

# Review of: "Teleology, backward causation, and the nature of concepts. A study in non-locality of reason"

Krasimira Filcheva

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This paper presents several highly suggestive lines of metaphysical inquiry into the possibility of objective teleological facts. Having presented in some detail the more dominant conceptions of teleological organization in nature, rooted in human intentional action and the projections of an "intentional stance," the author proceeds to argue for the possibility of an alternative view. According to the alternative view on offer, teleological organization in nature is possible in virtue of the possibility of backwards causation. Future causes determine past purposive actions. The author then formulates a number of different analyses of the relevant future causes – non-local correlations in quantum processes, on the one hand, and abstracta, on the other, among the more promising ones. A defensible and workable model of backwards causation in terms of abstracta, the author suggests, would require a novel view of concepts as non-local entities that extend wholly in different spatiotemporal regions.

One point of consideration I would mention, as a way to strengthen the paper, is scepticism about the overall project of defending an objective conception of teleological organization. In light of the especially metaphysically revisionary consequences of such a view, on balance, one might suppose, it may be better to reject the objective conception of teleology.

The article goes some way towards addressing the sceptical line of argument in the context of discussion on the Kantian, reflective-teleological conception of teleology. It would be interesting to see if more can be said to extend the author's argument that even the reflective-teleological conception presupposes, when sufficiently analysed, the constitutive conception of teleology. The overall idea would then be that teleological organization in nature is an essential objective feature of the world and scepticism is entirely unwarranted. The emphasis here would be on the unavoidability of metaphysical revisionism.

Finally, I thought the article presented a probing and interesting reading of the central argument in the *Analytic of Kant's First Critique*. The argument here is that the reflective-teleological mode of explanation is evident in the description of the activity of synthesis of the faculty of transcendental imagination. Transcendental synthesis is, as it were, aimed at unity of representations. It is worth noting that this functional reading is, in effect, also explored extensively in Beatrice Longuenesse' highly influential work on the *First Critique* (Longuenesse, 1998). The key to the central argument of the *Analytic*, she suggests, is that synthesis makes analysis possible. The idea is that the intuitive manifold must be already synthetically organized with a view to making judgment-level unity possible, and this is what explains the applicability of our forms to judgment to the objects of experience.

Longueness, B. (1998). *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.