

## Re: The Road with no Branches argument

**Source:** <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.logic/2004-10/0987.html>

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**From:** Immortalist (*Reanimater\_2000\_at\_yahoo.com*)

**Date:** 10/22/04

Date: Fri, 22 Oct 2004 12:18:18 -0700

"John Jones" <jiversjivers@btopenworld.com> wrote in message  
news:clbgeo\$rr3\$1@hercules.btinternet.com...

- > *You are not constrained to construct choices. Choices are not out there*
- > *waiting to be seen. The scenario where there are no choices is not at all*
- > *the same scenario where we construct no choices. A fork in the road means*
- > *nothing to a running dog.*
- >

A dog walking, twat (in heat) to the left steak to the right, which fork will he take and will he deliberate between the smell of babe vs the meat? If could fucking grab the meat vs meat the fucking, how best to get both with other competitors in the local area network?

> *JJ*

>

- > *Immortalist <Reanimater\_2000@yahoo.com> wrote in message*
- > *news:IpSdnbZKSsaBP-XcRVn-3Q@comcast.com...*
- >> *Whenever we make a choice we are doing (or think we are doing) something*
- > *like*
- >> *what a traveler does when faced with a choice between different roads. The*
- > *only*
- >> *roads the traveler is able to choose are roads which are a continuation of*
- > *the*
- >> *road he is already on. By analogy, the only choices we are able to make*
- > *are*
- >> *choices which are a continuation of the actual past and consistent with*
- > *the laws*
- >> *of nature. If determinism is false, then making choices really is like*
- > *this: one*
- >> *"road" (the past) behind us, two or more different "roads" (future actions*
- >> *consistent with the laws) in front of us. But if determinism is true, then*
- > *our*
- >> *journey through life is like traveling (in one direction only) on a road*
- > *which*
- >> *has no branches. There are other roads, leading to other destinations; if*
- > *we*
- >> *could get to one of these other roads, we could reach a different*

> destination.  
> > *But we can't get to any of these other roads from the road we are actually*  
> *on. So*  
> > *if determinism is true, our actual future is our only possible future; we*  
> *can*  
> > *never choose or do anything other than what we actually do.*  
> >  
> > *This is a powerful intuition pump, since it's natural to think of our*  
> *future as*  
> > *being "open" in the branching way suggested by the road analogy and to*  
> *associate*  
> > *this kind of branching structure with freedom of choice. But several*  
> *crucial*  
> > *assumptions have been smuggled into this picture: assumptions about time*  
> *and*  
> > *causation and assumptions about possibility. The assumptions about time*  
> *and*  
> > *causation needed to make the analogy work seem to include the following:*  
> *that we*  
> > *"move" through time in something like the way that we move down a road,*  
> *that our*  
> > *"movement" is necessarily in one direction only, from past to future, that*  
> *the*  
> > *past is necessarily "fixed" or beyond our control in some way that the*  
> *future is*  
> > *not. These assumptions are all controversial; on some theories of time and*  
> > *causation (the 4D theory of time, a theory of causation that permits time*  
> *travel*  
> > *and backwards causation), they are all false (Lewis 1976, Horwich 1987,*  
> *Sider*  
> > *2001).*  
> >  
> > *The assumption about possibility is that possible worlds are concrete*  
> > *spatiotemporal things (in the way that roads are) and that worlds can*  
> *overlap*  
> > *(literally share a common part) in the way that roads can overlap. But*  
> *most*  
> > *possible worlds theorists reject both assumptions and nearly everyone*  
> *rejects the*  
> > *second assumption (Adams 1974, Lewis 1986).*  
> >  
> > *Determinism (without these additional assumptions) does not imply that our*  
> > *"journey" through life is like moving down a road; the contrast between*  
> > *determinism and non-determinism is not the contrast between traveling on a*  
> > *branching road and traveling on a road with no branches.*  
> >  
> > *If this intuition pump nevertheless continues to engage us, it is because*  
> *we*  
> > *think that our range of possible choices is constrained by two factors:*  
> *the laws*  
> > *and the past. We can't change or break the laws; we cannot causally affect*

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> *the*  
> > *past. (Even if backwards causation is logically possible, it is not within*  
> *our*  
> > *power.) These two premises are the basis of the best known contemporary*  
> *argument*  
> > *for incompatibilism: the Consequence argument. More of this later.*  
> >  
> > <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/incompatibilism-arguments/>  
> > [http://www.campusprogram.com/reference/en/wikipedia/e/el/elbow\\_room.html](http://www.campusprogram.com/reference/en/wikipedia/e/el/elbow_room.html)  
> > <http://actiontheory.free.fr/Actionpuzzles.htm>  
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