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Causation: A User's Guide, by L. A. Paul and Ned Hall

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Paul, L. A. and Hall, Ned, *Causation: A User's Guide*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, xxii + 277, £18.99 (paperback).

Aimed at specialists in causation as well as those just venturing into the field, this book is an extremely thorough guide both to the problems confronting attempts to analyse causation, and to recent attempts to overcome these problems. Paul and Hall focus on counterfactual and regularity accounts (although they also discuss transference accounts), and examine a number of the most influential examples of these approaches. Their aim is to construct what they see as the holy grail of the philosophy of causation: an ontological reduction.

The majority of the book consists in detailed discussion of three major varieties of problem cases for analyses of causation: redundant causation, causation involving omissions, and problems with transitivity. Paul and Hall make extensive use of neuron diagrams to both explain and develop these problem cases. This approach has the advantage that all the examples are set out in a uniform format, which makes it easier to understand and appreciate the increasingly complex scenarios described. It also allows the authors to draw together a diverse range of literature, and to present these various works to the reader as part of a single story. They are thus able to argue, for example, that although an approach based on intrinsicness offers the best analysis of types of redundant causation (especially late pre-emption), this approach cannot account for examples involving double prevention (a variety of causation by omission). More generally, they conclude that no existing analysis of causation comes close to handling all the varieties of causation we should accept.

The downside of Paul and Hall's approach is that aspects of causation not readily represented by neuron diagrams are easily overlooked. For this reason, readers who are not convinced that these diagrams are the best way of representing causal structure may be left with a nagging sense that some of the examples act to obscure, rather than illuminate, important features of causation.

One of the book's strengths is that it clearly sets out the different goals and methodological approaches of those working in the philosophy of causation. For example, the authors clearly distinguish between conceptual and ontological, as well as reductive and non-reductive, analyses. An important take-home message is thus the need to carefully determine the aspirations of an account of causation, before constructing or evaluating it.

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Ross, Don, James Ladyman & Harold Kincaid (eds), *Scientific Metaphysics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. x + 243, £35 (hardback).

This volume of papers concerns the prospects of a scientific or, as Kincaid calls it in the introduction, *naturalized* metaphysics. The notion of a 'scientific metaphysics' has, of course, a convoluted history in philosophy: for much of the twentieth century it was a significant oxymoron, whereas, for Kant, the central problem was precisely *how* to conceive of metaphysics such that it could be scientific, that is, a body of synthetic *a priori* doctrine. Naturalized metaphysics, by contrast, is the Reichenbachian idea of a scientifically informed conception of one or more issues