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In an important departure from current theories of causation, David Owens proposes that coincidences have no causes, and that a cause is something which ensures that its effects are no coincidence. In *Causes and coincidences*, he elucidates the idea of a coincidence as an event which can be divided into constituent events, the nomological antecedents of which are independent of each other. He also suggests that causal facts can be analysed in terms of non-causal facts, including relations of necessity. Thus, causation is defined in terms of *coincidence*, and *coincidence* without reference to causation.

David Owens challenges ideas associated with Hume, Davidson and Lewis, constructing a theory which distinguishes nomological necessity and sufficiency from their logical counterparts. He is able to offer novel solutions to the major problems of causation, including the direction of causation, the logical form of causal statements, the problem of deviant causal chains, and the relationship between psychological and physical causation.

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*David Owens*

*British Academy Post-Doctoral Research Fellow  
Department of Philosophy, University of Cambridge*



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## *Preface*

This book was written during my tenure of a Research Fellowship at Girton College, Cambridge. My greatest debt is to the Mistress and Fellows of Girton for electing me to that fellowship, without which this book could not have been written. During the last year of my stay in Girton, I held a British Academy Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship and I am grateful to the Academy for enabling me to complete the work.

Parts of this book derive from a D.Phil thesis submitted to Oxford University in 1988. Paul Snowdon was my thesis supervisor and the present work has greatly benefited from his patience, insight and intellectual generosity. Jennifer Hornsby first directed my attention to many of the issues discussed herein and, though we rarely agreed, her demand for clarity and her anti-reductionism have had their effect. Susan Hurley introduced me to decision theory and made me aware of its philosophical implications.

As to the current text, the person who has influenced it most is Michael Martin. He read every part of the manuscript at least once and his comments necessitated extensive revisions. Roger Teichmann forced me to think seriously about ontology and the material on events is the result. Discussions with Andrew Jack changed my ideas on supervenience, modality and psycho-physical causation, among other things. I have also benefited from the comments of Simon Blackburn, Nicholas Denyer, Peter Lipton, Hugh Mellor, David Papineau, Tom Pink, Roland Stout and Sydney Shoemaker. I would like to thank Richard Sorabji, Nicholas Denyer and Kathy Wilkes for their help and encouragement at various points. Finally, the technical advice willingly offered by Andrew Jack and Michael Martin was invaluable to someone at sea with his own word processor.

I am grateful to the Editor of the Australasian Journal of Philosophy for permission to reproduce a passage from M. Davies – ‘Function in Perception’ *AJP*, 61, and to Cambridge University Press for permission

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