

---

# Actions as Attitudes

Conor Mchugh\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Philosophy, University of Southampton – Royaume-Uni

## Résumé

According to almost all philosophers of action, an intentional action is an event or process that is related in a certain way – causally and/or epistemically – to an agent, or, more commonly, to certain attitudes of the agent. For instance, they hold that an intentional action is an event caused in the right way by an intention (following Davidson), known about in a specific way (following Anscombe), or caused by an agent (agent-causalism). In this paper I motivate and explore a view that overturns this orthodoxy. On this *attitudinal view*, an intentional action *is* an attitude. More specifically, intentional action is an attitude-type, and token intentional actions are token attitudes of this type. As I develop the view, the objects of these attitudes are present event-types and the attitude is simply intention. To act intentionally is to intend to do something now.

There are four sections. Section 1 introduces. Section 2 clarifies the attitudinal view and distinguishes it from related views. Section 3 offers three motivations for the attitudinal view. First, it makes sense of the normative dimensions of action. Second, it elegantly accommodates an Aristotelian view of practical reasoning. Third, it avoids serious problems facing the orthodox views.

Section 4 addresses objections. The first is that you can intend to act now, but fail. In response, the view is compatible with failure to do as intended – just not with failure to act intentionally at all, a possibility we should reject in any case. The second objection points to alleged metaphysical differences between attitudes on the one hand and intentional actions on the other. For instance attitudes are states whereas intentional actions are events. In response I argue that token attitudes can be understood as events, and moreover that token attitudes of some types are temporally structured like intentional actions.

**Mots-Clés:** action, attitudes, intention, raisonnement pratique

---

\*Intervenant