

Topic: Epistemology and
Metaphysics (Western)

Subject: Philosophy

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1. Discuss critical estimate of Hume's view of causation?

Ans:- Common people regard cause as a power or force or energy which actively produces the effect. The causal relation is a necessary relation. Hume is a thorough going empiricist. He criticises the popular notion of cause. He strikes at the very root of the conception of cause as 'power' or 'activity'. All knowledge is derived from experience. We ~~never~~ never apprehend any 'force' or 'power' or 'energy' in our sense-experience. We know nothing of any production and there is no necessary connection between a ~~causal~~ cause and an effect. Experience gives us only succession of two discrete events. Causality is nothing more than conformity of succession, and cause is nothing but the invariable antecedent of an event. Causality is not efficiency. Cause does not produce the effect, because 'production' is never perceived. Cause and its effect are mere events, changes or occurrences. According to Hume the idea of causality may be derived from² two types of relations - Contiguity and

Succession. Whenever we perceive the cause we also perceive its effects, i.e., cause and effect are contiguous. Moreover, cause is antecedent to the effect, i.e., there is a relation of succession between them. Causal relation is not a necessary relation. It is a custom-borne habit of the human mind to read necessary connection into constantly conjoined events. Necessary connection is only a prejudice of our mind, it is something that exists in the mind, and not in objects. Hume erred in thinking that the sensations are atomic and discrete. Because of this initial error, he was compelled to regard causality as only subjective. The idea of causality is an a priori form of human understanding. Whitehead maintains that the reality is the process of events. In this process every event is continuous with the other. They cannot be separated. In this process the foregoing event is called the cause and the succeeding one is called the effect. Thus the causal relation is an objective relation.