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HUME'S VIEW ON CAUSALITY: A CRITICAL STUDY

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Abstract: *We know that if there is an effect, there must be a cause; an effect never occurs without a cause. The origin of an effect or any event depends on its cause. The progress of human civilization has largely occurred by investigating the causes of effects. The triumphs of science have also come from investigating the causes of effects. Human life has become much easier, and civilization has progressed. Similarly, in philosophy, there are disagreements about the relationship between cause and effect. Among these, two views are prominent: one from rationalists and one from empiricists. Hume's view, in particular, has brought a revolution to philosophy, showing a new direction. This essay provides a analytical discussion on David Hume's view of causality.*

Key Words: *- Cause,effect, causality, entailment, relation, event, conjunction etc.*

Popularly speaking, a cause is the antecedent event that produces an effect. That is, a cause is a 'power' which makes the event occur. So, when the occurrences or events are necessarily one is the cause and the other the effect. The immediate, unconditional and invariable antecedent is the cause, and the immediate, unconditional and invariable consequent is the effect. We may note here that an unconditional antecedent means an antecedent which contains all the necessary conditions and does not depend on any other condition to produce the effect. Similarly, an unconditioned consequent means a consequent which contains in itself all the necessary conditions and which does not depend on any other condition than the cause to be the effect. The necessary and universal relation between cause and effect under certain determined conditions may be termed a causal relation.

Causal relation plays a vital role in modern science and in our day-to-day life. Causal relation or the law of causation states that every event has a cause, and the same cause produces the same effect. This law uniformly operates under certain fixed conditions. So, the law of uniformity of nature is developed. Thus, modern science cannot move an inch without the law of causation or causal relation Moreover, causal relation is a fundamental category or assumption of our understanding in constructing a system of knowledge. It is on the basis of the causal relation that we can say that the universe is not a chaos but a cosmos. There is full harmony and coherence between and among different occurrences in the universe.

We are aware that there are two primary philosophical schools: rationalism and empiricism. Empiricists attempt to use experience to explain everything. As a result, they also do not spare cause and effect. They contend that cause and effect are nothing more than a predictable series of occurrences that we encounter on a daily basis. The antecedent event in the sequence is referred to as the cause, while the succeeding occurrence is referred to as the effect. They contend that the relationship between the cause and the consequence is only external. It is merely a coincidence. Regularity theory refers to the empiricists' notion of causality.

Hume's conception of causation is a landmark in the history of philosophy. He tries to examine the causal relation from an empirical point of view. His theory has two aspects-negative and positive. The negative side of his theory is the rejection of the relation of Entailment or the necessary relation between cause and effect. The positive side of his theory is that he establishes that the relation between cause and effect is a relation of sequence or co-existence and that there is no necessary relation between cause and effect. Then he tries to show in his An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding – how we reach at the knowledge of causal relationship.

In common sense and science, events are supposed to be connected by causal laws. When it is said that A is the cause of B, it means that there is a necessary relation between A and B. A and B are not connected accidentally. The notion of necessary relation has been subjected to severe criticism by Hume. He denies the necessary relation between cause and effect on the following grounds: -

Experience does not provide evidence for causality. We can not see any power in a cause that can produce effects. We discover that the relationship between cause and effect is external and temporal. We refer to the antecedent event as the cause, and the subsequent event as the consequence. As a result, the question of entailment or a necessary relationship between cause and consequence is not raised.
Causation cannot be discovered a priori by the action of mind. If causation cannot be determined by experience, the only other option is a priori reasoning. Hume believes that we can have a necessary link between two events if they are identical, or else if the assertion is analytic, such as 5 x 5 = 25. However, the consequence is so unlike to the cause that no required relationship can be established between the two. For example, the argument cancer causes death is neither analytic, nor are the subject and predicate the same. As a result, no required relationship can be identified a priori between cause and effect According to the Entailment theory, the effect can be found like the cause. But Hume points out that this is not true in practice. For example, like water, we cannot find the power to quench.

Hume believes that there is no mathematical certainty on the relationship between cause and effect. Assume that in all instances, we can witness that a specific item or event P is always followed by a second object or event Q. We have also noticed that in every occurrence of O that we have seen, it is always preceded by P. We conclude that f' caused O and that I will always be followed by Q in the future. We are almost certain of this sequence. However, this cannot be mathematically demonstrated. Hume's logical approach to the problem indicates that the relationship between cause and effect is vitally important. Indeed, indispensable, to the practical guidance of life and the conduct of all scientific investigation outside of mathematics.

Rationalists say that examining human volition and activity reveals the necessary relationship between cause and consequence. For example, we will raise our hands repeatedly. This willingness is the reason we raised our hands. So there is a clear link between cause and consequence. Hume responds by arguing that we cannot accomplish whatever we want based on our experience; we can discern between what we can and cannot do. Hume believes that if will and action were inextricably linked, we could have done anything and everything as soon as we wanted to. However, this is not the practice scenario. So, Hume concludes that there cannot be any relation or necessary relation between cause and effect. Thus, Hume rejects any relation between cause and effect.

Hume's view of causality as an unchanging succession or series. He, as a consistent empiricist, believes that knowledge is fully limited to sensations and their orders of occurrence, coexistence, and succession. We cannot see any relationship between so-called cause and effect in our experience other than their coexistence or succession. So, the concept of Causality involves nothing more than the idea of invariable succession or sequence, nothing more than the idea and expectation that one occurrence will always be followed by another. Our experience informs us nothing about the causal energy, power, or force that is supposed to produce the effect, or about the link between the cause and the effect. We know only the relation of succession or co-existence and that relation is only temporal and external.

Hume's psychological approach to causation is very famous. He holds that the necessary relation is not immediately perceived among our impressions of sensation. Our minds, he argues, add the so-called necessary relation to the impressions. For example, we see an event 'flame' being invariably followed by another event 'heat'. There is a link of notions in our minds between the two events 'flame and heat.' Flame leads to hear. The claimed required relationship between the two events is only a mental habit, not a feature or relationship inherent in our impressions. The habit of custom is the only reason we believe that an unseen force of efficacy transfers from one object to another. So, Hume believes that the cause is in the preceding event and the effect is solely in the subsequent occurrence. There is no connection between them.

Hume contends that the so-called causal relation that exists now may cease to exist in the near or distant future. Again, there is no proof that such a relationship occurred in prehistoric times or during periods beyond our experience. There is to ensure that rain in the distant past was followed by dampness of the ground or that future rain will be followed by wetness of the ground.

Hume claims that we frequently talk about one thing causing or creating another. However, we should state that one cluster of feelings is always or invariably followed by another. The cause of an event is simply an invariable antecedent of another event, also known as the effect.

According to Hume, any understanding of natural phenomena based on the concept of causality or necessary relation is belief rather than knowledge. He contends that we can have faith or trust in the uniformity of nature or the regularity of natural processes. However, such a belief cannot be elevated to the level of absolute certainty, as certainty is in mathematics.

Hume's theory is not infallible. His understanding of causality is superficial. On reflection, we will see that Causality is considerably more than just the concept of invariable succession. Causality also includes the concepts of productive energy, efficiency, and power. It also includes a necessary link. When we say that A is the cause of B, we say not only that A predates B, but also that A has produced B via its intrinsic force, and that A and B are inextricably linked. But Huge has failed to get the idea.

If we adopt Hume's theory, there is no reason to anticipate the kettle to boil when it is set on fire than when it is placed on ice. That is, the fundamental foundation of science will crumble. Russel emphasises that higher Physics can function without the concept of causation in the sense of required connection. Even so, other sciences are essential to our daily lives. These sciences will fail if the certainty of causality is questioned. If Hume denies everything but experience, how can he accept the certainty of mathematical truth, given that mathematics is founded on concepts and axioms that cannot be confirmed through experience? Hume's empirical theory of causation fails to explain the point. If causality is simply a series of events, no human action can be attributed to motivation or volition. There will be no relationship between volition and action. This is not consistent with our experience. Ewing correctly points out that if there is no relationship between cause and consequence, the sense of moral obligation becomes meaningless.

Inductive Logic has a great role to play in acquiring knowledge of the unknown from the known. Inductive Logic is fully dependent on the laws of causation and uniformity of nature. If there is no relationship between cause and effect, the entire structure of Inductive Logic will collapse. Such a stance cannot be acceptable. There are numerous invariable antecedents and consequences in nature. However, we do not see everything as causes and effects. For example, day is followed by night, Monday by Tuesday, winter by spring, and so forth. In such circumstances, we do not attempt to establish a causal connection between the events. Thus, the simple invariability of succession or sequence does not create our concept of causality. Causation is more than a predetermined series or sequence.

We cannot agree with Hume's claim that the concept of causal linkage is formed by custom or habit. Hume specifically states that we can never find a link between cause and effect. 'They seem to be conjoined, but never connected.' If experience fails to explain a necessary relationship between cause and effect, we must look for another source because we cannot deny it. This task is completed by Kant. He believes that causality emerges from understanding and is applied to phenomena in order to make them understandable.

We conclude that invariance of succession may indicate causation. But causation is more than that. We must remember that cause not only precedes but also generates effect. The influence not only comes after but also comes from cause, and so long as the cause is not counteracted, the effect is inevitable. As a result, we cannot reject the existence of a cause-

effect relationship. In truth, Hume's Regularity hypothesis characterises rather than explains the relationship between cause and effect.

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