

Naturalist Dualism and Mental Causation

Sloppy Premise Zombie-styled dualism cannot accommodate causally potent conscious states

1. Physical closure of nomological sufficiency
2. Common cause scenario
3. Dialectical considerations

Kroedel's Solution

Kroedel (2013) proposes the following approach:
Adopt Lewisian counterfactualism

Causation E causally depends on C *iff*
 $C \Box \rightarrow E$ and $\neg C \Box \rightarrow \neg E$

Semantics of $\Box \rightarrow$ $C \Box \rightarrow E$ is true *iff*
there is a possible world where C and E hold which is closer to the actual world than any possible world where C and $\neg E$ hold (or there are no possible worlds where C holds).

Embrace 'Supernomological' Dualism

Supernomological Dualism Psychophysical laws are *supernomological*: stronger than regular nomological laws but weaker than metaphysical laws.

Objections

- Supernomological dualism is either problematically *ad hoc* or unstable
- Supernomological dualism rekindles the common cause worry for counterfactualism

I submit that Lewisian counterfactualism cannot help the dualist because it still requires the mental states to inherit their causal powers from the underlying physical states.

Instead the dualist should focus on their properties *qua* mental states, and how those relate to the properties of their purported effects.

Alternative Solution

Sloppy Solution Causation is a relation between salient variables whose values systematically correlate under certain interventions.

cf. Campbell's volume knob and belief examples (2008)

Immediate worry: This account of causation is so convenient it cannot but be a trick. This is not *real* causation.

However, this account of causation is independently motivated by general considerations on the nature of the causation relation.

Negative Causation

Omissions can be causes *and* are too pervasive in causal processes to be dismissed as mere sleight of hand.

The pattern of negative causation features in even the most paradigmatically causal cases. Suppose that the sniper feels murderous, pulls the trigger, fires a bullet through the victim's heart, and the victim dies. Here is a paradigmatic causal sequence, *every step of which* is negative causation. (2004, p. 199)

I suggest that omissions as causes indicate the importance of a notion of *salience* for the causal relation: me not watering my plants is a salient fact, whereas Donald Trump's not watering my plants is not.

Time-asymmetry

What distinguishes causes from 'post-determiners'?

Adam Elga pointed out that, even though we *can* find so-called 'postdeterminers' for every state of affairs, these postdeterminers are highly specific and contrived states (2001). Moreover, the determination relation from this contrived postdeterminer state to their 'effect' is extremely fragile

Field (2003) suggested that causal asymmetry only holds between variables that are salient to us.

Adding Causes

It is implausible that in our actual world there are more causes in the sense of nomological determiners than in zombie world. **However**, it is not as implausible that the actual world contains more causes in the sense of salient and systematic variables.

Main Objection: what kind of intervention?

On the typical interventionist definition of causation, dualist qualia cannot be causes:

(M) A necessary and sufficient condition for X to be a (type-level) direct cause of Y with respect to a variable set V is that there be a possible intervention on X that will change Y or the probability distribution of Y **when one holds fixed at some value all other variables Z_i in V**

Some of the same worries reoccur as with Kroedel's account. However, the current account of causation might allow for a more principled answer to this worry. The criteria for being a cause seem to be set by the way we interact with the world. From that perspective, nomological supervenience, is as strict as any supervenience.

References

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