

CAUSATION & MANIPULATIONISM

A. Introduction to the Metaphysics of Causation

Counterfactual Theories (Lewis, D. (1973, 1986, 2000))

‘If it weren’t for the cause, the effect would not have been.’

Problem Cases: Preemption; Transitivity; Spurious Counterfactual Dependence

Probability Theories (Reichenbach, H. (1923); Suppes, P. (1970); Pearl, J. (2000))

‘Causes raise the probability of their effects.’

Problem Cases: Probability-raising without causation (effects of a common cause, effects on causes); Preemption

Process Theories (Salmon, W. (1984); Dowe, P. (1992))

‘Causes are connected to their effects by a process or mark.’

Problem Cases: Omission; Prevention; Double Prevention

B. Introduction to Manipulationism

Manipulationism begins with the idea that we are *agents* who can manipulate (or bring about) events in the world. There are a number of different species of manipulationist account (e.g. the agency theory, interventionism, causal modelling). However, apart from their common manipulationist starting points, they sometimes have little in common. Some have reductive aspirations, while others are committed to causal realism; some are engaged in the metaphysics of causation, while others seek to explain causal discourse. In other words **manipulationism crosscuts many other metaphysical and metametaphysical distinctions.**

Very roughly speaking, manipulationist theories take it that when *A* is a cause of *B*, making *A* occur will lead to *B*’s occurring.

One of the motivations for this kind of approach is that it shows promise in tackling the recalcitrant cases that plagued counterfactual, probabilistic, and process theories.

A second motivation is that it seems to provide an explanation for why we have a notion of cause and effect at all.

READINGS

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Price, H Forthcoming, 'Causation, intervention and agency -- Woodward on Menzies and Price', Draft.