



Surrounding the world with possibilities

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When two events occur simultaneously and a third one follows, how do we determine which of the first two was the cause? For instance, at the moment when I throw a brick you shout "No!"; then the brick hits the window. Is the breaking of the window caused by my throwing or your shouting? The skeptic might say that there is no way to know this. Wittgenstein (in: *Ursache und Wirkung*) proposes that we alter the question: What is the object we react to in response to the third event? This is the object we simply call the "cause". In many cases we just "trace the mechanism" to find the cause. It is only when we cannot trace the cause that we do experiments and thus introduce a plurality of possibilities into the picture. Thus, not excluding some possibility is not always a matter of "overlooking" it. Consequently, we need not agree with the skeptic and may conclude that knowledge of causes is possible. I will (tentatively) present a framework in which knowledge of causes can be modeled.