Rewinding the Past to the Present from the Future

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What does the future hold? This is an especially apt question humanity must ask given the recent cascading technological developments in AI. If the future is bleak, what, if anything, can we do to change it? If the future is bright, what, if anything, can we do to get there faster? In this talk, I try to methodically develop how we might go about thinking, preventing and bringing about possible futures. I first set the stage by considering why we may care about the future, and what issues arise with respect to prediction and intervention. I then extol the virtues of backwards reasoning and present a case study (formal logic) where such reasoning is successfully applied. I finish by applying such reasoning to a case involving an undesirable future, conjecturing what we might do to avoid it.