



The Works of Agency: On Human Action, Will, and Freedom

Hugh McCann

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In these essays, Hugh J. McCann develops a unified perspective on human action. Written over a period of twenty-five years, the essays provide a comprehensive survey of the major topics in contemporary action theory. In four sections, the book addresses the ontology of action; the foundations of action; intention, will, and freedom; and practical rationality. McCann works out a compromise between competing perspectives on the individuation of action; explores the foundations of action and defends a volitional theory; argues for a libertarian view of both the formation and the execution of intention; and considers the question of consistency in rational intentions, as well as the relationship between practical and theoretical reasoning.

Among the original features of McCann's work are his defense of both fine- and coarse-grained actions and his arguments for a noncausal theory of the relation between intention and action. He also suggests that intentions need not be consistent, either with each other or with beliefs about success. And he contends that intention formation is an intrinsically ratiocinative procedure, distinct from reasoning about what action would be best.

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