



Decomposing the Will (Philosophy of Mind)

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There is growing evidence from the science of human behavior that our everyday, folk understanding of ourselves as conscious, rational, responsible agents may be radically mistaken. The science, some argue, recommends a view of conscious agency as merely epiphenomenal: an impotent accompaniment to the whirring unconscious machinery (the inner zombie) that prepares, decides and causes our behavior. The new essays in this volume display and explore this radical claim, revisiting the folk concept of the responsible agent after abandoning the image of a central executive, and "decomposing" the notion of the conscious will into multiple interlocking aspects and functions.

Part 1 of this volume provides an overview of the scientific research that has been taken to support "the zombie challenge." In part 2, contributors explore the phenomenology of agency and what it is like to be the author of one's own actions. Part 3 then explores different strategies for using the science and phenomenology of human agency to respond to the zombie challenge.

Questions explored include: what distinguishes automatic behavior and voluntary action? What, if anything, does consciousness contribute to the voluntary control of behavior? What does the science of human behavior really tell us about the nature of self-control?

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