

# Causes and Effects are Facts

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## Abstract

It is both odd and unfortunate that singular causation is routinely represented by a relational predicate, ‘causes’, linking singular terms ‘*c*’ and ‘*e*’. It is unfortunate because the extensionality of ‘*c* causes *e*’ makes it hard to account for: (i) negative causes and/or effects, as in ‘The bullet’s missing him caused him not to die’; (ii) the difference between causing something and affecting it, as in ‘Her parachute’s opening slowed her fall’; (iii) intensional causal statements like ‘His payment of his fine caused his release’, and hence (iv) much mental causation.

These problems vanish if causation is represented not by a predicate but by a connective, ‘because’, linking truths, ‘*C*’ and ‘*E*’, as in: (i) ‘He didn’t die, because the bullet missed him’; (ii) ‘She fell slowly because her parachute opened’; and (iii) ‘He was released because he paid his fine’. This is because ‘*C*’ and ‘*E*’, unlike ‘*c*’ and ‘*e*’, can be (i) negative existentials, (ii) ascriptions of inessential properties to events, (iii) non-extensional, and hence (iv) no reason, given the non-extensionality of ‘*E* because *C*’, to distinguish mental from physical agency.

Taking singular causes and effects to be events rather than facts (in the minimal sense of ‘It’s a fact that *P* iff “*P*” is true’) is not only unfortunate because it generates spurious problems. It is also odd, because the two basic theories of singular causation, in terms of (a) instances of covering laws or (b) counterfactuals, both make causes and effects facts in the above sense. Why, given this, the myth of event-causation ever arose and still persists is a mystery I shan’t discuss: my object here is not to explain its appeal but to discredit it.