Karl Pfeifer
Actions and Other Events:
The Unifier-Multiplier Controversy.
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(Q1) If Donald's pulling the trigger caused the gun's firing, did Donald's killing Alvin cause that firing?

(Q2) If he turned on the light by flipping the switch did he flip the switch by turning on the light?

(Q3) Given that Alvin dies twelve hours after Donald shoots him, does Alvin's death occur twelve hours after Donald kills him?

A triple 'No!' might seem to justify the multiplicative claim that each question assigns two different though related actions to the same agent. If, to the contrary, each assigns just the one action, but under two different descriptions, as unifiers (e.g. Anscombe and Davidson) may or do allege, what should be the answers? As a unifier Pfeifer argues, first, that Goldman's level-generational criteria for multiplication lead eventually to incoherence. But let us skip to his more constructive approach, and then to the subsequent more general inquiry into event-identity which he appends.

By identifying the killing with the causing of death, and the latter with the trigger-pulling, the Davidsonian answer to Q1 is that the killing is indeed the cause of the gun's firing. While not dissenting, Pfeifer has a worry. The *specification* of an event as killing, unlike that of an event as trigger-pulling, hardly ranks as an *explanation* of the gun's firing. Hence, to loosen the causal specification-explanation bond, he purports to show how an unsophisticated savage may recognise his trigger-pulling as the cause of certain damage, while yet not knowing what explains the latter. But that is just a failure to comprehend intermediate links, and does not prevent the causal specification from being explanatory. Far better, then, just to acknowledge that the conditions, under which specifications of causes of effects *just as such causes* (e.g. as killings) can explain these or other effects, are more limited than (or different from) those under which specifications of these causes in other terms (e.g. as trigger-pullings) are explanatory.

In response to Q2 Pfeifer wants to discredit the initially plausible claim that the turning on of the light is not by the turning on of the light. That was the premise from which Goldman deduced that, if the turning on is by the switch-flipping, then it is not identical with the latter. But Pfeifer's ingenious scenarios suggest that the by-relation between the turning on and the switch-flipping is reversible. From this he concludes, with the help of some formal regimentation, that Goldman's premise is false. As a back-up he borrows an analogical argument of Norvin Richards' to show that in any case the inference from the premise to the non-identity claim is invalid.

Q3 is the crux. If the killing includes the victim's death, or else precludes any interval between itself and the latter, it is not identical with the

trigger-pulling. In that case the Davidsonian answer to Q1 would be wrong. Here Pfeifer is content to argue that for certain quite commonplace uses of 'kill' and 'death', if not for all, neither condition is fulfilled. But now the more general question must arise. Under what conditions do two different descriptions capture the same event?

For Goldman and Kim the conditions are implicit in the descriptions themselves. The same event is not captured, unless the descriptions ascribe the same properties. For Pfeifer the conditions are given by Davidson's causal (same causes and effects) criterion of event-identity. Whether his defence of this criterion against certain circularity, cosmological and isolational objections is decisive must here give way to a more basic issue. Do we really need a criterion? That handy distinction of Donnellan's between referential and attributive uses of descriptions suggests a proviso. Where in a referential use two definite descriptions (e.g. 'That man in the corner' and 'The red-haired gent') actually secure reference for the same people at the same time, whether what they refer to is the same object seems no longer in doubt. What need, then, for a criterion? It need only arise where they apply attributively, i.e. uniquely to something *whichever of several it might be*.

Accordingly, where what is described is an event, what we need instead, given that the descriptions are both referential, is a unifier's emendment to the Goldman-Kim position. Roughly this states (a) that a property-difference need only entail an event-difference where it holds between *independently* variable properties, and (b) that where the same thing cannot instantiate at least one of the two properties ascribed without the other during the same time, then what the descriptions capture is the same event. What this states are conditions the satisfaction of which may already be implicit, at least in context and with the help of some background knowledge, in the descriptions themselves. Primarily, then, what it specifies is not a criterion from the satisfaction of which event-identity may be inferred. Thus in the context it may be sufficiently plain that the ascribability of trigger-pulling is not independent of the ascribability of the causing the death. Where, on the other hand, one description at least, e.g. 'Donald's causing Alvin's death', only applies attributively, i.e. to an event *whatever that event may be,* (e.g. Donald's trigger-pulling or something else), then some criterion of identity may indeed be required. (Notice that in this application Davidson's criterion fits the unifying answers to Q1 and Q3 quite neatly. But what about the identification of Donald's trigger-pulling and causing the gun to fire? Would one say that they have the same immediate effect?) In sum, Pfeifer fails to distinguish sharply enough between an analysis of what event-identity is and a criterion for the day-to-day identification of events, where it is insufficiently clear from their descriptions whether they satisfy the conditions set forth in the analysis.

The critical tenor of these comments underscores the provocative impact of Pfeifer's study more effectively than words of praise. The latter, however, should not go unsaid in what remains of this review's quota of space. He writes in a limpid uncluttered style, pays scrupulous attention to the leading

contenders in the field, and remains ever alert to how arguments for positions he opposes might be further developed or strengthened. Altogether he has carried the debate with vigour and insight well beyond the point at which he entered.

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Robert Powell
Nuclear Deterrence Theory: The Search for Credibility.
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The classic theoretical papers analyzing nuclear deterrence — W. Kaufmann's 'The Requirements of Deterrence', (1956) Thomas Schelling's 'The Threat that Leaves Something to Chance', and 'The Reciprocal Fear of Surprise Attack', (1960), date from the early years of the thermonuclear era. This early work reflects strategic conditions prevailing in the late 1950s, during which the United States possessed nuclear first strike capacity against the Soviet Union and during which prominent alarmists in the United States, like Albert Wohlstetter in 'The Delicate Balance of Terror' (1959), claimed that the Soviet Union possessed first strike capacity against the United States. The terrifying instability generated by opposed squadrons of nuclear bombers was somewhat relieved in the 1960s by the introduction of missile submarines, and by 1970 each superpower possessed second strike capacity against the other.

The arrival of mutual second strike capacity did not produce a strategic literature comparable to the classic work of Kaufmann and Schelling. The analysis of nuclear deterrence languished through the 1970s and was re-ignited only by the dark irrationalities of the Reagan years. Some of the most interesting work in the dark years was undertaken by Robert Powell, who has consolidated his papers in this book, the most comprehensive analysis of mutual second strike capacity to date. Powell's methods go far beyond Schelling's and incorporate innovations in mathematical modelling characteristic of one sort of modern social science. Schelling's methods were quasi-game theoretic, and involve strategic choices taken once for the entire game; Powell's models involve sequences of strategic choices reflecting the unfolding character of events and changes in information and belief that occur as the game proceeds. More importantly, the Nash equilibria that set the gold