

# What We Talk About When We Talk About Causality

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## Abstract

This paper compares the relative merits of two alternatives to traditional accounts of causal explanation: Jim Woodward's counterfactual invariance account, and the Mechanistic account of Machamer, Darden, and Craver. Mechanism wins (a) because we have good causal explanations for chaotic effects whose production does not exhibit the counterfactual regularities Woodward requires, and (b) because arguments suggested by Belnap's and Green's discussion of prediction (in 'Facing the Future' chpt 6) show that the relevant counterfactuals about ideal interventions on non-deterministic and deterministic systems lack truth value.

**Keywords:** causal explanation, Woodward, Mechanism, Machamer-Darden-Craver

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