3 The Sense and Nonsense of Tracing

Abstract: People seem to be morally responsible for some actions and consequences they do not control. A popular view among proponents of control-based theories of moral responsibility is that this responsibility can often be captured in terms of “tracing.” As far as consequences are concerned, the idea is that in some cases moral responsibility for a consequence that lies outside an agent’s control can be traced to a suitably related action over which the agent did have control. A similar strategy is used to argue that agents are responsible for certain actions that are beyond their control. In this chapter, I argue that what I call “consequence tracing” may be defensible, while what I call “action tracing” is not.

3.1 Introduction

Agents would seem to be morally responsible only for behavior and outcomes that they control. Yet there are powerful counterexamples to this claim. A paradigmatic example is the drunk driver who causes an accident. At the time of the accident, the drunk driver lacks proper control over her behavior due to her intoxicated state. In spite of this, she is blameworthy. This suggests that moral responsibility does not require control after all. A well-known tool for reconciling such examples with the view that moral responsibility requires control is called “tracing.” The drunk driver is blameworthy because the accident can be traced back to an action over which she did exercise control: drinking. The idea is that an agent can be responsible for some outcome despite lacking control over it immediately prior to the outcome, as long as she controlled the outcome at some earlier point in time (Vargas, 2005, p. 269). Since the cognitive impairment that results from drinking is foreseeable and there are several ways for the agent to avoid getting into her car while drunk, agents are generally responsible for the outcomes of their drunk behavior.
Manuel Vargas points out that the outcome we trace to an earlier moment of control can be either an action or a consequence (Vargas, 2005, p. 274). For instance, the outcomes in the drunk driving case are a decision to drive home and the further consequence that is the accident. However, it may matter whether the outcome is properly treated as an action or a consequence. For instance, it matters whether we should blame a person for deciding to drink, the consequence of which was the drunk driving and further related consequences, or whether we can blame a person for deciding to drive while drunk. One reason for considering intoxicated behavior a type of action is that there is still a sense in which a person is behaving as an agent in such scenarios, which would be obfuscated if we were to treat the intoxicated behavior as a mere accidental happening.

I take the standard view on tracing to be that the outcome is treated as a consequence and will refer to this view as “consequence tracing.” However, some philosophers defend (or appear to defend) what I call “action tracing” and hold that the object of tracing is an action rather than a consequence (e.g., Fischer and Ravizza (1998) and Flummer (2016)). In the previous chapter, I briefly discussed a shortcoming of tracing with respect to accounting for responsibility for habitual behavior. In this chapter, my aim is to distinguish action tracing from consequence tracing and to argue that action tracing is indefensible. I will argue that tracing may license blaming an agent for an outcome if that outcome is understood as a consequence, but not if it is conceived of as an action.

In the second section, I will discuss consequence tracing. If successful, consequence tracing either extends the number of things for which one is blameworthy or the degree of blameworthiness. I leave open whether consequence tracing is plausible, since this discussion is part of the wider debate on whether agents are responsible for consequences. In the third section, I will argue that action tracing is implausible. Tracing is based on the fact that in some cases the temporally removed outcomes of your controlled actions are reasonably foreseeable. I will argue that even though satisfying this epistemic condition entails being responsible for the outcome
as a consequence, there is no reason to believe that satisfying the epistemic condition entails being responsible for the outcome as an action.

3.2 Consequence Tracing

Before I engage with consequence tracing, I will first briefly point out how I understand responsibility. In this chapter, I rely on John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza’s understanding of moral responsibility. I will assume that an agent is morally responsible insofar as she is an appropriate candidate for reactive attitudes (Fischer & Ravizza, 1998, p. 7). To hold someone responsible is just to have a reactive attitude towards that person, as a reaction towards the good or ill will displayed by the person who is held responsible. Reactive attitudes like gratitude and praise are appropriate if the acting agent did something praiseworthy, while reactive attitudes like indignation and resentment are appropriate if the agent did something blameworthy.

Many philosophers hold that in order to be responsible, an agent must meet an epistemic condition and a control condition. First, consider the epistemic condition. Suppose – to borrow an example from Fischer and Tognazinni – that Kevin’s friends planned a surprise party for Kevin but forgot to tell Dan that the party is indeed a surprise (Fischer & Tognazzini, 2009, p. 531). Sure enough, Dan spoils the surprise by informing Kevin that he is coming to the party. Dan’s ignorance of the surprise element plausibly absolves him from responsibility for spoiling the surprise. Hence, an agent must be in the right epistemic position in order to be responsible.

36 Fischer and Ravizza (1998) adopt talk of reactive attitudes, as influentially presented by Strawson (1962). However, they stress that their view is merely Strawsonian and does not correspond neatly to Strawson’s actual view (Fischer & Ravizza, 1998, p. 7).

37 I remain agnostic about the possibility of “neutral” responsibility, which Fischer and Ravizza accept (Fischer & Ravizza, 1998, p. 8). Furthermore, I agree with Fischer and Ravizza that blameworthiness does not entail that an agent needs to be blamed.

38 In addition to a control condition and an epistemic condition, Fischer and Ravizza argue that the agent must also “own” the action in some sense in order to be responsible (Fischer & Ravizza, 1998, p. 170). I take it that the ownership condition is largely aimed at showing that an agent who has been manipulated to act a certain way is not responsible for that action. Whether we should or should not accept the ownership condition has no special importance for my discussion.
the main idea that motivates philosophers to accept a control condition on moral responsibility is the idea that if an agent could not help acting the way she did, then it does not make sense to hold her responsible for acting that way. We do not hold the agent who suffers from severe kleptomania morally responsible for stealing, because she is unable to control her behavior in the right way (Fischer & Tognazzini, 2009, p. 531).39

Tracing comes into play when an agent lacks control over her action but this lack of control can be traced back to some earlier event in which she did have control. But what is control in the first place? According to a widely accepted conception, control can be understood in terms of reasons-responsiveness. Reasons-responsiveness accounts of control start from the idea that in order to be responsible, “an agent must be responsive to reasons in some suitable sense” (Vargas, 2013, p. 135). An agent must be able to recognize and respond to moral considerations in a suitable way in order to be morally responsible.40 Tracing is accepted by nearly all parties who accept that some version of control is necessary for responsibility (Vargas, 2005, p. 270).41 The argument in this chapter also works for certain other conceptions of control, including the influential view according to which control requires consciousness of the moral significance of one’s actions.42

Defenders of control-based theories of responsibility face a problem with respect to a number of cases in which an agent is not fully in control of

39 Note that even if we do not think it is appropriate to resent the kleptomaniac for stealing, we may still hold an objective attitude towards her (P. F. Strawson, 1993, pp. 28–30). That is, we can recognize the problem the kleptomaniac poses for society and attempt to find a reasonable solution (e.g. treatment, or perhaps incarceration).

40 The paradigmatic reasons-responsiveness account is developed by Fischer and Ravizza, who defend a version they call “moderate reasons-responsiveness” (Fischer & Ravizza, 1998, Chapter 3).

41 For instance, tracing can be accepted by parties who hold that control requires alternative possibilities. David Widerker points out that the principle of alternative possibilities, which holds that “an agent S is morally blameworthy for performing a given act V only if he could have avoided performing it,” leaves open whether agents can also be derivatively (indirectly) responsible in cases where they could not have avoided performing the action (Widerker, 2011, pp. 266, 266n2).

42 Neil Levy, who also accepts tracing, holds such a view (Levy, 2014, pp. 3, 37). John Mackie also holds such a view, but note that he rejects tracing (Mackie, 1977, p. 212).
her behavior but appears to be responsible anyway. The paradigmatic case in this regard is the drunk driver case mentioned in the introduction. Consider the following version of the drunk driver case:

Jill starts drinking at the party at \( t_1 \). After a few hours, Jill has become quite drunk and decides, at \( t_2 \), to drive home. At \( t_3 \), Jill accidentally swerves her car, resulting in a pedestrian’s death.

Jill is not in control of the outcome of her drinking.\(^{43}\) Yet it is common to believe that Jill and agents like her are responsible for the events at \( t_2 \) and \( t_3 \). This is because it is still in some sense up to Jill whether these events occur. After all, she could have refrained from drinking. Note that both outcomes can be construed as either consequences or actions, depending on how we individuate actions and construe what is required for performing them. For instance, the event at \( t_3 \) could be described as Jill’s killing the pedestrian. Rather than solving the problem of how to individuate actions, I will consider both possibilities: the outcomes as consequences and the outcomes as actions.

The central tenet of consequence tracing is that the agent does not need to meet the control and epistemic conditions for responsibility at the time the consequence occurs if the agent’s responsibility for that consequence can be traced back to some suitable earlier time when she did meet the requisite conditions. Consequence tracing has the following conditions: The agent must be able to control the action at \( t_1 \). Furthermore, at \( t_1 \) the agent must also be in the appropriate epistemic position with respect to the consequence of the action that occurs at \( t_2 \). Thus, the tracer’s claim is:

\(^{43}\) Note that there are some difficulties with respect to drunk driver cases. First of all, drinking leads to gradual incapacitation. Some drivers who are tipsy rather than drunk retain some control when deciding to drive at \( t_2 \). I submit that drunk drivers are not in control of their decision at \( t_2 \) and at the moment of the accident at \( t_3 \). The second problem pertains to the inverse relation that the control and epistemic conditions on moral responsibility appear to have in these kinds of cases (Khoury, 2012, pp. 193–194). An agent who has just started drinking is still in full control, but the full consequences are distant and unpredictable. On the other hand, as soon as the consequences become realistic because the agent is drunk, that agent is no longer in control. This issue has no special bearing on my discussion, since in this chapter I am concerned with more general problems pertaining to tracing.
Consequence Tracing: If one is in control of one’s action at time $t_1$ and one is in the appropriate epistemic position with respect to the fact that one’s action at $t_1$ may lead to a certain consequence at $t_2$, then one can be held responsible for the consequence at $t_2$.

Advocates of tracing have different takes on the epistemic condition required for tracing. For instance, Fischer and Ravizza hold that it must be reasonable to expect the agent to know that the event at $t_2$ will occur (Fischer & Ravizza, 1998, p. 50). On the other hand, Daniel Miller contends that tracers have reason to hold that an agent must actually foresee that the consequence will occur in order to satisfy the epistemic condition (Miller, 2017, p. 1580). Any defender of tracing accepts that some kind of epistemic condition is necessary for tracing.\textsuperscript{44} For my purposes, I do not need to commit to any particular understanding of the epistemic condition.

In order to get a grip on what is achieved by consequence tracing, it is helpful to distinguish between responsibility for actual consequences and responsibility for expected consequences. The distinction between actual and expected consequences can be clarified by referring to the phenomenon of “resultant moral luck.” Resultant luck occurs when luck affects the results of one’s action (Zimmerman, 1987, p. 376). Resultant moral luck occurs when resultant luck affects the degree of an agent’s blameworthiness or praiseworthiness. To understand when resultant moral luck may arise, consider two scenarios in which an assassin attempts to shoot his victim.\textsuperscript{45} In \textit{Assassin 1}, an assassin aims his rifle at his victim and pulls the trigger. The bullet hits the victim, who dies shortly after. In \textit{Assassin 2}, everything is exactly the same as in the first scenario except that after the assassin pulls the trigger, a bird flies into the bullet’s trajectory. In \textit{Assassin 2}, the victim remains unharmed. Luck affects whether the assassin’s shot actually results in the intended death of the victim. If you accept that the “successful” assassin is

\textsuperscript{44} The epistemic condition on tracing has inspired much recent debate (Fischer & Tognazzini, 2009; Miller, 2017; Shabo, 2015; Timpe, 2011; Vargas, 2005).

\textsuperscript{45} I borrow this version of the “assassin case” from Khoury (Khoury, 2012).
more blameworthy than the “unsuccessful” assassin, then you affirm the existence of resultant moral luck.\textsuperscript{46}

Consequence tracing concerns responsibility for the actual consequences of one’s actions rather than the expected consequences. There are two different ways of acknowledging responsibility for actual consequences. One way is to simply accept resultant moral luck, which implies that factors beyond the agent’s control can affect the degree of moral responsibility. An alternative way is to say that responsibility for consequences widens the scope of things for which an agent can be held responsible. According to Zimmerman, the successful assassin is blameworthy for more things than the unsuccessful assassin, such as the death of the victim (Zimmerman, 2006, p. 598). On the other hand, if two agents behave in the exact same way but their actions lead to different results through sheer luck, Zimmerman claims that there is no morally relevant distinction between the two actions. Therefore, the successful assassin is not more blameworthy. Thus, we can distinguish between the scope and the degree of blameworthiness. The defender of consequence tracing is at least committed to the claim that tracing allows agents to be blameworthy for more things even if agents are not more blameworthy.

Consequence tracing leads to the following analysis of the drunk driver case. Jill is in control of drinking alcohol. Assuming she is aware of the possible consequences of her drinking, we can trace the consequence “Jill decides to drive” and the consequence “Jill causes an accident” to her drinking, which she controls. This means that Jill is blameworthy for both consequences. On the least demanding take on responsibility for consequences, this means that consequence tracing widens the scope of things for which Jill is blameworthy. She is responsible not only for drinking alcohol but also for deciding to drive and causing an accident, but she is responsible to the same degree as she would have been had she not decided

\textsuperscript{46} On a view that rejects resultant moral luck, the actual consequences may still be what Khoury calls “epistemically relevant” (Khoury, 2012, p. 200). That is, the fact that some consequence occurs provides an indication that the agent is blameworthy for some past action.
to drive (and thus not caused an accident). On a more demanding take on responsibility for consequences, consequence tracing also increases the degree of Jill’s blameworthiness.

In this section, I have discussed the main facets of what I believe is the predominant view on tracing: consequence tracing. The plausibility of consequence tracing is directly related to the plausibility of responsibility for consequences in general, which depends on one’s take on resultant moral luck. Assessing the plausibility of responsibility for consequences and resultant moral luck is beyond the scope of this chapter. Consequence tracing does not draw a principled distinction between the various outcomes, since all outcomes are treated as consequences. As I will show in the next section, some philosophers are committed to such a distinction and advocate a form of action tracing.

### 3.3 Action Tracing

Tracing is a way to account for responsibility for uncontrolled behavior, but what happens if we think of that behavior as an action rather than a consequence? Philosophers who accept what I call action tracing hold that it matters that the outcome counts as an action rather than a mere consequence, which would be a nonaction. In this section, I will argue that action tracing is a nonstarter. Since the distinction between action tracing and consequence tracing is not widespread, I will first argue that some philosophers, such as Fischer and Ravizza (1998), are committed to action tracing or are at least unclear about whether they believe the traced outcome should be treated as an action or as a consequence. According to Fischer and Ravizza, tracing is a way to account for responsibility for some actions that are not under the agent’s control:

When one acts from a reasons-responsive mechanism at time $t$, and one can reasonably be expected to know that so acting will (or may)

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47 The classics in the debate on moral luck are Thomas Nagel and Michael Zimmerman (Nagel, 1979; Zimmerman, 1987). For recent contributions, see Neil Levy and Robert Hartman (Hartman, 2016; Levy, 2016).
An implicit assumption of this claim seems to be that some ways of behaving that are not under an agent’s control can properly be called actions. Since agency and control are intuitively closely related, this may seem striking. The wedge between agency and control is entailed by their notion of moral responsibility. Fischer and Ravizza defend a “mechanism-based” approach to moral responsibility rather than an “agent-based” approach (Fischer & Ravizza, 1998, p. 38). They argue that in some (Frankfurt-style) cases, it makes sense to think that the agent is not reasons-responsive, while the mechanism leading to the action is. The mechanism is what gives rise to the process that leads to the action or “the way the action comes about” (Fischer & Ravizza, 1998, p. 38).

In some cases, an agent acts on a mechanism that is not appropriately reasons-responsive. An example of such a case is the agent who is drunk to the point that “he is almost oblivious to his surroundings” (Fischer & Ravizza, 1998, p. 49). Tracing is employed by Fischer and Ravizza to deal with the kinds of cases in which an agent acts from a mechanism that is not appropriately reasons-responsive. Their portrayal of tracing suggests that tracing is used to make sense of cases where an agent exercises some minimal level of agency but lacks the control necessary for responsibility, even though the agent is intuitively responsible. In the remainder of this chapter, I will call behavior where some level of agency is retained in absence of control “actions*.”

A number of philosophers understand tracing as action tracing. Fischer and Ravizza’s outline of what they call the “tracing approach” suggests that they are committed to action tracing. However, other philosophers are explicitly committed to understanding tracing as action tracing. For instance, Matthew Flummer claims that even if we deny that agents are responsible for the consequences of certain actions, we would still need tracing to account for impaired decisions like the drunken agent’s decision to drive home (Flummer, 2016, pp. 450–451). His point is that
decisions involve mental states, which would imply that a decision cannot properly be called a consequence. In addition to these defenders of action tracing, some who are critical of tracing also understand tracing as action tracing. Craig Agule has argued that tracing concerns responsibility for actions that are not under an agent’s control rather than responsibility for consequences (Agule, 2016, p. 8).

Having argued that a number of philosophers understand tracing as action tracing, we can now turn to what action tracing precisely involves. What does it mean to be responsible for an action* rather than a consequence? An action* is an action over which the agent does not have the level of control necessary for responsibility. Following Fischer and Ravizza, I adopt the view that an agent who is morally responsible is an apt candidate for reactive attitudes (Fischer & Ravizza, 1998, p. 7). According to Fischer, “the reactive attitudes are keyed to features of behavior that reflect the quality of the agent’s will (his good or ill will, or his indifference)” (Fischer, 1999, p. 295). The reactive attitudes are thus geared towards the respective target’s quality of will. This means that if an agent is responsible for an action*, then there are some features of that action* that express the agent’s quality of will. On the other hand, if an agent is responsible for the consequence of an action, then her quality of will is expressed by features of the action that led to the consequence. For now, I will assume that an action tracer holds that an agent expresses some quality of will when she is responsible for an action*. Later in this section, I will defend the claim that action tracing fails regardless

48 Flummer’s claim is based on Khoury’s definition of consequences. Khoury defines consequences as follows: “A ‘consequence’ will be taken to mean an event or state of affairs (causally related in the appropriate way to an action of an agent) under a description that makes no reference to the mental states of the agent in acting” (Khoury, 2012, p. 197).
49 Matt King also appears to be committed to action tracing. According to King, tracing is designed to deal with rare and exceptional cases like drunk driving (King, 2014, p. 473n19), while responsibility for consequences is not rare or exceptional. However, King is not expressly committed to understanding tracing as action tracing, and he argues that tracing is simply unnecessary to account for cases like drunk driving.
of how we spell out the difference between being responsible for a consequence and being responsible for an action*.\textsuperscript{50}

Defenders of action tracing subscribe to the following claim:

**Action Tracing:** If one is in control of one’s action at $t_1$ and one is in the appropriate epistemic position with respect to the fact that one’s action at $t_1$ may lead to a certain action* at $t_2$, one can be held responsible for the action* at $t_2$.

Action tracing allows us to understand the drunk driver case as follows. Jill is blameworthy for drinking at $t_1$. Jill is also blameworthy for deciding to drive at $t_2$. At both times, features of Jill’s behavior reflect her quality of will. Separate reactive attitudes are warranted for Jill’s behavior at $t_1$ and for Jill’s behavior at $t_2$. This means that each expression of quality of will merits its own set of reactive attitudes, but these sets of reactive attitudes could in principle be of the same kind. For example, suppose that an experienced burglar commits burglary on both Tuesday and Wednesday. He is blameworthy in both instances and for the same kind of action. Hence, he can be blamed for both acts, which display his ill will, and he can be blamed for both events separately. Note that if Jill’s killing the pedestrian at $t_3$ carries sufficient agency to count as an action*, then this event will also merit its own distinct set of reactive attitudes. For the sake of argument, I will proceed to only consider the event at $t_2$ as an action*.

The contrast with consequence tracing is that with consequence tracing we are only concerned with one expression of the agent’s quality of will.\textsuperscript{51} To illustrate this contrast, consider what the different takes on tracing entail concerning what we can say about someone’s reaction to Jill’s behavior. Suppose that at time $t_2$ Kelly gets angry at Jill for her decision to drive home. The question is what Kelly is blaming Jill for, exactly. On consequence

\textsuperscript{50} If one is not on board with this difference, one will not accept action tracing in the first place.

\textsuperscript{51} Note that if there are multiple expressions of quality of will, then this does not automatically imply that the agent is also more blameworthy in degree than an agent who only expresses her quality of will once.
tracing, Kelly would be blaming Jill for her decision to drive home as a consequence of her earlier decision to drink. Kelly would then respond to the indifference Jill expressed at \( t_1 \) by deciding to drink. On action tracing, Kelly could blame Jill for the decision to drive home as a decision in itself. On this reading, Kelly would be responding to the indifference of Jill’s decision to drive while drunk.

What makes action tracing a nonstarter is that tracing does not support the idea that the agent is responsible for an action*. To show this, first consider that we ordinarily take failure to meet the control condition and failure to meet the epistemic condition to mean that an agent’s quality of will is not reflected in her behavior. In the case of the severe kleptomaniac, for example, the fact that this person steals something is not a reflection of her ill will towards the person she is stealing from but rather reflects the condition of kleptomania. In cases where we apply tracing, the control condition is also absent with respect to elements of the agent’s behavior, which would suggest that there are no features of these elements that reflect that agent’s quality of will. Therefore, something about the tracing relation must show why being able to trace responsibility for an act* (over which the agent lacks control) to an earlier act (over which the agent had control) allows us to view the agent as evincing her quality of will.

The core intuition that supports tracing is that an agent could have prevented the action* over which she has no control insofar as she could have foreseen that the action* would occur. It is the agent’s epistemic position at \( t_1 \) that makes it plausible that she has this ability to prevent the action* from occurring at \( t_2 \), as long as she controls the action at \( t_1 \). The tracing relation is based on the fact that an agent can – to some extent – foresee the outcomes of her actions and is able to prevent those outcomes in virtue of her control over her actions.

The case in which Dan spoils the surprise element of Kevin’s surprise party helps to further explain the importance and role of the epistemic condition. As Dan had no reason to assume that the party was in fact a surprise party, he cannot be blamed for the consequence that the party was
no longer a surprise. Dan’s lack of knowledge of the “surprise” element implies that he did not display a desire to spoil the surprise and did not express ill will towards Kevin or his friends. Compare Dan with Bernard, who is envious of Kevin’s social status in their group of friends and holds ill will towards Kevin. Suppose that Bernard spoils the surprise by informing Kevin that he will attend the party. This act alone does not show that Bernard spoiled the surprise out of ill will, for if Bernard had not known that the party was a surprise, he would have spoiled the surprise only by accident. However, if Bernard is aware that the party is a surprise and that the consequence “the party is no longer a surprise” will disappoint Kevin, then it is clear that Bernard acted out of ill will. The epistemic condition is crucial to moral responsibility because the epistemic position of the acting agent discloses information about his quality of will in acting.

The presence of beliefs about the consequences tells us something about the quality of the agent’s will when she acts at \( t_1 \), but it fails to justify treating her action* at \( t_2 \) as a new display of her quality of will. Suppose that Jill is in the right epistemic position with respect to the fact that she may drive home when she starts drinking. Jill’s epistemic position discloses that she acts with ill will when she starts drinking, for she knows that drinking can lead to risks to others later that evening. In other words, Jill is reckless.\(^\text{52}\) If Jill actually decides to drive when drunk, this is at most indicative of the quality of her will at \( t_1 \). Suppose that Jill is absolutely certain that she will drive home in an inebriated state if she starts drinking now. This knowledge only seems to make her more blameworthy for starting to drink, but there is no reason to think that it shows that she displays a new quality of will the moment she decides to drive.

The problem generalizes to any specification of the difference between consequences and actions. The epistemic condition encompasses all states of affairs that will result from acting in a particular way. In other words,

\(^{52}\) According to King, we can model all responsibility at stake in drunk driving cases as either recklessness or negligence, and hence we do not require tracing (King, 2014, p. 463). I frame it differently and take it that all that tracing can achieve is modelling responsibility as either recklessness or negligence.
it concerns the epistemic position of the agent with respect to the consequences of acting a certain way. The epistemic condition is thus intrinsically related to responsibility for consequences. Tracers have presented no reason to think that the epistemic condition is related to something over and above responsibility for consequences. Such a reason would be necessary to support a distinction between responsibility for consequences and responsibility for actions*. Therefore, up until now, a tracing relationship that is only based on the epistemic condition fails to support action tracing. Thus, the accounts of tracing thus far do not give us a reason to subscribe to action tracing.

Given the way tracing has been presented by various authors, action tracing does not get off the ground. As a result, action tracing cannot accommodate the idea that Jill is blameworthy for the indifference disclosed in her decision to drive home at $t_2$. The upshot is that we are left with two options. The first is to deny that we can treat behavior over which an agent lacks control as an action* for which she can be held responsible. Jill can only be responsible for the consequences of her drinking. The second option is to maintain that there are cases in which, while the agent is not in control of her action*, she can be said to be responsible for it. Taking this latter option requires either developing an alternative to tracing or lowering the bar for what counts as sufficiently controlled behavior for which one can be morally responsible.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Consequence tracing is the view that the objects of tracing are the foreseeable consequences of actions that are under an agent’s control. Recently, a number of philosophers have endorsed action tracing, according to which the objects of tracing are actions. According to tracing, an agent is responsible for an outcome that is outside of her direct control if she meets the epistemic condition with respect to that outcome at the moment of her action and she is in control of that action. I have argued that meeting the epistemic condition does not give us any reason to accept that the objects of tracing are actions.
Tracing cannot show that an agent is responsible for an action over which she lacks control. The upshot is that tracing can license certain blaming reactions to drunken behavior but at the same time does not support others. We can blame a drunk driver for the occurrence of her drunk driving as a consequence of her drinking, but we cannot blame the drunk driver for her drunken decision to drive home.