

Alternative Approaches to Causation: Beyond Difference-making and Mechanism

Dates

28 - 29 June 2021

Venue

University of Kent, Canterbury, UK

Plenary Speakers

Rani Anjum (Norwegian University of Life Sciences)

Simon Blackburn (University of Cambridge)

Nancy Cartwright (Durham University/University of California, San Diego)

Ned Hall (Harvard University)

Federica Russo (University of Amsterdam)

Jonathan Schaffer (Rutgers University, New Brunswick)

Jon Williamson (University of Kent)

Organiser

Yafeng Shan (University of Kent)

Funders

The British Academy

The Leverhulme Trust

Conference Description

Causality is one of the most controversial topics in philosophy. There is a wide range of standard accounts of causality, for example, the regularity account, the probabilistic account, the counterfactual account, the interventionist account, which are all classified as ‘difference-making’ accounts; and the mechanistic account. Pluralists (e.g. Cartwright, Hall, Reiss) maintain that there are multiple kinds of causality, whereas monists (e.g. Godfrey-Smith, Psillos, Williamson) argue that there is only one causal relation. Eliminativists (e.g. Russell) argue that science has no need of causation at all, while primitivists (e.g. Armstrong, Tooley, and Carroll) maintain that causation is unanalysable.

Difference-making and mechanistic approaches have dominated recent philosophical discussion of causality. The aim of the conference is to explore and examine alternative approaches to causation. The approaches to be examined include but are not limited to causal pluralism, causal contextualism, causal primitivism, causal eliminativism, the projectivist approach, the dispositional approach, the epistemic approach, and the informational approach.

The conference is planned to be an in-person event at the University of Kent, but it might be converted to a virtual event if travel and gathering are still difficult by then.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit a 500-word abstract via [EasyChair](#) by 28 February 2021. Submissions on any of the alternative approaches are welcome. Submissions engaging with case studies in science are particularly welcome. Selected contributed papers from the conference will be considered for publication in an edited volume.