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Editors' introduction

(*Introducción de los editores*)

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James Woodward (University of Pittsburgh) is one of the main figures in philosophy of science, and perhaps the most prominent contemporary researcher on causation. The debate in this field during the last decades has been shaped by his interventionist theory, which is put forward, among many other places, in his 2003 book *Making Things Happen*. In this book, he provides an interventionist theory of causation and explanation, according to which (very roughly) the claim that a variable X is causally relevant to another variable Y means that an ideal intervention that changes the value of X will also change the value of Y. In the last twenty years, Woodward has extended this approach in multiple directions and defended it from different objections and misunderstandings.

We are honored to publish a new essay by Woodward, in which his ideas about causal inference and explanatory asymmetries are further developed. In this article, titled ‘Flagpoles Anyone? Causal and Explanatory Asymmetries’, Woodward addresses one of the most pressing issues about causal inference, the question of how we can infer causal direction from observational data. Woodward explores different procedures for doing so, relying on techniques from machine learning. As part of this investigation, Woodward characterizes several notions of independence and invariance, which complement his interventionist framework. Given the interest of this new contribution, we have prepared a special issue of the journal around it. Besides Woodward’s article, the issue includes five commentaries by different authors (Katrina Elliott and Marc Lange, Jiji Zhang, Kun Zhang, Porter Williams, and Fernanda Samaniego), and a response by Woodward to those commentaries. We are very grateful to James Woodward and all the participants in the special issue. Thanks as well to John Norton and David Teira for their help with this project.

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