the objects of belief (pp. 154–73). The final chapter (Ch. 4) includes a brief discussion of the ascription of beliefs to non-linguistic animals.

Richard's book is clearly written, with many of the more technical details cordoned off in digressions or relegated to the final chapter. (However, it would have helped the reader – and especially the re-reader – if there had been more section divisions to separate distinct topics. And I do wish that the examples had been a bit more imaginative.) The book is also well produced, with relatively few misprints apart from a deviant spelling of 'Barbara' that infects Chapter 2, and the notes conveniently placed at the foot of the page.

Even if Richard's theory should prove untenable, its failure would be instructive, and his resourceful elaboration of the theory and discussion of many thorny issues about propositional attitude ascription would remain valuable. His book should be of interest to anyone working in this field.

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Lawless Mind
By RAZIEL ABELSON

Abelson believes that the only way to explain certain phenomena (such as psychological causation and robust agency) involves denying causal determinism. He argues that moral responsibility requires freedom to do otherwise which in turn requires the absence of causal determinism. Further, he suggests that the deterministic picture is misleading and dangerous insofar as it 'threatens us with a kind of spiritual annihilation' (p. xvii). (This claim is rather puzzling, since, for all we know, causal determinism might be true, and its truth presumably would not affect any phenomenological features of the world – including our spirituality.)

Abelson argues against the model of agency according to which reasons cause bodily movements without the mediation of an (unanalysed) agent. Thus, 'dyadic' causality is to be replaced by 'triadic' causality, in which the agent plays a crucial mediating role. Some of the most interesting and illuminating material in the book is to be found in Abelson's arguments against dyadic causality and in favor of triadic causality. It is alleged by Abelson that indeterminism follows. But even if dyadic causality must be rejected in favour of some more complicated picture, I do not believe that this entails indeterminism. For a more refined approach – even something like a triadic approach – may be compatible with causal determinism.

Abelson considers the Principle of Transferability of Responsibility (T-R): "Whoever is not responsible for bringing about the cause of an event is not responsible for bringing about its effect, and, contrapositively, whoever is responsible for bringing about the effect of a cause must have been responsible for bringing about its cause" (p. 43). He attributes a similar principle to van Inwagen, and suggests that it underlies van Inwagen's incompatibilistic argument (p. 43). Abelson claims however that T-R applies only to natural causal chains and not also to "action chains". He
says, "... if a government official is bribed by an airplane manufacturer to accept defective fighter planes, some of which crash because of their defects, the official may not argue that the resultant casualties were not his fault but the fault of the manufacturer, on the ground that his own corrupt conduct was caused or brought about by the manufacturer's offer of a bribe" (p. 43–44). Abelson goes on to conclude that because T-R applies to natural causal chains but not action chains, it is plausible to think that action chains are not causally deterministic (pp. 52–53).

But whereas van Inwagen's principle resembles T-R, it is different. His principle, as applied to moral responsibility, says that if an agent is not morally responsible for $P$, and if the agent is not morally responsible for $P$'s leading to $Q$, then the agent is not morally responsible for $Q$. Note that Abelson's example of the corrupt official is not a counterexample to van Inwagen's principle, even if it is a counterexample to T-R. Thus, Abelson's example in no way threatens van Inwagen's incompatibilism.

Abelson defends a traditional approach to such issues as agency, morality, and moral responsibility. Such an approach posits free will—in the sense of freedom to do otherwise—as a necessary background condition, and it claims that such freedom is incompatible with causal determinism. But I believe that the phenomena to which he adverts can be explained in ways which do not require the presence of this sort of free will and the absence of causal determinism. It might be fruitful to pursue such alternative explanations, especially because it would be jarring and alarming to learn that we would have to give up our conception of ourselves as persons and moral agents if causal determinism turned out to be true.

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By JOHN BISHOP
Cambridge University Press, 1990. xii + 212 pp. £25.00

For Dr Bishop, the central philosophical issue about action (which underlies the determinism-free will debate) is this: Can ascribing moral responsibility, which seems to involve thinking in terms of agent-causation and agents exercising control over things that happen, be reconciled with a purely naturalistic view of the world—a scientific view, which recognises causation by events but not causation by agents? The primary challenge, on this view, is to convince the sceptic about action that what we think of as agent-causation can exist in a world in which only events really cause things.

The only hope he sees of doing this is by (i) giving a naturalistic account of mind and mental goings-on, (ii) developing an analysis of action as behaviour caused in a certain way by mental events of certain kinds, and then (iii) specifying in naturalistic terms the further conditions which must be added to agency to yield moral autonomy and responsibility. Making the assumption that (i) is achievable, he set himself to accomplish (ii). (In his final chapter he suggests that (iii) presents no major problem.)