

Synthesizing Activities and Interactions in the Concept of a Mechanism

Tabery, James (2003) Synthesizing Activities and Interactions in the Concept of a Mechanism.

Full text available as:

[Microsoft Word](#) - Requires a viewer, such as [Microsoft Word Viewer](#)

??

Abstract

Stuart Glennan, and the team of Peter Machamer, Lindley Darden and Carl Craver have recently provided two accounts of the concept of a mechanism. The main difference between these two versions rests on how the behavior of the parts of the mechanism is conceptualized. Glennan considers mechanisms to be an interaction of parts, where the interaction between parts can be characterized by direct, invariant, change-relating generalizations. Machamer, Darden, and Craver criticize traditional conceptualizations of mechanisms which are based solely on parts interacting and introduce a new concept—activity. This essay is an attempt at carving out a relationship between these two philosophical interpretations of a mechanism. I will claim that, rather than being in conflict, Glennan's concept of interaction and Machamer, Darden, and Craver's notion of activity actually complement one another, each emphasizing a missing element of the other.

Keywords: activity, causation, explanation, invariance, interaction, interactivity, mechanism, productivity

Subjects: [General Issues: Causation](#)
[General Issues: Explanation](#)

ID Code: 1428

Deposited By: [Tabery, James](#)

Deposited On: 02 October 2003