Interstellar Variations 1: Plan B and Causal Objects

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Abstract

> The incredible movie “Interstellar” introduces “Plan B” to save humanity from an approaching apocalypse. In this paper, I discuss “causal objects” as Plan B to contrast the contemporary scientific culture that holds that everything is physical. I do not discuss them as such but introduce the concept to stimulate further research.

Michael Caine’s character, Professor John Brand, in the movie Interstellar has a Plan A for the survival of mankind. If that doesn’t work, he has a backup Plan B. Plan A is the desired one, whereas Plan B saves some astronauts and a lot of fertilized eggs.

Today, we have a scientific culture that functions as our Plan A. That culture states that everything, in one way or another, is physical. A recent shift in our language is the move from “my thoughts are in my mind” to “my thoughts are in my brain.” If we have thoughts and everything, in the end, is physical, it is natural to think that one’s thoughts are in one’s brain.

In preparation for the defense of my master’s thesis (2019), I played with an application of it and found that it provided an ontologically neutral view of the scientific object. I had introduced the concept of causal objects, and it applied to any kind of object (with a causal background). In my preparation, I saw that separate ontological fields could be joined by something I called interfaces (2017). Accordingly, everything, in the end, may be physical – or not. I thought this

possibility was very interesting.

Plan B is to investigate this possibility and see where it may lead. One thing is established, though, and that is that the mind can be a substance of its own – provided that there can be interfaces between ontological domains.

Variation 1

Descartes' extended objects are not just extended. They are, just like all other ordinary objects, also continuous objects. Take a football, for instance. It rolls over the football field when you kick it. It rolls and is itself as it rolls, just like people going about doing their things being themselves as they go about. Any causes affecting such a continuous object affect the continuous object. It is like the famous example with billiards balls. The balls go there and there after the break – as continuous objects.

When we look at quantum-sized objects, we have the same basic understanding of them. They move about as continuous objects and are extended. However, the dualistic view of the mind is that the mind is something totally different. For one thing, it has no physical extension, and, of course, this disqualifies it from the list of possible objects.

When we move with plan A, therefore, we think that all things are continuous and that they belong to a specific set of dimensions, the physical dimensions. In a variation of this theme, we must change something. We have three things to look at: the dimensionality, the continuity, and the extension of the object.

We can start with the extension of the object. Physical objects have extension; they have physical extension. If we assume non-physical objects in this variation to be without extension, we are back in the Princess Elisabeth-Descartes dilemma. So let us say that all objects have extension. Given this, that all objects have extension, we can add the assumption that all objects are in some set of dimensions; they have some sort of dimensionality.

Now we have continuity left to consider. Without attacking footballs or creatures moving about, let us just take a deep breath and pause with continuity for a while.

In my preparation to defend my master's thesis, I saw that separate ontological fields could be joined by interfaces – provided that all objects were causal objects. Essentially, this is the variation since causal objects are discrete objects.

References

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