CHAPTER V

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We have devoted considerable effort and space to review the ideas of Collingwood, Gasking and particularly von Wright. We also have taken into consideration some of the criticisms raised against the experimentalist theory, especially by J.Kim and Douglas Ehring. Further we tried to defend the experimentalist or manipulative theory as far as we could.

Causal relations, as we have seen, are basically anthropomorphic. The recent attempts to strip the causal notions from the traces of anthropomorphism have not been fully successful. We are not at all convinced that only 'primitive' people or the Greeks thought of causation on the model of human agency. In recent times anthropologists, such as Evans-Pritchard and Max Gluckman, report that in some cases where ill ensues for the people concerned
there is a belief in a double causation. For example, Mr.Jadu's hut falls down because termites have eaten the basis of its supports. But the question is: why should they have attacked Mr.Jadu's hut and not the next man's? That means, it is clear that termites eating away supports will cause them to collapse - it is the particular person which needs further explanation. So the cause may be seen as some kind of agency, though not a personal one. Where agency is personal, aitia as guilt may be imputed. If it is not personal, aitia as guilt may pass over into being aitia as cause, shedding the ascription as responsibility.

Nevertheless, the notion of agency, in aitia as cause may still be reminiscent of the notion of human agency. It is not only a puzzle for primitives, but also for contemporary philosophers. It has been well said by Austin, that the word 'cause' snares us; that

1. See for details analysis, Moral coral Crises"- Magical and secular Solution", in Max Gluckman, (ed)-The Allocation of Responsibility, Manchester. (1972) ,p.6; where Evens Princhard's views are also discussed.
2. For the background of the notion of aitia as bearing an imputation of guilt and responsibility, and the carrying over of this into its causal use, see Lloyed. G. Maqic, Reason and experience, Cambridge, (1979),p.49.
is, we are struggling to ascribe to it a new, unanthropomorphic meaning, yet constantly, in searching for its analysis, we unearth and incorporate the lineaments of the ancient model. Therefore, we say that all the versions of the experimentalist or manipulative theory currently available trace the anthropomorphism in causality to human intervention into the normal course of natural events. Someone may ask that if this is the case, how would we react to such a counter example: The pull of the moon causing tide formations on earth?

Before answering the above counter-example, we must keep in mind that the entities which we relate in terms of the causal relations are abstractions from nature, and the metaphysical scheme that we have envisaged in the introduction (sees Ontological Framework) following Wittgenstein and von Wright, seems to be best suited for the understanding of the causal asymmetry.

and the causal language. The structure of time will also be taken as a discrete medium, that is, the density of the successive moments of time is that of rational numbers and is not that of real numbers. Me have to divide time into segments in order to talk about nature meaningfully. We inevitably do it in terms of days, hours, seconds or may be even micro-seconds. The notions of "before" and "after" need not presuppose the time medium as discrete in the sense that for any two points in time, we can find a point of time such that the intermediate point can be suitably related with the two points of time in terms of the relations of "before' and "after". Similarly, the notions of "then" and "always" need not presuppose the time medium as discrete. But for the formulation of the causal relations in terms of the states of affairs and changes among the states of affairs, the notion of "next" is inevitable which clearly demands for a discrete time medium. The notion of "next" is inevitable for the expressions required for the formulations of the changes among the states of

affairs. A "change" among the states of affairs means two non-identical states of affairs at two successive moment. Successiveness demands a discreteness among the entities which are arranged through the notion of a successor function. If each point has a unique successor, except the end point, it forms a chain. Temporal sequence is a chain of moments and in this sense the temporal medium is to be taken as discrete. Or the density of the moments in time (possible worlds) is that of rational numbers and not that of real number.

With these remarks, we may try to answer the earlier mentioned counter-example against manipulability or experimentalist theory. The examples 'Pull of the moon causing tide formation on earth' — shows that it is an example of causation in nature without any human intervention or is an example of natural causation. Natural causation means that a causal relation is determined in terms of 'natural laws'. Here, in accordance with natural laws, that is, 'the pulling of the moon'
brought about the so called changes on earth, that is, 'tide formation on earth'. But we have already mentioned that causal relations are nothing but abstractions from nature. To understand the phenomena of change in nature, we need the help of manipulative or experimentalist theory of causation. We can very well understand the 'pull of the moon causing the tide formation on earth', in the light of a miniature model replicating similar phenomena. Let us suppose that we have a puller in front of a deepwell. If we pull, then water will come, or the way a physician takes out the liquid medicine from a vial through a syringe. This miniature model, when extended to nature, helps us in understanding natural changes. In the present example, the moon, like an agent, pulls, it orings about the tide formation on earth. This relation also shows that it is asymmetrical. That is, 'the pulling on the moon' causes 'the tide formation on earth' and not the other way round. Since 'pulling' is more directly amenable to human control than that of 'tide
formation' or 'accumulation of water at a place from surrounding areas in sea'.

One may venture to say that our view cones very close to that of von Wright, von Wright explains causal connection in terms of human agency. He is of the opinion that for an understanding of the idea of causation, we must understand the idea of causation, we must understand the idea of action and agency. The idea of causation is "conceptually" dependent on the idea of action. He further classifies his opinion by claiming that when we say that a generic event A is the cause of another generic event B, what we mean is that we can influence a B-type of event by influencing an A type of event and not vice-versa.

One may argue that given von Wright's explanation of causal relation, anyone who says that we can influence X by manipulating Y because Y and X are causally related would be guilty of the sorae error as the physician
In Le Malade Imaginaire, who proclaimed that opium tends to put people to sleep because it has a dormative virtue. But the thing which, in von Wright's view, we roust not say, is something which sensible persons constantly do say. This indicates that von Wright has not quite succeeded in capturing our everyday concept of causal connection.

In response to this objection we may say, attribution of such a view to von Wright is quite beside the point. Von Wright clearly makes a distinction between the causal ideas in the realm of natural states of affairs and in the realm of human states of affairs; he considers causal relations only in the realm of natural phenomenal for human phenomena, he prefers the term teleological rather than causal. In the above example, the cause, 'dormative virtue', is clearly a human state of affairs and not a natural state of affairs, though the effect, 'opium tending people to sleep', is a natural state of affairs. Such causal connection can

only be attributed to von Wright's view at the cost of "category mistake", so to say.

With an amendment of von Wright's view on causation, we may claim that many difficulties are removed. The commonsensical claims that we can influence X by manipulating Y because Y and X are causally connected, amounts to sayings *We* can Influence X by manipulating Y because any natural agent who was able to manipulate Y could thereby influence X. What humans can do is explained by being deduced from a generalization about what any natural agent with the requisite ability could do: a clear case of explaining one regularity by subsuming it under a more comprehensive one. In that case we need not, as von Wright does, claim that the category of causality is totally alien for human phenomena. We may, then take into consideration, the cases of social engineering, social (human) phenomena are also causally linked through human intervention, we may also pay a closer attention to the modern Management
techniques which again is based on the human intervention in the realm of social phenomena. Moreover, even in the realm of natural phenomena, it becomes easier to explain the causal connections for the events related to geological past or astronomical predictions.

Von Wright has noted the resemblance between 'causes' and 'actions', yet he falls victim to the Humean idea of "regular succession" of the state of affairs. He is only able to explain the causal regularities in terms of some other regularities of nature. A regularity in the "change" among the states of affairs is dependent on human intervention, according to von Wright. Our notion of 'cause' is loaded with the concept of 'action'. But a von Wrightean analysis of the notion of cause being dependent on action, assumes a circularity. Since, he makes a distinction between the result and consequence of an action and a perfect description of an action must include the intended consequence. The practical inference employed in action presupposes a regularity
in nature, and the causal regularity is established through action. It seems, therefore, that the notion of action, if taken as an extension of the concept of our action, the circularity may be avoided.

When an action is performed, something is brought about, some event takes place. By the very fact that we describe it as an action performed by an agent, we assign responsibility to him. This assigning of responsibility to an agent implies that he could have done otherwise. This brings us face to face with the concept of an agent, an agent who can act freely who has a choice. A mere behaviour is a response to a stimulus. Such responses or behaviour may be found in any object in the world. The objects in the world may behave in a certain fashion, but such behaviour need not turn the object into an agent. To be an agent, to act, one must have some comprehension regarding the objects in the world and their behaviour, as if the agent himself /her self is not an object in the world, to act upon them. Such a distancing is conceptually necessary
for an agent, though he/she is never totally cut off from the world. Such a distancing or separation of the agent from the world may be termed as a 'being-of-the-world', while mere objects or even changes taking place, are in-the-world.'

From this point of view, we may say that an agent is assumed to be a "being-off-the-world" who is capable of contemplating, who, as a congniser, must have cognised (or at least contemplated) the consequences. An agent, in order to be an agent, must separate himself/herself from the mere objecthood of being-in-the-world, yet the agent cannot be totally lifted out of the world and assigned a place beyond it. He maintains contact with the world by deriving his group identity through some socially given myths or lebenswelt. The agent's subjective intentionality gets objectified through the socially accepted norms and myths of the society to which he belongs. This does not mean that an agent acts with a complete obedience to the social norms. On

* This terminology of 'being-in-the-world' and 'being-off-the-world' - was suggested to me by Dr. Chinmoy Goswami. He has used these terminologies in one of his papers "on the logical Form of Action Sentences", presented in a symposium on Human Action organised by Indian Philosophical Association in Bombay on June 5, 1990
the contrary, the role played by an individual is never totally determined. An agent, performs within a broad framework, which is made available to him by the society to which he belongs. But minute details are always filled in and interpreted by the agent himself. Through a process of contemplation, cognition, etc., an agent makes a non-actual possibility actual. The actualisations of the non-actual possibles, are actions. The very idea of a possibility emerges from a being-off-the-world. Only by separating himself/herself from the world, one can look beyond. A mere being-in-the-world, grapples with only 'is' but a hybrid being-in-off-the-world tries to grapple with both 'is' s and 'could be's' or might be 's'. In order to differentiate actions from events, to act, there is a primacy of the being-off-the-world over the being-in-the world, a cognition is necessary to form an intention, a directedness towards a good, to have a teleological model for action.

Human actions are directed towards some end, that is, something in the future is aimed at by our actions.
But the causal notion seems to be based on the concept of our actions in the sense that they are that 'acts' of nature and we find out the relation in terms of something in the past, as in the case of causal explanations and in terms of something in the future, as in the case of prediction. It is admittedly an anthropocentric mode of understanding which always lies beneath our everyday understanding. We have learnt it in our childhood and it is not possible to disregard it totally. However hard we may try to free ourselves from the anthropomorphic notions in the name of objectivity or science.

If we suppose that causal relations held for the "changes" among the states of affairs, and our actions have consequences then we also must accept that nature does move or change, by itself. It is true that cor intervention can bring about a change in the existing state of affairs, but one cannot deny that "changes" among the states of affairs are also brought about even without our intervention. The causal efficaciousness
is to be compared with the performing of our actions while the persistence of states of affairs may be compared with the non-performing of any action. Of course, the distinction between the "result" of an action and its "consequence" will be fused or even may collapse in case of the "acts" of nature, but that there are consequences of our actions is an evidence to the fact that nature changes by itself, without any human intervention as well. Nature is to be seen as an "agent" who can "act". It may be the case that we may not be interested to assign any sense of rationality or value in nature but that is no obstacle or hindrance for assuming that nature can "act" (or behave) in certain ways. We may not be interested in explaining the "acts" of nature in the same teleological way as we do for the human actions as we do not assign any "intentionality" to nature or to the "acts" of nature. The ways in which nature usually "acts" (behaves), we call - causal relation. Action and behaviour coincide. The distinction between action and behaviour collapse. Nature's actions are her behaviours, the way
she behaves. Understanding of nature, its laws and functions is the key to the problem of causality and we must accept that our understanding of nature, its ways of behaviour is, at least partly, based on our understanding of ourselves. Since the days of primitive (early) understanding, animistic ideas have been spreading their roots. It is believed that a growing child, from its birth to maturity undergoes through the developments of human history from "early" man to "modern" man during the 'Journey of an individual through early childhood to maturity gathers animistic beliefs; Consequently, animism has deeper roots than is usually believed in the modern scientific world. Any attempt to remove all the traces of animism from the process of understanding is not only futile but there is no intellectual virtue in it.

Von Wright claims that the notion of causation is conceptually dependent on the concept of action. His theory of action presents certain logical peculiarities which are closely related with the concept at cause and
yet he fails to recognise that the concept of cause is only an extension of our concept of action. Nevertheless, he provides a very clear account of both the concepts of cause and that of action. He himself, at certain places, points out that the logical behaviour of the two concepts are very close and their behaviour in language almost coincide. Von Wright clearly sees the similarities in the linguistic usage of the two concepts and consequently he finds that the concept of action is needed for the understanding of the notion of 'cause'. We would like to say that the very notion of 'cause' is anthropocentric. It may not be a proof but enough evidences in support of anthropocentricism of the causal notions that in most of the natural languages, we find the causal notions quite intricately connected with the notion of agency -and action.

It may appear that, we have deviated a long way from our main concern-the problem of causal asymmetry. The deviation has not been without reason. The problem of causal asymmetry can only make sense when one has a
vivid picture of the notion of causal relation itself. The notion of causal relation itself has been a problematic issue. We had to devote some space on the idea of causal relation itself, as our main problem—the problem of causal asymmetry—is dependent on it. Once we have a fairly clear picture of the notion of causal relation, we may hope to shed some light on the problem of causal asymmetry, which, as expected follows naturally.

The notions of "cause" and that of "action" are closely related with each other. Since the concept of "cause" can only be well understood in terms of "action" or in terms of ideas connected with action. Causal notion is an extension of the notion of "action". Causal relation, the 'cement of the Universe' binds the phenomena together. Through the discovery of causal relations a cosmos is discovered amidst chaos. But such cognations are possible only through actions. Actions alone opens the doors for cognition. There is an interdependence between action and cognition, in general. It is through action, we cognise and with some knowledge about the
world we act upon it. Cognition of causal relations is more heavily dependent on the notion of action since causally connected events are supposed to be the result and consequence of an "act" of nature or even "act" of nature and its result.

In the light of such a view, the problem of causal asymmetry takes a peculiar turn. This problem comes to sharper focus when we consider singular causal statements. Singular causal statements have a particular spatio-temporal location. Consequently, philosophers were tempted to equate causal priority with time. That is to say, temporal factor play a significant role in it. Some philosophers are of the opinion that the asymmetry displayed in the causal relation is due to the linear nature of time. They rule out any possibility of causes and effects being simultaneous.

One may not be able to put aside the possibility of simultaneous causation under a deeper logical and metaphysical scrutiny. If one believes that the nature
of time is continuous, then it may not be problematic. One can always allow a small time between the cause and the effect. A description of the cause must have a duration in time, so has the description of the effect. Assuming, the time medium to be continuous, one can always put something in between and hence causal priority can be equated with the temporal priority. However, to believe that time is continuous will be hypothetical. It is impossible to capture the continuous time media is in our common language, even measurement of time impossible. We have assumed that the time medium is discrete, in order to express causal relation in language. Once we assume, time media is discrete, the problem of simultaneous causation is unavoidable. If cause and effect are two distinct moments then there must be something in between to connect them. The element in between can very well serve as the effect or the cause. One way to escape the dilemma is to accept that the effect is not prior to cause. This obviously opens up the possibility of the effect being simultaneous with the cause. In that case time factor is not at all a helpful
guide to differentiate between the cause and the effect. It may be claimed that mere time factor is not able to solve the problem of causal asymmetry. Since, in simultaneous causation, there is no time gap between the cause factor and the effect factor.

We may conclude, therefore, that the asymmetrical character of the causal relations are to be understood in terms of human intervention. The event over which we have a more direct control is the cause. We can control the effect only through a control over the cause. In other words, the event which can be brought about by an agent more directly is a more plausible candidate for being the cause, while the consequence of the action is the effect of the event brought about by the action. At times, we may come across where two events are equally amenable to human control and one causes the other. In such situations, we must pick the particular causal situation and the cause will be that one which has been under human (agent's) control more directly in that situation. The cause factor must be amenable to human control, at least, theoretically.
more directly than the effect factor. This approach is a different account of causal asymmetry which deviates considerably from the traditional ideas of mere "constant conjunction" or "temporal asymmetry", without the help of temporal factor, it solves the problem of causal asymmetry. Moreover, the present approach to causation, if suitably amended, may shed some light on the other associated problems mentioned earlier (in chapter-2). It can be easily shown that the cause can very well be singled out from the conditions through the possibility of human intervention in each singular causal situation. The factor, from among the many factors present, is called the cause which has been under more direct human control than the effect in any causal situation. In fact that is how we single out 'striking of the match' as the cause for 'the match stick cot ignited'. Similar is the case with the counterfactual dependence. The result of an action is counterfactually dependent on action, though this counterfactuality is logical. The logical necessity of the counterfactual associated with action retains
its necessity but loses its logicality in case of the "acts" of nature due to epistemic uncertainties. Thus the notion of action, which the positivists thought as an off-shoot of animism, in connection with any scientific enquiry comes out to be an extremely useful, practical and handy concept for an understanding or the causal concepts. It also comes out to be the case that the notion of action lends adequate support in solving many problems associated with the causal notion. Obviously the logic of causal asymmetry is the logic of the asymmetrical relation between the action and its result while the knowledge of causal priority is directly obtained through the amenability or the fact of human control.