
This volume is composed of nine papers, five previously published, but with the exception of the last chapter (‘Kant’s Jewish problem’), they constitute a continuous study of the development of Kant’s position on the freedom of human beings to live up to the demands of the moral law throughout the entire period of his recorded thought about moral philosophy, from his first philosophical work, the New Exposition of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition of 1755, to his last published work, the Conflict of the Faculties of 1798. In her introduction, ‘Taking autonomy seriously’ (pp. 1–14), and in her brief concluding remarks on ‘The limits to autonomy’ (pp. 335–43), Shell ventures some suggestions about the potential significance of Kant’s theory of autonomy for contemporary liberalism, pitched in part against the argument of John Rawls (after A Theory of Justice) that we should seek only a political and not a metaphysical foundation for liberalism, but these suggestions are not developed, and the book should be considered and evaluated primarily as a work in the history of philosophy, an interpretation of Kant’s theory of autonomy and its development; at least that is how I will approach it here.

Shell’s historical argument is as follows. In Kant’s very earliest work, he did not take exception to the generally prevailing eudaemonistic approach to the object and principle of morality nor to the equally general compatibilist approach to the freedom of the human will to fulfil the demands of morality. In the seminal remarks that he made in his own copy of his 1764 Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime, however (remarks that Shell repeatedly but misleadingly refers to as a ‘text’, as if Kant intended them to be read together and by anyone other than himself, assumptions we have no basis to make), Kant, under the influence of Rousseau, began to treat freedom rather than happiness as the goal of morality. After that, his chief philosophical concern became to secure the possibility of our acting in accordance with the demands of morality and realizing its objective, or finding a guarantee that we can in fact achieve autonomy. In Kant’s ‘mature’ work, chiefly the Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, particularly its Section III, Kant invokes the metaphysics of transcendental idealism to...
guarantee the possibility of the freedom to fulfill the demands of morality (the freedom to achieve intra- and interpersonal freedom of choice and action, we might say). In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, according to Shell, Kant then adds the doctrine of the highest good in order to provide a possible object for morality, a step that is necessary to make autonomy possible in the sense that it would be incoherent and thus impossible for a rational being to will to act in accordance with a principle without an object at which it thereby aims. But then in the works of his final decade, from the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* of 1790 through the political writings, chiefly *Toward Perpetual Peace* of 1795 and the Doctrine of Right of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, first published separately in 1797, to the *Conflict of the Faculties* of 1798, Kant turns to teleology and history, including political and religious history, for evidence of the possibility of autonomy, and in these he finds evidence for both the possibility but also the limits of autonomy, a ‘disposition’ (*Anlage*) to progress but no guarantee that it will actually be achieved – hence her title *The Limits of Autonomy*.

I welcome Shell’s attempt to provide a comprehensive history of Kant’s practical philosophy, and am particularly grateful for her discussion of the early evidence of Kant’s moral thought in the remarks in the *Observations* as well as for her emphasis on Kant’s works of the 1790s, works in which it seems to me that Kant did indeed have an underlying project of showing what his abstract moral philosophy of the 1780s implies more concretely for embodied creatures such as us, in the dual sense of showing what duties the general principle of morality entails for embodied creatures such as us (the project of the *Metaphysics of Morals*) and how embodied creatures such as us might realize the demands of morality (the rest). However, to my mind Shell does not get the continuities and discontinuities in the development of Kant’s thought quite right: I believe that her argument that throughout his mature period Kant’s aim is only to secure the possibility of our living up to the moral law, never to prove the validity of the moral law itself, understates the discontinuity between the *Groundwork* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*, while at the same time I believe that Kant’s elaboration of the natural and historical conditions for the realization of human freedom beginning with the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* only works out a programme that is already implicit in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, thus that in this case Shell overstates the discontinuity between Kant’s metaphysical work of the 1780s and the teleological, political, and historical work of the 1790s. On both fronts, then, I think Shell’s work suffers from an insufficient appreciation of the second *Critique*. In what follows, I will try to flesh out and sustain this charge.

Shell’s first chapter, ‘“Carazan’s dream”: Kant’s early theory of freedom’, covers the period from the *New Elucidation* of 1755 to the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* of 1764, in which the long footnote on the tale of ‘Carazan’s dream’ is found. Here Shell describes Kant as moving under the influence of Rousseau from the perfectionist metaphysics of Leibniz and Wolff in the *New Elucidation* and also the *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* of the same year (a perfectionism that was the local version of the general eudaemonism of early modern thought,
I would argue) to an ‘anthropological revolution’ (p. 33) in which Kant begins to look for ‘“living” evidence of human freedom’ (p. 36), particularly the freedom to ‘“connect” with . . . fellow human beings’ that is the yearning of Carazan’s dream (a precursor of Charles Dickens’s Christmas Carol, pace p. 351n22). In the next chapter, ‘Kant’s Archimedean moment: Remarks in “Observations Concerning the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime”’ – Shell’s italicization of ‘Remarks in’ reflecting her tendency to treat these remarks as if they were intended to be a single, coherent ‘text’ – Shell argues that in these remarks Kant formulates the project of creating ‘an intellectual construction based on the premise that freedom in harmony with itself is naturally possible’ (p. 55). According to her account, in these notes Kant both formulates the idea that ‘For a free, uncorrupted being’, to act freely ‘has a higher worth than any secondary good that might arise from it’, or that ‘the most perfect will is that which maximizes a general good that includes as its sine qua non the harmonious general exercise of freedom itself’ (p. 63), and also begins to offer an historical explanation of the emergence of our motivation to act for the sake of freedom itself, one that emphasizes in particular the relation between men and women as the arena in which morality develops – ‘civilized domesticity (like wise simplicity) “perfects” an orderly condition that originally obtained without anyone needing to intend it’ (p. 69); but, she claims, in this work ‘that reason suffices to enjoin us to obey [the moral law] (as the principle of autonomy will later insist) is not yet clear’ (p. 83). I am not persuaded by Shell’s attempt to link Kant’s numerous remarks about the relations between men and women with his several striking remarks about our abhorrence of subjection and love of freedom (some of the most important of which Shell cites at pp. 57–8) into a single coherent argument; this seems to me an anachronistic importation of the argument of the 1786 essay on ‘The conjectural beginnings of human history’, a response to Herder rather than to Rousseau, into the unconnected notes of two decades earlier. I do think that the remarks about freedom from subjection in these notes are of profound importance in Kant’s development, but what I would have liked to have seen here instead of this strained argument about freedom and domestic relations would have been a discussion of the steps that Kant needs to take, and gradually does take, to turn these early comments about our abhorrence to subjection into the more abstract and general notion of the avoidance of self-contradiction in the use of freedom as the ‘essential end’ of mankind in the lectures on ethics from 1777–84 and then, in the Groundwork, into the idea of humanity, as the power to set our own ends, as an end in itself.

In chapter 3, ‘Rousseau, Count Verri, and the “true economy of human nature”: Lectures on Anthropology, 1772–81’ (originally written for a 2003 volume on the lectures on anthropology, first published in the critical edition of Kant’s works in 1997), Shell argues that Pietro Verri’s Del piacere e del dolore, published in Italian in 1773 (a date that Shell does not supply) and translated into German by Christoph Meiners in 1777, was important for Kant’s turn away from a psychologist’s account of moral motivation in the previous period. It was important both for ‘liberat[ing]
Kant from his formerly fixed view that human beings are necessarily moved to act by the representation of an aim or “object” and an accompanying “pleasure” (or other felt register of goodness)’ (p. 109) and for persuading Kant that neither the soul nor ‘Freedom is . . . known directly, through an intuition of spiritual life’ (p. 88), a position that she holds Kant as affirming in his anthropology lectures before his reading of Verri in 1777 but rejecting afterwards. The key idea here seems to be that, whereas in the notes on the Observations in 1764 or 1765 Kant thought to justify the value of freedom by the happiness it produces, after reading Verri Kant no longer hoped to explain the value of freedom in this way but would have to seek an alternative method. However, most of this chapter actually discusses the anthropology lectures, and Shell does not offer enough of an exposition of Verri’s little-known work to allow for an evaluation of her interpretation of his influence.

In any case, the central contention of chapter 4, ‘The “paradox” of autonomy’, is that in the Groundwork Kant entirely gives up on the project of explaining or justifying the value of freedom, but instead takes it that the moral law and its unconditional valorization of the value of freedom is a matter of common knowledge, and that the task for moral philosophy is only to prevent this common knowledge from being undermined by doubts that we can actually realize the demands of morality: ‘in aiming to “seek out and set fast” [erforschen und festsetzen] the supreme principle of morality . . . the Groundlaying does not claim to give us new reason to be moral, but to release us from a moral sophistry that obscures what is “before our eyes”’; the book does not mean ‘to “deduce” the moral law from a non-moral premise. Its purpose is, rather, to help overcome the dialectical resistance to its own law to which human reason is generically prone’ (p. 123). Or, as she puts it in her discussion of Section II of the Groundwork, ‘what is here at stake is ‘not the moral outlook as such but our unwavering commitment to its demand’ (p. 137). Sometimes Shell makes it sound as if the doubt about the possibility of our actually being autonomous that the Groundwork has to overcome is created merely by Populärphilosophie, the work of inept or malicious philosophers (e.g. pp. 125, 132, 134). But this opening remark makes it clear that she cannot mean that, and does recognize that for Kant the mistakes of ‘popular philosophy’ are just the inevitable reflection of the ‘natural dialectic’ of human practical reason, just as the dialectical inferences diagnosed in the first Critique are illusions unavoidably generated by human theoretical reason itself, diagnosable although not removable by a critique of pure reason. In line with this approach, the heart of this chapter is Shell’s interpretation of Section III of the Groundwork (pp. 143–51). As is well known, it is in Section III that Kant proposes to move from the analytic argument of the first two sections of the Groundwork, which have only been intended to clarify the content of the moral law (in the words of Kant’s Preface, the phase of erforschen), to the synthetic argument meant to establish it (festsetzen). Most readers take this to mean that in Section III Kant aims to show that the moral law that has been shown to be valid for rational beings in general will now be shown actually to be valid for us human beings, essentially by means of an argument from transcendental
idealism that we in fact are rational beings at the noumenal level, and that
this synthetic phase of the argument is to count as a deduction of the valid-
ity of the moral law. But Shell’s interpretation is that Section III ‘seeks to
provide a “deduction” of the categorical imperative [only] in the specific
sense of justifying our “venture” of a synthetic use of pure practical reason
in the face of a lingering suspicion (on the part of any thoughtful reader [of
the Groundwork] who has come this far) that the concept of duty rests on
an illusion’. In her view, the argument is not ‘aimed at offering a “reason”
to obey the moral law’ (pp. 143–4), and what is ‘synthetic’ is not that the
moral law applies to us but only that we are capable of living up to it
motivated by reason alone. She then offers her interpretation of how Kant
attempts to turn back doubt that we have the capacity to obey the moral
law for its own sake in nineteen numbered steps. Key steps in this account
are step 8, at Groundwork 4: 453, in which according to Shell ‘Reason
establishes the actuality of its “pure spontaneity” through what it does
as a self-critical theoretical agent . . . [thereby uncovering] a capacity in
itself for the production of ideas that cannot be understood as subject to
sensibility’ (p. 147), and numbers 14 through 16, in which any claim that
freedom is impossible is refuted by appeal to transcendental idealism, that
is, the distinction between noumenal ‘essence’ and phenomenal ‘appear-
ance’, which makes any alleged insight into the impossibility of freedom
impossible (p. 148) thereby ‘helping to refute the “fatalist,”’ who “unfairly
’ claims, despite his own admission that essence and appearance differ, that
human freedom is impossible’ (p. 149). I think that it is fair to say that the
argument of Groundwork III is not designed to ‘offer us a “reason”’ for
being moral, but I think this does not capture Kant’s intention to say that all
it means to do is appeal to transcendental idealism to show us that freedom
cannot be proven impossible; on the contrary, Kant’s aim seems to be to
identify the noumenal self and will with pure reason, thus to show us that at
that deep level we do not need a reason to be moral because we cannot but
be moral. Moreover, I think that Shell’s account of Kant’s argument under-
mines her interpretation, because her exposition of 4: 453 at her step 8
does ascribe to Kant the proof that we are not subject to sensibility because
of our reason, not merely that we might not be completely determined by
sensibility, and this is at odds with her claim that Kant only refutes in steps
14 through 16 the certainty of the ‘fatalist’ or determinist that freedom
is impossible. It further leads her to understate Kant’s fundamental meth-
odological reversal between the Groundwork and the Critique of Practical
Reason, his admission that there can be no deduction of the moral law from
the fact of freedom after all but only the deduction of freedom from the
primordial fact of our consciousness of the moral law (5: 47) (she rejects the
idea of a ‘radical reversal’ on p. 151). And it leads Shell to omit discussion
of what is a fundamental problem for Kant in the 1790s, namely to break
the equation of the noumenal will with action in accordance with pure
practical reason and thus to allow for the possibility of evil. This will lead
to a hole in the middle of Shell’s account of Religion within the Boundaries
of Mere Reason, as I will suggest shortly.
What Shell does argue is new in the second *Critique* is the recognition that practical reason needs not just a principle but an aim or goal, namely the highest good, and that our belief in the possibility of being moral would be threatened if we did not have reason to believe that this goal can be achieved. This in turn makes religious belief necessary for proving the possibility of autonomy: ‘Religion is thus “subjectively” necessary – not as an incentive to moral obedience, or to help effect a lively moral interest (as the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Groundlaying* had respectively argued or implied) – but to overcome the thought – morally disabling for a moral understanding like our own – that the aim of pure practical reason is itself fantastic’ (p. 157). As Shell implies, although she does not discuss this point at any length, the concept of the highest good and the doctrine of the postulates of pure practical reason are already present in the 1781 first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in the Canon of Pure Reason. But it is far from clear that Kant there treats the possibility of the highest good and the postulated reality of its necessary conditions as an ‘incentive to moral obedience’; rather he seems even in 1781 to begin his argument for the practical postulation of the conditions of the possibility of the highest good from the assumption that the impossibility of the highest good as the object of morality would undermine our already present motivation to be moral – see especially A813/B841, where Kant suggests that it is our resolve that would be undermined if we could not believe in the possibility of the highest good. In other words, the kind of argument that Shell finds Kant making in the second *Critique* is not an innovation; it is already present in the first *Critique*. So the innovation of the second *Critique* and Kant’s reason for returning to the issue of the highest good at such great length must lie elsewhere. I would suggest – which would not be inconsistent with Shell’s overall emphasis on Kant’s transition from eudaemonist morality to the morality of freedom – that at least part of Kant’s reason for returning to the subject was his recognition that his treatment of the postulate of immortality in the first *Critique* put the realization of happiness before that of virtue, and his new argument in the second *Critique* that immortality is necessary to perfect our virtue rather than our happiness is meant to reinforce his view that virtue and the worthiness to be happy are more important than happiness itself. I would also suggest that Kant’s revisions to his treatment of the highest good in the second *Critique* are part of an ongoing process of revision that is not complete until the 1793 essay on ‘Theory and Practice’ (or even until §27 of the Doctrine of Virtue of the *Metaphysics of Morals*) in which Kant makes it clear beyond doubt that the happiness that is the (subordinate) object of morality is not one’s own but ‘unselfish’ happiness or the happiness of all. Shell does not discuss this fundamental transformation in Kant’s conception of the happiness component of the highest good in the works of the 1790s (she only touches upon Part III of ‘Theory and Practice’ in her later discussion of Kant’s philosophy of history), which seems to me to be a missed opportunity, and indeed something that we would have expected given her own emphasis that Kant’s evolution as a moral philosopher began in 1764–5 precisely with the redirection of his concern from individual perfection to the ‘rights of man’ (e.g. p. 41).
This brings us to Part II of Shell’s book, ‘Late Kant, 1789–1798’ (p. 163). Shell chooses 1789 as her terminus ab quo because of a letter to F. H. Jacobi of that year in which Kant tries to cover up the breach between himself and Jacobi (pp. 164–7), because of the influence on Kant of the French Revolution that began that year (pp. 167–8) and because Kant wrote the bulk of the Critique of the Power of Judgment during 1789 even if he did not publish it until the next year (p. 164). Shell does not devote a separate chapter to the third Critique, but only briefly argues that its point is that ‘Natural teleology . . . brings us to the brink of reason’s sovereignty without delivering what man must freely do collectively and individually’ (p. 173). I am a little unclear what this statement is supposed to mean: if it is supposed to mean that the third Critique does not add anything to Kant’s prior specification of the general principle of morality or the particular duties of human beings, that is certainly correct but hardly unexpected; if it is meant to suggest that the third Critique’s interpretation of teleology – and history, which Shell also discusses – does not go all the way toward proving that reason’s sovereignty must be realized in natural and human history, then that would be right, but it would be misleading to suggest that any later work of the 1790s is intended to prove that.

The first main chapter of Part II is then chapter 5, ‘Moral hesitation in Religion within the Boundaries of Bare Reason’ (Shell translates Kant’s word bloße as ‘bare’ rather than ‘mere’ because she wants to emphasize the image of nakedness and the idea that moral conversion religiously understood requires stripping oneself bare of one’s old garments and putting on new ones; see p. 204). The core of Shell’s approach to the Religion is that Kant’s reinterpretation of original sin as ‘radical evil’ is meant to emphasize our uncertainty about the purity of our motivation, our inability to be aware that we have been motivated by the moral law alone (she says on p. 205 that ‘self-doubt’ is ‘Kant’s own version of original sin’), and that the image of the passion of Jesus is meant to serve only as an example with ‘historically unequalled pedagogic power’ (p. 204) that pure moral motivation is possible for human beings. This seems to me to make radical evil a phenomenal rather than a noumenal problem; that is, it treats the problem of radical evil as a merely epistemological problem, the problem of the inaccessibility of our real motivation even when that motivation might actually be pure, rather than as the metaphysical problem that it is, namely the problem that if we are genuinely free to choose good then we must also be free to choose evil – otherwise our choice is not a free choice after all. This is central to Kant’s project in the Religion and cannot be emphasized too much, because for Kant it is this metaphysical fact about freedom that guarantees that even if we have chosen evil – as the empirical evidence suggests we all have – it is still always in our own power to undertake moral conversion and choose good (see Religion, 6: 37). However, this metaphysical fact about freedom also means that, even if we have in fact chosen the good, it is still always in our power freely to relapse into evil, and thus we should never take the possibility of grace as a substitute for our continued moral self-vigilance (the message of Part II of the Religion). By not treating Kant’s concept of evil at this fundamental level, Shell misses the opportunity to expound
Kant’s own clearest statement of the limits of autonomy: the very nature of freedom itself means that achievement of morality is always possible for us, but never necessary for us, and so the choice to be moral must be a lifelong effort. Just as for Aristotle a person could not truly be said to be happy until her life was over, so for Kant a person could not truly be said to be moral until she had not only chosen to make the moral law her fundamental maxim, but also overcome every opportunity that life offers her to relapse from that choice.

Shell’s remaining chapters concern Toward Perpetual Peace (chapter 6), Kant’s theory of philosophical versus religious moral education in the first part of the Conflict of the Faculties (chapter 7), Kant’s treatment of the possibility of historical progress in the second part of the Conflict (chapter 8) and finally, as already mentioned, ‘Kant’s Jewish problem’ (chapter 9). There is much to discuss here, but I will focus only briefly on Shell’s discussion of Kant’s famous remark in Part II of the Conflict that even though the conduct of the actors in the French Revolution had to be immoral by Kant’s lights – because of his rejection of either a constitutional or a moral right to rebellion (as if those two could come apart for Kant), which Shell does not explicitly discuss – the approbation of the spectators of the French Revolution (on the right bank of the Rhine) ‘proves [beweiset] “the moral tendency of the human race”’ (p. 285). Shell suggests that his argument in the Conflict is meant to be an advance over the ‘partial failure’ (p. 279) of Perpetual Peace, which had demonstrated under what conditions a perpetual peace would be possible, but also left open that perpetual peace is only an ideal that we will never fully realize, and that we might even be permitted to defer under certain circumstances (e.g., non-cooperation by other, non-republican nations). However, apart from the fact that it may be chronologically misleading to suggest that Part II of the Conflict is a later work than Perpetual Peace, since it was probably drafted around the same time in 1795, it is puzzling why Shell thinks it reaches a stronger conclusion than does Perpetual Peace, since, according to the crucial passage that Shell herself quotes, the approbation of the spectators of the French Revolution proves only ‘a moral character . . . at least in disposition . . . that not only permits hope in progress toward the better, but is already itself such progress’ (p. 285, quoting from Conflict 7: 85–6, emphasis added here). This seems to say exactly the same thing that Kant had been saying throughout his religious, political and historical works of the 1790s, namely that human moral conversion and therefore progress is always possible but never inevitable.

Kant’s clear recognition of this point in all his writings in different genres in the 1790s should, I think, itself be taken as fundamental progress over the theory of freedom in the Groundwork and the second Critique, which to be sure did not explicitly deny this point but by identifying the noumenal will with pure practical reason made it impossible to understand. Still, there is another way in which Kant’s turn to nature and to human history for evidence of at least the possibility of human morality in the works of the 1790s should not be seen as a radical departure from Kant’s views of the 1780s. I have in mind here Kant’s point in the Critical Elucidation
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of the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason in the second Critique that ‘the whole sequence of [the human being’s] existence as a sensible being is to be regarded as nothing but the consequence and never as the determining ground of his causality as a noumenon’ (5: 98), which itself can be seen as a version of his thesis in the first Critique that the ‘empirical character’ of human actions, in which they stand in thoroughgoing ‘connection with other appearances in accordance with constant natural laws, from which, as their conditions, they could be derived’, must also be able to be seen as the consequence of their ‘intelligible character’, ‘which does not stand under any conditions of sensibility and is not itself appearance’ (A539/B567).

From the outset of the development of his transcendental idealist theory of freedom, in other words, Kant had assumed that human action as empirically perceived must be able to be understood as the expression of human choice noumenally conceived. His attempt to find both the possibility but also the limits to the inevitability of moral progress in human nature, in human history, in human political and religious practices is only his attempt to cash in these earlier programmatic statements, not a departure from his Critical view. On this score I think there is more continuity in Kant’s thought than Shell’s chronological exposition suggests.

In spite of my disagreements on several substantial points, I am deeply grateful for Shell’s work on many others: her discussion of Kant’s seminal notes of 1764–5, her lucid exposition of an interpretation of Groundwork III diametrically opposed to my own, and her discussion of the whole range of Kant’s works of the 1790s, which I think need precisely the kind of sustained and interconnected attention she has given them. So I expect to come back to this work often and will recommend it to my students as well.

(But I do have to note that there are editorial errors in this work that we would not expect from Harvard University Press. Kant’s teacher Martin Knutzen is repeatedly referred to and indexed as ‘Knudsen’ [pp. 10, 17–18]. On p. 68, we read of ‘solon society’ instead of ‘salon society’. On p. 88, Shell states that Kant lectured on anthropology forty-eight times, but since Kant lectured on anthropology for twenty-five academic years, from 1772–3 to 1796–7, and did not lecture on anthropology in both semesters, this number should presumably be half of that. On p. 179, she says that ‘The Conflict of the Faculties also resurrects the Archimedean imagery of the unpublished Remarks composed forty years earlier’, but, since those remarks were composed in 1764 or 1765 and the Conflict between 1795 and its publication in 1798, the number should be closer to thirty. P. 286 has the nonsensical word Stetzungpunkt, which I assume was meant to be Standpunkt [and did not have to be in German anyway; in general, Shell sprinkles more of the original German words in her quotations than is necessary for her purposes]. Finally, on p. 306, Shell gives the date of the third Critique as 1789, although she elsewhere, including p. 312, gives it correctly as 1790; on p. 313 she gives the date of the Religion as 1792, when it was only its first Part that was published in the Berlinische Monatschrift that year and the whole book was not published until 1793; and on p. 314 she gives the date of the second Critique as 1787 instead of 1788. There are also a number of ordinary typographical errors. None of these
errors mask Shell’s meaning, to be sure, but they are distracting and should be corrected in any future printing.)

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The objective of this remarkably ambitious book is to solve three major problems of philosophy of mind, namely the mind–body problem, the problem of mental causation and the problem of intentional action. Hanna and Maiese believe that these problems are closely connected and could be solved with a unified approach, which they call *The Essential Embodiment Theory*. We will first sketch *The Theory* and then put forward some objections.

*The Theory* has six central theses:

(1) **The Essential Embodiment Thesis**, defended in chapters I and II. According to (1), creatures with conscious, intentional minds – such as ours – are completely embodied, and this embodiment is metaphysically necessary. This metaphysical necessity does not rule out the logical possibility of disembodiment, so that the Cartesian arguments from conceivability of disembodiment are beside the matter. (1) also entails that our minds are embodied throughout the whole body, not just the brain or central nervous system. The arguments given for (1) are based on so-called ‘neuro-phenomenological analyses’, which consist of three steps: first, describe our consciousness as it appears to the first person; second, produce some a priori claims about conscious minds such as ours using this first-person description; third, show that these claims cohere with the empirical evidence from cognitive neurosciences.

(2) **The Essentially Embodied Agency Thesis**, defended in chapters III and IV. These chapters offer a critique of the Davidsonian theory of action, on which actions are caused by ‘primary reasons’. Hanna and Maiese argue that Davidsonian theory should be rejected because primary reasons can have no causal efficacy, primary reasons are insufficient for action, primary reasons are not necessary for action and there is always the possibility of a deviant causal chain connecting a primary reason to a bodily movement even in the absence of an intentional action. Instead, they propose (2) according to which our basic actions are intentional body movements that are caused by our essentially embodied minds’ trying and active guidance. Trying is simultaneous with a neurobiological process that it actively guides until the neurobiological process manifests itself in intentional bodily movements.

(3) **The Emotive Causation Thesis**, defended in chapter V. (3) says that all intentional actions are necessarily caused by emotions. Accordingly, desire-based emotions are the basic mental causes of all kinds of intentional action in the guise of trying and its active guidance. Chapter V offers an