

Thinking with Causality about 'Causality':
Reflections on a 'concept' determining all
Thought about Action and Knowledge

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If 'causality' is what it is thought to be, how can one 'think' about it? And, if one can think about it, it would not be what it has been thought to be.

'Thinking' is an 'activity' and if so, it must have a 'cause', and if it has a 'cause' then, on the usual understanding of 'causality', it could not be different from what it is. But if it could not be different from what it is, how could it be 'thinking'?

'Thinking', of course, may have, and generally does have, something *precedent* to it, but one need not necessarily be 'thinking' before this 'act' of thinking. In either case, whether thinking is preceded by some other 'act' of thinking or by something else, it need not necessarily be considered as having 'caused' it. To be an 'antecedent' to something is not to be the 'cause' of it. This has been known to be a fallacy, but it has seldom been reflected upon to find why it is a fallacy. 'Post hoc, ergo propter hoc', one reads it in old textbooks on Inductive Logic, but why, something to be considered a 'cause', should *precede* that of which it is said to be a cause? If one insists on this requirement, one would have to accept, however reluctantly, the extreme Buddhist position that there can be no such thing as a 'thing' to be studied or known as it cannot last for any length of time, each 'moment' being preceded and succeeded by some other moment.

The Buddhist, of course, assumed that the notion of 'moment' was intelligible. He could be excused for this, but not so the modern thinker, including the scientist, who may reasonably be expected to know the problems raised by the possibility of 'infinite divisibility' and the idea of a 'continuum', so common-place in modern

mathematics. The empirical scientist may not worry about this, just as the ordinary man does not, and the physicist may talk of the empirical fact that physical reality or matter consists in a 'quantized' form and that we can only accept it and say that it just happens to be so, and that he can do nothing about it.

But once the 'facticity' of anything is accepted in the sense of something 'given' in human experience, even if it does not fulfil the demand of 'rational intelligibility' as man encounters it in himself, the two would be seen in a different relationship than has been the case up till now.

In a sense, man had to satisfy himself with this in the realm of 'moral intelligibility' long ago, though even there he had to struggle with the problem of 'causality'. The distinction between the 'good' and the 'bad', like the distinction between the 'true' and the 'false' or between 'rational' and 'irrational', or between 'intelligible' and 'unintelligible' is as much a 'given' to human consciousness as any other. The 'given', therefore, is not of just one sort, or of one type, and not only this, it may even 'change' as one's experience changes.

'Causality' is no exception to this, and the 'demand' for intelligibility in 'causal terms' is only a 'demand' like other demands, which may either be fulfilled or not. The attempt to save it at all costs by treating it as an *a priori* constituent condition of 'understandability' as in Kant, or as a necessary methodological precondition of engaging in any cognitive inquiry or research would mean giving up the empirical-experiential foundation of the claim of knowledge to be 'scientific' in the most radical sense of the term. This is not a return to Humean scepticism, either overt or disguised, as it does not deny the possibility of finding an actual relation between a certain class of events which may be 'causal' in nature. It only says that it is not necessary that such a relation be always found, or that it is a necessary condition for the 'understandability' or 'intelligibility' of the event or events concerned. 'Causal relation', in other words, is as contingent as any other empirical relation, and thus may factually obtain or not as the case may be.

The attempt to articulate the 'necessity' supposed to be involved in the notion of 'causality' through its translation into the logical relations of 'implication' and 'equivalence' between propositions designating 'facts' is doubly deceptive as, literally, there is no relation

between the 'facts' supposed to be designated by 'sentence-variables', but only a spurious 'logical' relation which itself is a function of two independent variables, verbally designated by the terms 'truth-value' and 'truth operator'. The former is generally supposed to consist of 'true' and 'false' symbolized by 'T' and 'F', but this, though generally found in all text books, is systematically misleading as there is nothing in the notion to confine it to two values only, nor to what generally is understood by the terms 'truth' and 'falsity' in the semantic sense of the terms, except the requirement of total exclusion of each by the other, that is, if one obtains the 'other' cannot, by definition, obtain in principle.

The same is the case with the notion of 'truth operator' which is also called 'logical operator' or 'logical connective' or 'truth-functional operator'. Its distinctive character is that it is the result of a pure definition whose utter arbitrariness is masked by two deliberate attempts at camouflage to hide the covert maneuverings so that one may be totally lulled into a semi-hypnotic state where one may not raise any questions or entertain doubt about what is being done. The first step in this exercise is to admit the notion of a 'non-logical' sentential connective or operator, thus indirectly legitimizing the idea of a 'logical operator'. The second step is to arbitrarily prohibit any appeal to the actual 'use' of these so-called logical connectives in everyday discourse, thus rendering the whole exercise 'non-empirical *ab initio*'. The third, and the last step in this exercise is to turn around and say 'we are not really talking about the relations "if, then" or "either or" or "it is not the case that" or "and", but only of that which is conveyed by arbitrarily invented symbols such as the horse-shoe (\supset), or Vedge (V), or curve (\sim) or dot (\cdot)'. One may, of course, use any other symbol, just as one may, if one so likes, and also do the same in respect of 'T' and 'F' as there is nothing sacrosanct about it.

The so-called 'truth-table' is a direct result of these two basic notions, i.e., of the 'truth-value' and the 'truth-operator'. But the usual 'Truth-Table' given in the textbooks not only has nothing to do with 'truth' or 'falsity' in the usual sense of the term, but also usually does not mention the fact that it not only confines itself to a 'two-valued' logic, but to a dyadic logical operator only, meaning thereby that not only it is concerned with only 'T' and 'F'

symbolized also as 'I' and 'O' when there is no intrinsic reason in the system to confine it to these only, but also to permit only those connectives which minimally require two sentences to hold between. But just as there can be a logic with any number of 'truth-values', so also there can be an 'n-adic' logic which may minimally require any number of sentences, just as one can have a truth-functional logic with a 'monadic-operator' only.

The purely formal relations exemplified in the 'Truth-Table' of the modern logician are, therefore, of little help in understanding the notion of 'causality', even though it too is formulated in 'if, then' terms, or 'if this, then this'. Kant was misled when he treated the 'cause-effect' relational category as a correlate of the hypothetical judgement in his table of judgements. Not just this, he even forgot that the hypothetical judgment cannot give us the 'cause-effect' relationship in its strict sense as it leaves open the possibility of the 'plurality of causes' which the usual understandings of the notion does not accept. But even the stricter modern formulation as 'if and only if' suffers from the same problem, as the weaker formulation 'if, then', for it is the empirically vacuous 'Truth-Table' which defines both in modern logic.

The 'ghosts' of 'necessity' and 'universality' that have troubled thinking about the notion of 'causality' may, thus, be finally laid to rest by the realization that they are a superimposition on 'experience' by logic in its 'purity' and 'formality'; the two characteristics which have nothing to do with it. And, once one 'sees' this, one also sees that the so-called 'necessary' and 'sufficient' conditions are as irrelevant and misleading, if they are considered as analogous to the formal conditions, or only another name for them.

In fact, neither the requirement of 'necessity' or 'universality', or of, what are called 'sufficient' and 'necessary' conditions seem to have been closely analyzed, though they have been with us for so long that it is difficult to imagine any discussion of causality without them. The two sets that define the two dimensions of the discussion are so different that they need to be separately considered on their own, though one may wonder 'how' or 'why' the two have been brought together in any discussion of this most enigmatic concept in the history of thought that has been bequeathed to us from ancient times.

The term 'necessity' or 'necessary'—though used in both the sets, for example—means entirely different things. 'Necessity' can only be something 'ontological', something *a priori*, something 'non-empirical' as it is never found in human experience which is shot through and through with 'contingency' and 'chance'. Today, even mathematics and logic have disowned it, as the contingency of the postulated conditionality of 'if' in the standard exemplification of it as 'if, then' is openly admitted by everybody. Whether the 'if' obtains or not is a contingent fact, and the so-called 'necessity' of the relationship is only the result of a definition. Yet, if it is so, there can be no argument or justification for the belief in the ontological reality of 'necessity' and it would become merely a matter of 'faith' about which there can be no argument. Nor could it be regarded even as something *a priori* on the Kantian model as, even for him, 'freedom' is as much an *a priori* requirement for 'understanding' human action as 'causality', the twin requirement, that the 'teleological judgement' combines in itself, a point so forcibly argued by him in the *Critique of Judgement*.

The notion of 'necessary condition' is even stranger, as it is defined negatively, i.e. as including all that has to be absent or not obtain if the so-called 'cause' is to produce an effect at all. But all these conditions can never be exhaustively specified in principle and, hence, whenever the so-called 'cause' is said to be there and the 'effect' happens to be absent, one can always save the situation by postulating the existence of some obstructive condition or another about which no one may happen to know anything at all.

In fact, there is a simpler way of 'saving' the situation and that is by taking recourse to the 'statistical causality' where the postulated causal relation itself allows, or even requires, that there actually be a sufficiently significant number of cases where the relationship fails to hold in experience. Statistics is such a 'respected' discipline and so many branches of knowledge thrive only on such kind of postulated relationships, that one may reasonably conclude that the generally held idea of the 'causal relation' being so 'universal' that even one single 'counter-instance' is sufficient to prove it wrong, is mistaken. It has to hold sometimes and, to be statistically significant, it has to hold in a larger number of instances than the ones where it does not hold. But this requirement, at least at the

theoretical level, is unfulfilable in principle as not only the 'unobserved' numbers are always larger than the 'observed' ones, but given the 'time-dimension' and the 'reality' of the 'future', the 'occurrences' that have not even occurred is bound to be larger than those that have occurred.

The requirement of 'universality', or 'space-time invariance', if taken literally, would render the claim to the 'truthfulness' of an asserted specific causal relationship unestablishable in principle. Neither the 'statistical' nor the 'non-statistical' versions are, or can be, immune from this. One may still try to save the situation by holding on to the 'belief' in the 'reality' of 'causal relationships' on the ground that life cannot be 'lived' or any 'action' done without presupposing it, and that even the 'search' for knowledge gets its dynamic momentum from this helpful 'heuristic' assumption as the history of science has shown up till now.

There can be little to dispute about all this, except that those who say so are not sincerely prepared to accept the implications that all this has for the notion of 'causality' in the form it was earlier being argued for by them.

What exactly, then, is the notion of this 'causality' without which 'human life', as we know it, cannot be 'lived'. 'Causality' in the context of 'human living' appears to be centered in relation to the body where, inexplicably, 'things' seem to happen just because there is an 'intending' that they happen. One is made to 'learn' this from the moment one is born and, in a sense, one continues to do this all one's life. This is 'known' to everybody, but there has hardly been any serious reflection on it. There are, for example, layers and layers of 'learning' where if one 'intends' and the 'intended' does not happen, this is not taken as a 'denial' of causality of the causality of 'intending'. There are bodily activities which are independent of 'intending', but the line separating them is fuzzy and unclear. There is the distinction between 'direct' and 'indirect' determination as, many a time, 'intending' is done to bring about something else through what is 'intended' by the 'intending'. There are also 'sequential chains' in the 'intending' process where each step in the sequence is governed by the 'intending act' itself. And, in any case, the 'intending' itself cannot be considered as 'causal' by anyone, unless one has already accepted that the idea

of an 'uncaused cause' is a contradiction-in-terms, i.e., assumed to be something impossible, by definition.

Bodily activity, however, is not the only thing that is 'intended'; one may 'intend' to 'think' as we are now trying to do about this notion, and it would be difficult to say if any 'causality' is involved in it, and even if it is, the question, what 'kind' of causality it is, is bound to arise. The simple fact is that this 'causality' has none of those characteristics which 'causes' are supposed to have. It is what may be called 'free causality', free in both senses of the term, i.e. 'free' in respect of its 'origins' about which not only nothing is 'known' but nothing can be known in principle, and 'free' in respect of what it wants to 'find' or 'bring about' through 'thinking' as it just does not know it and hence not even the 'causality', that could 'produce' it. In this, it is radically different from 'purposive' or teleological action which presupposes both 'freedom' and 'causality', the latter being subordinate to the former, being purely 'instrumental' in nature. There is just no 'causal knowledge' available to transform the 'activity' of 'thinking' into a 'purposive' activity of the usual kind as the moment it were to become such, it would cease to be 'thinking' at least in this sense of the term.

But it is not a 'purposeless' term. It is, to use a phrase by Kant, 'purposiveness without a purpose'. Kant used the paradoxical expression in the context of understanding the notion of the 'beautiful'. Creative activity in the arts comes closest to it, though he seems to have used it primarily in the context of nature. But in the case of 'art', there is the distinction between one who 'makes' or 'creates' and the one who 'sees' or 'hears' and finds it 'beautiful'. In the case of 'nature' there seems to be only the 'observer', and the idea of a 'creation' a superimposition that seems unnecessary. Yet, though there is an 'activity' involved in the former, it does not seem to be of a 'causal' kind, while in the case of 'nature', the imputation of 'causality' in the context of 'beauty' seems gratuitous.

Kant does not seem to have noticed this, or ostensibly addressed himself to this issue. He was more concerned with understanding the element of 'universality' involved in a judgement where the subjective feeling of 'pleasure' seemed a necessary element in its

apprehension. He wanted to underline the distinction between the judgement 'x is pleasant' and 'x is beautiful'. But Kant does bring in the notion of 'purposiveness' in the 'understanding' of biological nature, though he concedes the possibility of 'understanding' it purely in causal terms, even if it ostensibly does not seem to be so. He leaves the issue of the 'beautiful' untouched in this context though in his discussion of the sublime in nature, he seems to give up everything, causality, purposiveness and even pleasure.

But Kant, like everyone else, confines his discussion only to judgements where the 'predicate' is 'predicated' of something that can be considered as 'object', and not the 'subject' to which the whole 'judgement' is an 'object' and which is regarded as 'true' or 'false'. Surprisingly, while Kant does consider the predicates 'good' and 'beautiful', he does not seem to be concerned about 'truth' or 'being true' which is the heart of the epistemological issue to which he is supposed to have made the most revolutionary and fundamental contribution in the history of thought.

Kant does discuss the predicate 'pleasant' which, though 'subjective', is said to qualify the 'object', and 'freedom' about whose 'causality' he sees no problem and which, in any case, is identical, for him, with the 'intrinsically good' and constitutes the subjectivity? of the 'human subject', itself.

The human subject is, thus, outside the categorical scheme in Kant and hence cannot be the 'subject' of any 'judgement' whatsoever. It can have no predicates and thus can be articulated only as 'I am', a formulation that he does make in the First Critique which, later, became the pivotal starting point of Fichte's thought.

But if the 'subject' can have no predicates, what happens to all the 'virtues' about which Aristotle talked? And 'virtues' if there are any, can only be predicated of the 'subject' and not the 'object'. And, in case this is so, what is their relation to 'freedom' and 'causality' without which it will be difficult to understand them. This, however, is not the relationship that is involved in the notion of 'purposive action', or 'instrumental rationality', or even 'prudential morality', as Kant called it.

Virtues can be 'cultivated', even 'exemplified', but not 'taught' as everyone has to 'do' something himself or herself to be

'virtuous'. But this 'doing' is not the same as one does when one, say, 'lifts' one's arm or 'talks', that is, makes one's 'body' do something. It has little to do with one's body, and even in respect of what we call one's 'mind'; it is to try to achieve a 'dispositional' potentiality which gets actualized when the occasion arises, and that too in diverse ways. But, what is even more important, is that in spite of all that one 'does' one can never be sure that one has become 'virtuous' or not. Not just this, if one accepts Aristotle's notion of 'virtue' as a 'mean' between two 'extremes', one may never 'know' what the 'mean' is, particularly, because it is a 'valuational property' between the 'extremes' that themselves are regarded as 'disvaluationally qualitative' in character.

Aristotle's notion of virtue may be considered 'closer' to the notion of 'wisdom' and the 'extremes' may be regarded as two 'ends' of a continuum where one exemplifies the 'good', and the other the 'evil'. But whatever the way we conceive it, the problem in respect of the application of the concept of 'causality' in this context remains, as while we have some idea, and that too at the individual personal level, of what is to be done, we have little idea of the 'effect' it is intended to bring about, or whether it will ever be able to bring it about or not.

This anomalous situation becomes clearer when one reflects on 'meditative' practices where one is supposed to 'do' something to consciousness by consciousness itself so that it may stop functioning in the 'ordinary' way it usually functions.

One may, of course, deny that there is any such thing, but if one admits, one has to face the question 'what sort of "activity" or "doing" this is, and what is the 'causality involved therein?' There is some sort of 'action' involved and some sort of 'result' achieved, but the relationship between the 'two' is so puzzling that those who have reflected on it have only said that the activity involved is a purely 'negative' activity, a 'removal' of something and not the 'bringing into being' of something else, which was not there before. The 'stopping' of the ordinary activity of consciousness only makes one aware of that which was already there, just as when one 'wakes' up one sees the 'world' which was already there before one woke up. Does any radically 'new' form of activity emerge after the cessation of the 'ordinarily known' levels of activity and what is

their 'causality', if we can talk of 'causality' in these contexts, is the 'unasked' question in relation to the 'meditative realm' as *samādhi* is supposed to be the 'Be-All' and 'End-All' of the activity, though the Buddhists have already talked of *prajñā* after *śīla* and *samādhi*. But this new realm of consciousness 'opened' by *samādhi* is, as far as I know, not described or discussed in the tradition.

But one need not go to these realms for understanding the problem as everyone knows—at least to some extent—what 'concentrating', or 'attending' or 'thinking' is. Even a cursory reflection on these would reveal that while one cannot 'deny' them the title of being some sort of 'activities' and having some sort of 'causality', it is not even remotely related to what is usually conveyed or 'understood' by these terms. There is a close parallel or analogue with what we 'do' when we 'intend' to 'produce' a bodily movement. But here what we want to do is something relating to 'mind' or 'consciousness' itself, and we hardly 'know' what we do, or whether it would 'produce' the 'result' we want, or even what the 'result' is that we 'intend' to bring about. If this be still called 'action' or 'causality', then it is a strange use of the terms indeed and we do so as we know nothing better.

But even where it is clear, as in the case of 'lifting' one's hand or 'walking' or 'doing' the hundred things one does 'with' or through one's body, one does not consider them to be much of an 'action', unless they form part of a 'causal nexus' or be 'meaningful' as conveying 'something' to 'somebody'. Even when it does form part of a 'causal nexus', it must have some end in view, or purpose to attain, the 'attainment' of which generally depends on the complementary, cooperative 'activity' of others who also, like oneself, 'intend' and 'do' something with their bodies in order that the 'action' may take place.

This 'cooperative complementarity' of diverse 'actors' with different skills and abilities is generally ignored and the discussion and reflection centers primarily on the 'individual' as if it were the sole centre of 'agentive causality' in relation to the 'action' which occurs or takes place, or is performed.

But if the 'causality' is the 'result' of 'cooperative' and 'complementary' causalities, then what sort of 'causality' is it? The problem is known in the discussion on the subject as 'Plurality of Causes'

and 'Intermixture of Effects', though these do not exactly convey what we have been trying to point out. The usual discussion treats the 'causes' as individual and separate, and yet giving rise to the 'same' effect. What we are saying, however, is that there are no separate, individual causes, but a multiplicity of causes acting together in unison to bring about the effect which would not be there in the absence of cooperative complementarity. The 'effect', it should be remembered, cannot be decomposed into 'separate', 'individual' effects ascribable to each separate individual cause in the complex 'unity' created by the 'complementary' and 'cooperative' character of the 'causes' concerned. The atomistic, monadic one-one a correlation which is assumed by the analysis, would make the type of causality we are talking about impossible in principle. But those who have argued thus have not seen that this, if properly reflected upon, would make the 'occurrence' of causality impossible. What would count as an ultimate, not further analyzable, unrelated element to be considered a 'cause', or what an 'effect' will have to be settled and answered first. And, even if such a possibility were conceded in the 'empirically' establishable sense of the term, nothing would remain of causality except a mere 'succession' leaving all the problems involved, including the one relating to the distinguishability of 'effect' from 'cause', to time or temporality without which the notion of causality would become inconceivable even if the idea of 'simultaneous connection' is accepted in principle.

Leaving theoretical questions aside, what appears as an indubitable fact of 'experience' is that the 'effects' man wants to achieve are of such a strange kind that they are not only 'unrealizable' by any identifiable individual unit of causality, but that the 'effect' even when 'seemingly' achieved, does not seem to be what one 'really' wanted to achieve, for what one wanted to achieve was the realization of a 'value' which alone seems to give 'meaning' to human life. 'Values' are what one wants to achieve, and yet they are hardly the sort of things which can be specified as 'effects' achievable through 'causes' that one can effectuate individually or collectively.

What one 'really' encounters are the 'primary' and 'secondary' qualities, but what one really wants is the 'tertiary' qualities whose relation to the first two is so tenuous that it can hardly be under-

stood in 'causal' terms. The relation between 'qualities' that are sensorily apprehended and their 'quantitative' counterparts in physical nature are fairly well known, but the relations between the qualities belonging to each of the senses and the complex combinations that can be formed out of them, whether belonging to the same sense or the different senses, is so indefinitely varied, multiple and unpredictable in terms of its own emergent qualitative apprehension by consciousness, that it is difficult to think of it in 'causal' terms. The emergent complex quality, even when it is a purely sensuous quality—as in the case of taste—is not an additive quality but rather an inter-actional property that is essentially unpredictable from any 'knowledge' of all the secondary sensuous qualities, singly or in combination. Taste is not being 'tasty', and being 'tasty' is not being 'nutritious', and being physically nutritious may not be 'spiritually' so, as in the case of 'meat-eating' by some persons.

Food is a simple example, and 'cooking' an ordinary day-to-day activity of 'causally' producing something, but works of 'imagination' and 'thought' share the same problem, though at a subtler level. Art and philosophy may be taken as examples where something is brought into being through 'imagining' and 'thinking' which normally are not considered as 'activities' at all. The attempts at transforming consciousness, through 'spiritual exercises' such as yoga, are another example where something is sought to be brought into being by trying to 'stop' all activity, including that which is involved in 'imagining' or 'thinking' where some sort of bodily activity is generally involved.

These are all basically individual-centered, though the cooperation of others is also involved, specially in the arts, and what is sought to be achieved, as both are given to one by tradition which 'comes' to one through others. The question of 'beginnings' is always there, but nothing is solved by postulating an 'original originator' as what has 'come' to one is already 'mediated' by the incredible idiosyncracies of innumerable 'go-betweens', each of whom has been a 'selective filter' to suit his or her own taste and judgement.

But 'ends' can be collective and be collectively pursued where the tables are turned, and the individual seem only 'instrumen-

tally' as 'contributing to the 'collective' good. Most political and social ends are like this and civilizations are built by 'seeing' individuals in this way, and this way alone which, of course, is 'immoral', but immoral in a different way. The individual, after all, does treat 'others' instrumentally in the course of his 'self-centered' pursuits and, if so, why should not the thinker, the artist and the saint be regarded as paradigmatic example of 'self-centeredness' and hence of immorality.

Kant did try to save the situation by adding the 'saving' clause 'not as a means only'. But he did not investigate the moral problems raised by this, even in the realm of individual inter-actional relationships outside formal, institutional frameworks in which private, personal morality is usually perceived. As for collective, impersonal ends for the realization of which 'action' of a different sort is required, involving 'carrying out orders' from an 'authority', authorized and recognized to do so. 'Discipline' is the key word here and the organization of the armed forces, the clearest example of it. Organizations, of course, may be of different types, but the problem in respect of 'morality' remains the same. The 'instrumental' use of the other or others for purposes 'other' than their own, is the heart of the matter and one can get out of the situation only by giving up the notion of the 'good will' and substituting for it the will that 'wills the good', be it at the individual or the collective level, and involving in it notions of 'mutuality', 'reciprocity' and 'inter-personal inter-dependence', without which the 'idea of good' is inconceivable.

But what is the realization of 'good' without which human reality cannot be understood, and 'causality', without which the very notion of 'human action' becomes unintelligible? The 'causality' of causal action that is expected to produce the 'good' is surely different from the 'causality' that is said to operate in 'nature' which is supposed to be indifferent to values or be 'value-neutral'. There has to be some sort of 'causality', a causality that reconciles not only the 'individual' good with the 'collective' good, but also the conflict within the 'goods' themselves, both at the individual and the collective level.

The problem of 'causality' in the context of collective human action has not been paid the attention it deserves, particularly as it involves the notion of a plurality of 'free' beings, each pursuing his

or her 'own' end, and yet helping in the realization of the 'end' of the collectivity through this very action. It effectively negates not only the idea of causality as consisting of separate, isolated, single 'chains' of unlimited sequences, but also of 'freedom' as conceived of in terms of 'independence' and 'unrelatedness' with others who are also 'free' like oneself. The relation with the 'other' cannot be 'causal' in the usual sense of the term, as it is not only mediated by 'norms' but also leaves an essential, irreducible margin of indeterminacy both because of the others' 'freedom' and the intrinsic unpredictability of the response made by them.

The situation is further aggravated by the factors which, if taken into account, would render the 'security' and 'safety' supposed to be provided by the notion of 'causality' impossible. The 'game' is generally 'competitive', and the 'actors' always 'changing' by the very nature of the case.

The realms of society, polity, culture and economy illustrate this to a pre-eminent extent. The history of civilizations, their genesis, growth, decline, degeneration and even disappearance remain a 'mystery', as no 'reasonable' causal explanation can 'explain' it. History, as everybody knows, is the 'graveyard' of causal explanations, the 'despair' of all those who want to 'understand' it in rational causal terms. Yet, human actions and events must have taken place in terms of a 'causal discourse', just as they do now. But, then, this 'discourse' could not be the one bequeathed to us by our studies in the natural sciences, particularly those that are concerned with what is generally regarded as 'inanimate' matter. The 'principle of indeterminacy' supposed to be a characteristic of matter at the ultra-microscopic level, is not even an analogue of what we are saying, for what we are talking about is 'action', human action, and not knowledge, or understanding which is a different thing. The closest analogue, if there is one, is not science but 'engineering' and, as everyone knows or should know, 'social engineering' is in shambles while informatics and space technology may justifiably congratulate themselves on the 'miracles' they have achieved.

Between these two extremes, and even within them, there are significant variations, resulting in the puzzling situation that while one has to use the concept of 'causality', one does not exactly 'know' what one means by it. In the realms of thought, morality,

spirituality, art and culture this is well known, but that it is also the same in 'education' which pervades all fields, has seldom been noticed. The same is the case where 'time' is integral, as in all theories of 'evolution' where, whatever may be said about the 'past', little can be said about the future. Besides 'time', 'consciousness' or 'awareness' disturbs the situation in a fundamental way as the 'desirability' or 'undesirability' of the extrapolated causal projection makes one intervene and introduce 'new' causal factors in the situation and attempt to change it in a direction it would not have taken before. As the notions of 'desirability' may be diverse and even 'conflicting', the 'interventions' can take many forms, something that may even be brought about by diversity in 'knowledge' on which the intervention is based, or the 'weightage' that is given to different factors in the 'same' knowledge. Nor is the knowledge of 'causal connections' so securely established in all fields as is generally assumed, specially in those which concern human beings, and which 'matter' most to him. And, even in fields where it is relatively more securely established, it is a function of changing 'knowledge', a 'change' which is 'in-built' in it if it is to deserve the name of knowledge.

Thus, the 'relevance' of the category to the field in which it is applied depends not so much on the 'abstract' nature of the category as the specific, particularity of the phenomena to which it is being applied. Kant tried to deal with this problem through his notion of 'schema' or 'schematism' of the 'categories', but did not see that the 'application' not only affected the nature of the category, but also revealed the inadequacies in its abstract formulation and the 'diversities' hidden in it.

This, of course, is true of all the categories, but the notion of 'causality', if wrongly understood, can play havoc with the human enterprise of 'understanding' or 'knowing', as it already seems to have done with all those who find it impossible to escape from the inevitability of 'universal determinism' which they see as an inescapable consequence of it. Kant's valiant attempt to find a place for 'freedom' in this impossible situation is an evidence of this.

'Freedom', however, is not a value for Kant, but rather an 'ontological' presupposition without which morality would be impossible. 'Freedom' has already to be there if 'morality' is to be 'under-

stood', but it is not a 'category' for him, an *a priori* presupposition for making 'sense' of the 'moral' phenomena that we encounter in 'experience', even though he did talk of 'categories of Freedom'. It is, thus, not an 'ideal' to be realized, either in individual or collective life.

The issue of 'causality' in the context of the realization of 'ideals' has seldom been discussed in philosophy. It involves 'determination' by such a large number of variables, many of which are not only disparate and conflicting in nature, but also some that are not 'actual' or 'real' by their very nature. They are even more troublesome than Ryle's ghosts in the machine as they are not only 'known' to be such, but are regarded as more 'real' than the 'machine', or that which is considered as the 'really actual' by the thinkers concerned. Ryle's 'ghost' still haunts all those who deny the 'reality' of consciousness or its 'causal efficacy' for any reasons whatsoever.

The problem of 'causality' thus, is manifold as a reflection on 'human action' would reveal. Once one accepts the 'reality' of imagination, the 'causal efficacy' of the apprehension of that which is 'not' but 'should be', the 'determination' of action by the sense of 'ought' and, at a deeper level, by language which symbolizes all that is man's continuing collective creation that after being 'created' shapes and determines him, one has accepted strange kinds of 'causality', a reflection on which would make one free from the false dilemma posed by 'freedom' and 'causality' in the context of 'human action' and its 'reality' that includes the attempt to stop all activity, including the mental one, at the conscious level.

To think about 'thinking' and ask the question about the 'causality' involved in thinking, is not only to 'see' the problem in a 'new' way, but also to 'free' oneself from the multifarious problems which 'philosophical' thinking itself has raised about this issue. The 'philosophical worries' created by 'philosophical thinking' do sometimes affect, if only marginally, the way human beings 'live', but in the case of 'causality' the effects seem so far-reaching that their 'oppressive import' needs to be looked at a little more closely so that 'philosophical therapeutics' may help in mitigating, if not 'curing' the 'disease' it itself has created.

Discussion and Comments

Comments on the article: *Transformative Education: Śankara and Krishnamurti on the Encounter between Teacher and Student* by Daniel Raveh in *JICPR*, Vol. XXI, No 3.

In his article, Daniel Raveh has drawn parallelism between Śankara and Krishnamurti in their approaches towards communication (education) between a teacher and disciple.

At the outset, on parallelism can be drawn between the two, since Ādi Śankara lived in the eighth century, much before Krishnamurti, who belongs to the twentieth century. Ādi Śankara was an ascetic who founded a monastic order based on the teachings of Advaita Vedānta, which is the essence of the Upaniṣads, the Śruti texts, which are the core of the Vedas. It was Śankara who systematized the teachings through his *bhāṣyas* on the *Prasthānatrayi*, viz., the *Bhagavadgīta*, the *Brahmasūtras* and the *Upaniṣads*. He repeatedly says in his *bhāṣyas* the knowing 'Ātman' or 'Brahman' liberates the man from the clutches of samsāra.¹ In his teachings, he says that emancipation (*Mokṣa*) is the *summum bonum* of life.² In his teachings, he closely follows the *Upaniṣads*, quoting them to illustrate that his teachings possess a lineage of illustrious teachers and his predecessors—notable among them the great Ācārya Gaudapāda, the celebrated author of *Gaudapāda Kārikas*, the gloss on *Māndūkya Upaniṣad*. He calls these predecessors, 'Sampradāyavidbhir-Ācāryaha', the knowers of the tradition of Advaita Vedānta.³ Following *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Śankara gives importance to *śravaṇa* (hearing from the Guru, the teacher), *manana* (contemplation) and *nidhidhyāsana* (assimilation) following the great Yājñavalkya in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.⁴

For a qualified student, *śravaṇa* (hearing the teacher explaining the Śruti texts) the kindling spirit within is enough for self-realization. However, for the medium (*madhyama*) and lower (*mandha*) students, the other two requirements, *manana* (contemplation) and *nidhidhyāsana* (assimilation) are essential. For Śankara, śruti

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