

## What Do Deviant Causal Chains Deviate From?

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### Abstract

The problem of deviant causal chains is endemic to any theory of action that makes definitional or explanatory use of a causal connection between an agent's beliefs and pro-attitudes and his bodily movements. Other causal theories of intentional phenomena are similarly plagued. The aim of this chapter is twofold. First, to *defend Davidson's defeatism*. In his treatment of deviant causal chains, Davidson makes use of the clause "in the right way" to rule out causal waywardness, but he regards any attempt at specifying 'right' sorts of causal histories as hopeless and even harmful. To my mind, Davidson's defeatism contains a valuable insight, so I shall try to explain the reasons for it. Second, I shall try to answer a question that has often been ignored or passed over in the literature; namely the question of *what it is that deviant causal chains deviate from*.