

## Manipulation and Downward Causation.

Debates about the possibility of downward mental to physical causation have recently taken an interesting turn. While the debate had traditionally been pursued within the limits of philosophy of mind, several philosophers have appealed to concepts drawn from philosophy of science, and theories of causation in particular, in order to answer questions raised by mental causation. Carl Craver and William Bechtel, for instance, have argued that, properly understood, apparent cases of interlevel causation only involve intralevel causal relationships and interlevel constitutive relationships (Craver & Bechtel, 2007). In the background of their discussion is James Woodward's manipulationist theory of causation, most thoroughly developed in *Making Things Happen* (Woodward, 2003), and explicitly endorsed by Craver (Craver, 2007, pp. 93-104).

Craver & Bechtel's strategy for explaining away interlevel causation has been criticized on several counts by Max Kistler. In the process of objecting to Craver and Bechtel, Kistler claims that the manipulationist account of causation allows for interlevel causation (Kistler, forthcoming). This point has been independently argued for by Panu Raatikainen (Raatikainen, forthcoming). According to Raatikainen, Woodward's theory allows for cases in which a mental event can cause a physical event independently of its physical supervenience base. If Kistler and Raatikainen are right, then Craver & Bechtel need to rethink their argument: They need to abandon either the manipulationist theory of causation that is used as a background or the belief that there is no interlevel causation.

While I approve the strategy that both Kistler and Raatikainen adopt, i.e. the strategy that consists in looking at theories of causation to answer questions raised by mental causation, I disagree with the conclusions they draw. I argue, first, that the putative causal relations in Raatikainen's argument are not located at different levels. I locate the origin of Raatikainen's error in the fact that he works with a misleading concept of level, and argue that adopting a mechanistic concept of level clarifies many of the issues at stake. Against Kistler, I claim that, even when we work with an adequate concept of level, Woodward's approach does not allow for downward causation. This is so because, in alleged cases of downward causation, any possible manipulation of the putative cause will fail to qualify as an intervention on Woodward's account.

This conclusion is significant because it deprives advocates of downward causation both from a major objection to Craver & Bechtel's strategy for explaining away downward causation and from a theory of causation that is plausible and that can account for downward causation.

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