

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

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Basically speaking, it is an intriguing paper, which inspired me to think about many things related to causation. But it is an ambitious project indeed, since so many things need to be clarified to make the authors' backward causation model convincing. Anyway, I still love the paper, given that the current atmosphere in analytic philosophy seems that only discussions on small topics will be encouraged. Philosophers should do something bigger.

Now turn to my puzzles concerning this paper:

1. The author suggested two ways to instantiate entities which can be used as causes in his backward causation picture. One is related to quantum mechanics, another is related to concepts. But the two candidates are so ontologically different from each other, and the only commonplace between them is only that the spatial distribution of them may be not pointwise but somehow in a region. However, to take any route here will result in a metaphysical stance wildly different from that of taking another: the quantum-picture buyer will be a physicalist while the concept-picture buyer will be a Platonist. Isn't the author's ontological pluralism a bit too pluralist?
2. Now turn the option of concepts. In order to make concepts minimally spatially-temporally relevant to events occurring in the present, the author suggests that the concept in question may occupy a local region in which the current event is located. Hence, the concept pertaining to this region looks like a media between the very event and the concept simpliciter. Now the question is: Is the media itself requiring a further media relating itself and the event, and will this lead us to infinite regress? Well, Aristotle's criticism of Plato is still troublesome here.
3. By "concepts", does the author mean entities including concepts related to artefacts or exclusively related to natural kinds alone? If the latter is the answer, how to account for, say, my current hero (I mean Zelensky actually)'s teleological intention that the Kiev government will take back all of the lost territory from invaders? "The lost territory" is definitely a conceptual device making sense only in human political affairs. But if concepts like this should be considered for accounting for backward causation in human history, how large would the set of future-cause-playing concepts turn out to be? That question also can be posed to numbers, given that the author favors the cases on maths more than politics. How many numerical concepts are needed to account for the backward causation in counting activities, given the unlimited size of numbers?
4. I also have a puzzle about the relationship between temporality and modality in the author's picture. Yes, counterfactual analyses do play a role in this paper, but a systematic clarification is still needed. What is the relationship between, say, the future and possibilities? What kind of modal theory should be used to cooperate with

the author's picture of causation? Modal realism or modal non-realism or modal combinatorial theory ?

5. I even doubt that the author's picture has to be cooperating with a certain form of theory of time. For instance, is backward causation requiring 4-dimensional theory? I have a gut-feeling that it does, but it seems that the author has left this problem untouched.