

INTRODUCTION: SPECIAL ISSUE ON AGENCY AND RATIONALITY

This issue aims to explore the nature of rational agency, both practical and epistemic. Typically, exercises of our rational agency are governed by certain practical and epistemic norms. However, it is far from clear what exactly these norms are, or how we are to understand the way in which they govern us in acting and believing. Thus, understanding rational agency requires addressing issues that cut across different philosophical areas, such as ethics, philosophy of action, and epistemology. It raises questions concerning both the nature of normativity and the nature of belief and action. On the one hand, there are questions concerning the ground, scope, and content of practical and epistemic norms: Can fundamental practical and epistemic norms be grounded in the nature of action and belief? What are instrumental norms and how do they relate to actions? Must all genuine norms be understood in terms of reasons? On the other hand, there are questions concerning the metaphysics and epistemology of action and belief: How are we guided by various normative phenomena (reasons, norms, rules) in acting or in believing? What is the relation between agency and self-knowledge? Do we exercise agential control over our beliefs?

This volume brings together contributions by philosophers who approach these issues from both the perspective of ethics and the perspective of philosophy of mind and action. By assembling these papers in a single volume, we hope that philosophers from these overlapping fields can benefit from each other's insights.¹

SERGIO TENENBAUM¹ AND DAVID HORST²

*¹ University of Toronto
Department of Philosophy
170 St. George St. Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2M8
Canada*

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² Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul
Department of Philosophy
Porto Alegre, RS
Brazil

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