emotion, appetite, agitation, and other supporting concepts); and (c) intention (and intentional act).

11.3.1 Reason

Reasons are potential ingredients of explanations of *certain types of acts*. More particularly, an act is a doing that an Agent *A* performs or fails to perform, and, for certain types of doing that an Agent *A* performs or fails to perform, reasons are potential ingredients of answers to questions of *why A did ξ*. Within the category of acts, it is paradigmatically the voluntary act that is open to explanation in terms of reasons.¹ This is because *A*'s performing of a voluntary act γ involves *his* exercising of a two-way power to do or refrain from doing γ (Bennett and Hacker, 2003), and the rules of language establish as a possibility that *A* had reasons for having done, or refrained from having done, γ . In the event that *A* did γ , rather than having refrained from doing so. In contrast, *A* cannot have had reasons for having slipped and fallen, for slipping and falling are not acts, let alone acts the performance of which involved *A*'s exercising of a power to do or refrain from doing.

Let it be the case that an Agent *A* has performed a voluntary act γ . Then:

- Ri) it is a possibility (allowable under the rules of language) that *A* had reasons for having performed γ ;
- Rii) there is no necessity that *A* had reasons for having performed γ .

If *A* did, in fact, have reasons for having performed γ , then:

- Riii) these reasons are (non-causal) factors *his* that *A* considered to be relevant to his having performed γ ;

Riv) these reasons are *his* reasons. The possessive grammar, here, marks an '...asymmetry between first- and third-person, present tense, psychological statements' (cf. Baker and Hacker, 1982). *Clarification*: The reasons that *A* provides for having performed γ are standardly groundless (not resting on any *evidence*) avowals of his wants, desires, beliefs, and the like. *A* may choose to avow his reasons or he may choose to keep them to himself. He may mull over his reasons, modify them or change them outright, or come to have a new set of reasons for having performed the same act.

On the other hand, a third-person ascription to *A* of reasons for *his* having performed γ is made on the basis of behavioural criteria; that is, behaviours of *A*, including *A*'s avowals, that constitute grammatical justification for the claim that *A* had these reasons for having performed γ (cf. Baker and Hacker, 1982).

While both *A*'s truthful first-person avowals and third-person ascriptions of predicates to *A* on the basis of behavioural criteria confer grammatical certainty upon the relevant judgments made about *A*, grammatical certainty is not the same thing as absolute, unconditional, certainty, and judgments made on the basis of either avowals or correct third-person ascriptions are logically defeasible (under, for example, a broadening of the circumstances or a demonstration of *A*'s pretence) (Baker and Hacker, 1982);

Rv) The richness of the explanations of γ possible through a citation of *A*'s reasons for having performed γ will standardly vary as a function of the *type* of voluntary act that γ is. *Clarification*: In the case of voluntary acts that are either unintentional, or neither unintentional, nor intentional, the prospects will be limited. Why was *A* running his fingers through his hair while he studied algebra? That is, why was he performing *that* voluntary, unintentional act? Answer: He says that he wasn't aware that he was doing so. Why did *A* crush blades of grass on his way to the car? That is, why did he perform that particular voluntary act that was neither intentional nor unintentional? Answer: He had not even considered the point, but, in any case, had to do so in order to get to the car.

The logical structure of voluntary, intentional acts, on the other hand, opens the way for richer explanations involving *A*'s reasons for having done. If *A* has performed a voluntary, intentional act φ , *A* knowingly

performed φ (he foresaw result φ') and performed φ either solely because he *wanted* to bring about result φ' or because he *knew* or *believed that*, in performing φ , he was performing some consequent act whose result he *wanted* to bring about. Act φ is, by virtue of its being a voluntary, intentional act, tied to factors, namely, A 's wants, beliefs, and desires, that were relevant to A in his having performed φ .[□]

11.3.1.1 Reason and cause

The concepts *reason* and *cause* are not synonymous. Although both causes and reasons are potential ingredients of explanations of the doings of agents, they are ingredients of explanations of *different* types of doings. As we have noted, A 's reasons for having performed a voluntary act γ , should he have had reasons for having done so, are legitimate ingredients of explanations of γ . Causes are not; voluntary acts performed by agents *have no causes*.

If the doing in question is, on the other hand, a nonvoluntary act ρ , ρ may have a cause ρ_c , but the agent A who performed ρ cannot have had reasons for having done so. This is because in having performed ρ , A was not exercising a two-way power to do or refrain from doing ρ .

If a nonvoluntary act ρ has a cause ρ_c :

- Ci) ρ_c is the thing that brought about ρ ;
- Cii) the occurrence of ρ can be explained with reference to ρ_c ; hence, ρ_c is a legitimate ingredient of explanations of ρ .

Though it would make no sense to inquire as to the *reasons* A had for slipping and falling, it would make perfect sense to investigate the conditions under which the accident occurred, the aim being to discover its *causes*. And though it would, similarly, be nonsensical to inquire as to A 's *reasons* for the involuntary twitching of his face (the twitching of A 's face not under control of a two-way power possessed by A to do or refrain from doing), it would make perfect sense for A to seek out medical assistance in the hope of coming to know the cause of his twitch.

One inquires as to *why* Agent A performed voluntary act γ (and, if A had reasons for having done, and these reasons are known, cites these reasons), but *what* is the cause of ρ , say, his involuntary twitch. Whereas A 's reasons for performing the voluntary acts he performs are *his* reasons (are formulated by him out of his knowledge, beliefs, and wants), the cause ρ_c of ρ , is not A 's cause. A has reasons, not causes. A may *avow* his reasons for performing a voluntary act, but not the cause of his twitch. Causes are as they are. They are independent of what A knows,

believes, and wants. It is incoherent to say that A has reasons for having performed an act but does not know what these reasons are, but not at all to say, for example, that A 's twitch has a cause, but A does not know what it is.

11.3.2 Motive

Motives are potential ingredients of explanations of intentional acts (Bennett and Hacker, 2003). Let it be the case that an Agent A has performed an intentional act β . Then:

- Mi) it is a possibility (allowable under the rules of language) that, in performing β , A was *acting out of* a motive ζ (Bennett and Hacker, 2003);
- Mii) there is no necessity that, in performing β , A was acting out of a motive.

If, in performing β , A was acting out of a motive ζ , then:

- Miii) ζ is an appetite, emotion, or desire of A 's; more generally, ζ is a psychological phenomenon whose denoting concept has a formal or formal and specific object. *Clarification*: Appetites such as *hunger*, *thirst*, and *lust* are blends of sensation and desire (Bennett and Hacker, 2003). Sensations do not have objects, but desires do. The desire component of an appetite has a formal, but not a specific, object. The formal object of *hunger* is food/nutritional sustenance, of *thirst* is liquid refreshment, and of *lust* is sexual intercourse (Bennett and Hacker, 2003).

Emotions such as *grief*, *love*, *resentment*, *fear*, and *jealousy* have both formal and specific objects (Bennett and Hacker, 2003). The formal object of one's jealousy is the thing that makes one jealous, the specific object, some particular state of affairs; example, that the object of one's affections was seen entering a house with a former flame.

Finally, a desire is identified by the object κ that satisfies it. The sentence 'I desire a steak for dinner' specifies the the object of my gustatory desire is steak.

Although conceptually closely related to the appetites, emotions, and desires, the agitations and moods do *not* have objects, and so cannot play the role of motive for an intentional act (Bennett and Hacker, 2003). Agitations such as being *thrilled*, *excited*, *shocked*, *terrified*, or *horrified*: $A(a)$ are short-term affective disturbances that temporarily *inhibit* motivated

action. One may behave in a certain way *because* one is terrified, but not *out of* terror; A(b) are modes of reaction. One recoils *with* revulsion, shrieks *in* terror, cries out *in* horror (Bennett and Hacker, 2003). Moods such as feeling *cheerful, depressed, contented, or euphoric*; MO(a) are frames of mind that are either occurrent states or longer-term dispositional states; MO(b) colour one's thoughts and pervade one's reflections,² and MO(c) are exhibited not in patterns of action but, rather, in the manner in which one does whatever one does (e.g. in one's demeanour or tone of voice) (Bennett and Hacker, 2003).

Miv) the motive (appetite, emotion, or desire) ζ out of which *A* was acting in his performance of β was the (non-causal) origin of a *pattern of behaviour* (sequence of voluntary, intentional acts of which β was an element) oriented towards the object of ζ (Bennett and Hacker, 2003). *Clarification*: Appetites, emotions, and desires can be motives for intentional acts because they have (formal or formal *and* specific) *objects*, and it is characteristically human that individuals deal with the objects of emotions, desires, and appetites through the performance of sequences of intentional acts.

When, for example, an Agent *A* is in love, the object of his love is some individual, say, individual *B*. *A* must deal, in some way, with his passively acquired feelings of love for *B*, and may well do so by performing intentional acts: example, by acting in a manner that he believes will please *B*, seeking out *B*'s company, spending time with *B*, attempting to woo *B*, buying gifts for *B*, or writing poetry for *B*. His love of *B* is the motivating emotion of a sequence of intentional acts, a pattern of behaviour. In performing the intentional acts which this pattern comprises, *A* is *acting out of his love for B*;

Mv) With respect to the issue of asymmetry between first- and third-person, present tense, utterances, the concept *motive* is a mixed case (cf. Baker and Hacker, 1982, p. 237). The ascription to *A* of motive ζ for his having performed β rests on a demonstration that β is an element of a sequence of intentional acts performed by *A*, these acts oriented towards the object of ζ . Although there is no first- and third-person asymmetry attendant to utterances about the acts themselves (*A* does not *avow* performance of an act), there *is* such an asymmetry attendant to the ascription of appetites, emotions, and desires (i.e., *A* may *avow* his appetites, emotions, and desires).

11.3.3 Intention

Agents *form* intentions to perform voluntary, and nonvoluntary, intentional acts φ , *manifest* these intentions in nonlinguistic behaviour, and express them in language. Let φ be a voluntary or nonvoluntary intentional act performed by an agent *A*. Then:

- li) It is a possibility (allowable under the rules of language) that *A* formed, prior to having performed φ , an intention to perform φ ;
- lii) There is no necessity that *A* formed an intention to φ prior to having performed φ .

If *A* did, in fact, form an intention to perform φ prior to his having performed φ , then:

- liii) His intention was neither a state of mind, nor an inner phenomenon, nor a private experience, nor a *thing*. *A* *manifests* his intentions in his nonlinguistic behaviour and expresses them in language. When *A* states, 'I am going to φ ', he expresses his intention to φ by heralding the performance of φ . When *A* declares, 'I have decided to φ ', he indicates that a period of indecision has been brought to a close and an intention to φ , formed. When *A* employs the expression 'I intend to φ ', he is *avowing* an intention to φ ;
- liv) *A*'s manifesting of his intention to φ in his nonlinguistic behaviour, or expressing of it in language, gives an addressee '...a (non-inductive) ground for prediction' (Bennett and Hacker, 2003, p.103) or, in other words, a grammatical basis for expecting that *A* will perform φ ;
- lv) The relation between his intention to φ and φ is grammatical rather than empirical. In particular: (a) his performing of φ *satisfied* his intention to φ ; (b) his intention to φ was not a cause of (did not bring about) φ ; (c) *Nothing* in *A*'s having formed an intention to φ necessitated that *A* satisfy this intention by performing φ . Having formed an intention to φ , *A* still had to, and did, in fact, both take initiative and successfully perform φ , in order that his intention to φ was satisfied.

As with the concept *reason*, the concept *intention* is marked by a first-person/third-person asymmetry. When an Agent *A* *forms* an intention to

φ , he may either avow this intention or keep it to himself. Third-person ascriptions of intentions to *A* rest on behavioural criteria, that is, *A*'s 'behaviour in context' (Baker and Hacker, 1982, p.235).

11.4 The explanations of suicidology

The phenomena of suicide and attempted suicide, whose explanations are at issue, are manifold classes of intentional acts, either voluntarily or nonvoluntarily, performed by agents. Let φ^* stand for an intentional act belonging to one of these classes, and let it be the case that an Agent *A* has performed φ^* . It may, then, be concluded that:

- i) it is a possibility (allowable under the rules of language) that *A* had reasons for having performed φ^* . If *A* did, in fact, have reasons for having performed φ^* , these reasons are legitimate ingredients of explanations of why *A* performed φ^* . It follows, then, that the author of any such an explanation must be able to ascribe to *A*, *A*'s reasons for having performed φ^* , and this will require that he is either privy to *A*'s avowals of his reasons (say, as a consequence of his having been present during these avowals, or in possession of letters, diary materials, or other writings, in which they were expressed), or other criterial evidence that supports their ascription to *A* in the third-person mode;
- ii) it is a possibility (allowable under the rules of language) that, in performing φ^* , *A* was acting out of a motive ζ . If, in performing φ^* , *A* was acting out of a motive ζ , then motive ζ is a legitimate ingredient of explanations of why *A* performed φ^* . The sense in which ζ explains φ^* is that φ^* is an element of a sequence of intentional acts that originated in ζ (an appetite, emotion, or desire), the acts that constitute the sequence oriented towards the object of ζ . Hence, an explanation of φ^* in terms of ζ will take the form of a description of both the originating appetite, emotion, or desire, and the subsequent sequence of intentional acts that contains φ^* ;
- iii) it is a possibility (allowable under the rules of language) that *A* formed an intention to φ^* prior to his having performed φ^* . If, in fact, *A* formed an intention to perform φ^* prior to his having performed φ^* , this fact is not *relevant* to an explanation of *A*'s having performed φ^* , the reason being that the fact that *A* intended to φ^* prior to having done so does not bear on the question of *why* he did so. Knowledge of *A*'s intentions is, however, relevant to the formulation of *predictions* of *A*'s future behaviour;

- iv) because φ^* is not caused, and so does not *have* causes, a citation of hypothesized causes is *not* a legitimate constituent of explanations of why *A* performed φ^* .³

11.4.1 An example

The popular media have documented many cases of individuals whose suicides have brought to a close a period during which they had been suffering through the agonies of unrequited love for another.⁴ In one such recent case,⁵ a fourteen-year-old boy from Abergele, Wales (hereafter, *A*), met a fifteen-year-old girl from Huddersfield, England (hereafter, *B*) at Disneyland Paris and fell in love with her. While waiting in line for a ride, *A* and *B* chatted and exchanged personal information. Following their returns to their respective homes, *A* and *B* corresponded by e-mail and text message. In these exchanges, *A* described his love for *B* as follows: 'Words don't seem able to come out of my mouth when it comes to you ... after I heard your voice everything seemed to flood out ... When we spoke I knew you were the girl I wanted to be with and my heart fluttered, but after you left a chill fell into the gap and I felt so alone, so stranded, so longing to be with you ... All I can think about is how amazing you are.' *A* also alluded to problems in his life, notably, a home situation in which there had recently been much arguing. *A*'s attempts to arrange to meet with *B* in Manchester came to nothing, because *B* believed that her parents would forbid such a meeting.

A committed suicide by hanging himself, leaving behind notes for *B*, his family, and friends. In the note to *B*, he stated, 'I always said I would give my life just to see you again, but now I'm giving my life not to see you again', 'I know you will be upset ... but I want you to know I will be in heaven watching over you always.'

We have then:

- i) an originating emotion, *E*, *A*'s feelings of love for *B* that: (a) is a composite of an emotional attitude that informed *A*'s life from the time of his having met *B* until he ended his life by committing suicide and episodic emotional perturbations⁶ (see Bennett and Hacker, 2003, pp. 203–7); (b) has a specific object, that, of course, being *B*.

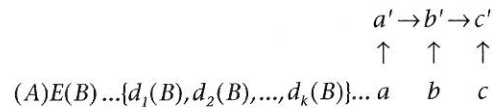
I will symbolize the originating emotion, the object of which was *B*, as (A)*E*(*B*);

- ii) a sequence of intentional acts, d_t , $t=1..k$, performed, subsequent to the onset of (A)E(B), by A, and oriented towards B. These acts included A's sending to B e-mails and text messages, attempting to convince her to meet with him in Manchester, and writing her a suicide note.

Let this sequence be symbolized as $\{d_1(B), d_2(B), \dots, d_k(B)\}$;

- iii) an act b of committing suicide performed by A subsequent, of course, to $\{d_1(B), d_2(B), \dots, d_k(B)\}$. Act b was: (a) a Scenario 4 or 5 suicide, for it is clear that it was performed by A at least in part for the sake of bringing about certain consequent states of affairs, $c' = \{c'_1, \dots, c'_p\}$, having to do with B. In particular, A seems to have believed that his committing suicide would bring about a state of eternal closeness with B; (b) performed by A through his performing of the intentional act a of hanging himself.

Ordering these elements temporally, we have:



Now, in this case a motive is a legitimate constituent of an explanation of why A performed the act b of committing suicide: A was acting out of his love for B. What warrants ascription of such a motive to A, that is, justifies the claim that, in performing the act of committing suicide, A was acting out of his love for B, is the existence of a *pattern of behaviour* that originated in E, terminated in the explanandum, b , and was oriented towards B.

The assistant deputy coroner for North Wales concluded that 'The only clue that there is to what might have been going on in [the boy's] mind comes from the e-mails and text messages and the note left by him for this girl he met in Disneyland... *there is nothing at all to give a reason why* [italics added].' This is mistaken. As I have noted, aside from the fact that A was acting out of a motivating emotion, A avowed at least one reason for his having committed suicide, and this reason is a legitimate part of an explanation of why he committed suicide. In his note to B, he revealed that he viewed it as *relevant* to his intention to commit suicide, his belief that, in so doing, he would be bringing about a state of eternal closeness with her.

Various authorities portrayed both A's difficulties at home and his having been called 'gay' by peers earlier in his life as possible *causes* of his having committed suicide. This is mistaken. The act of committing suicide that A performed was an *intentional act*, and so *had* no causes. Of course, A may have considered these to be *reasons* for his having committed suicide; he did, after all, take the trouble of mentioning to B, the object of his love, his familial difficulties.

Finally, the fact that A wrote suicide notes is criterial support for the claim that, prior to committing suicide, he had formed an intention to do so. However, that an intention to commit suicide can be rightly ascribed to A does not have any relevance to the issue of *why* he committed suicide.

Notes

1. But not exclusively so; nonvoluntary, intentional acts are also open to being explained with respect to A's reasons for having done.
2. For example, a depressed individual, i.e., one who is suffering from depression, is suffering from a dispositional depression or a long-term proneness to feeling depressed (a proneness to having his thoughts and reflections be coloured black). Whether or not there is a biological basis to his proneness to feeling depressed is an empirical issue that is currently unresolved.
3. Once again, certain constituent elements of a scenario in which A performs φ^* (e.g. bodily states and afflictions, contractions of muscles involved in A's performing of φ^*) may have causes, which would need to be cited in any explanations that are formulated of these elements.
4. Interestingly, the protagonist of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, published in 1774, commits suicide after suffering unrequited love for a married woman.
5. The details of this case I know only as reported in a story by Liz Hull, *The Mail*. As I am not attempting to provide an accurate characterization of this particular case, but only a context in which to demonstrate certain of the conceptual clarifications made in the current manuscript, any distortions I visit upon the case as a result of my uncertain understandings of its details should be of no consequence.
6. It is hard to imagine love in the absence of such perturbations, but if the reader is looking for criterial evidence for this ascription, note that A refers, in his notes to B, to the flutterings of his heart, a chill descending over him in B's absence, and, more generally, feelings of longing and loneliness.

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12

The Neuroscientific Case for a Representative Theory of Perception

John Preston and Severin Schroeder

It has been urged repeatedly over the last two decades that empirical findings in neuroscience and psychology provide compelling reasons for endorsing a representative theory of perception. Richard L. Gregory and John R. Smythies are perhaps the best-known advocates of this view. When it comes to vision, in particular, scientists of this persuasion think that the supposed alternative, 'direct realism', is hopelessly naïve, and they conclude that, as Francis Crick puts it, 'What you see is not what is *really* there; it is what your brain *believes* is there' (Crick, 1994, p. 31). We will take a critical look at some of these empirical findings, and discuss the extent to which they support the more sweeping philosophical claims scientists have drawn from them, in particular the advocacy of representative theories of perception.

In the decades of the mid-twentieth century, leading figures from the philosophical tradition of conceptual analysis, such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, J. L. Austin, Gilbert Ryle, and Alan R. White, began their pioneering project of analysing our extensive panoply of perceptual concepts. In more recent years, philosophers such as Peter Hacker and John Hyman, strongly influenced by Wittgenstein's work, have continued this project, deepening and sophisticating such analyses, and drawing attention to flaws in causal and representative theories, whether those theories originate from scientists or from philosophers.¹ The extent to which the scientific advocates of the representative theory have failed to learn the lessons of this work (even in the very formulation of their opponents' views) will soon emerge.