

CAUSALITY

Evolution is not a force but a process; not a cause but a law. John, Viscount Morley of Blackburn

Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts? Shakespeare

I assert that nothing ever comes to pass without a cause. Jonathan Edwards

I pass with relief from the tossing sea of Cause and Theory to the firm ground of Result and Fact. Winston Churchill

During my time in space as a biologist specializing in alien life forms, I visited many planets that were deemed capable of supporting living creatures. Most of them did. I am sure that many, if not most of these extraterrestrial inhabitants, found me as unappealing as I did them. However, I never felt that I was ever in any danger. Receptions ranged from icy coolness to overt friendliness. Communication was made possible by the use of universal translators. I had many rather interesting adventures and interactions. I can go on for a very long time recounting them. However there is one that I feel must be told.

I landed on this planet blessed for me with a rather benign environment. I did not need to don any garb that on other occasions provided protection and the means to breathe. I was immediately approached by biped beings that were physically attractive and very friendly. It did not take long for me to get acquainted with their society and culture.

I was allowed to go anywhere and to converse with anyone. I was taken to a medium size urban center. What struck me immediately was that there was no traffic but instead, a fabulous mass transit system. Relations between the individual members of the populace were more than just civil. They were cheerful and very congenial. I sought, but did not find, any authority of any stripe whatsoever. There were no police, nor municipal power figures. It seems that crime of any kind was never committed. Therefore the need for criminal investigators was of no use. There was also no governing body anywhere on the planet because there was no need for one. Egalitarianism and equity were the driving forces that everyone subscribed to. Education and health care were just parts of a civilized process that was taken for granted.

I could not imagine how such a world had come about. It is true that the various planets I had visited and studied exhibited packets of benevolence but never universally. I made it my business to discover the root reason for the existence of this unique paradise.

It took me longer than I thought it would. Ultimately I discovered what I think is the underlying paradigm that allows for such munificence, kindness, compassion and good will. I had difficulty believing it. It seems that the notion of 'Cause and Effect' is totally alien to this world. The cause and its effect are two separate events. For example, a malady is not linked to any specific

cause. It is treated for what it is and not for what supposedly caused it. Its cause, when determined, is simply another event that may be regarded as a unique occurrence with its own characteristics that may or may not be dealt with. This paradigm is extended to nearly all other activities. Thus blame is never attributed to anything, so that the concept of culpability and or guilt does not have any meaning. History is given short shrift. It is not too difficult to ascertain what the impact of such philosophy could have once it permeates a given society as it seems to have done here. It is ironic to note that the repudiation of 'cause and effect' is itself a cause with an enormous effect.

Once I realized that 'Cause and Effect' had no place here, I wondered if anything had replaced it or what exactly had given rise to that particular worldview. I hunted for the oldest academic who, I thought might be able to assist me in my endeavours. It took a while but I found him. He lived as a recluse and spent most of his time in contemplation. I never discovered what he was thinking about. However, he was able to provide me with more food for thought.

"Your query about our denial of 'Cause and Effect' is worthy of a measured response. Many aeons ago we gave a great deal of thought to that subject. Three problems came to mind. The first is that if every effect has a cause, that cause must have been an effect caused by some other cause, which in turn was caused and so on. Some asserted that there must have been a 'Prime Cause.' If so where and when did it come from? Obviously, that was a question that could not be answered. Thus there is no point in asking questions to which an answer is impossible. That was one reason we put 'Cause and Effect' aside. Second, you may have noticed that we devote nothing to the concept of time. The reason is that, implicit in the notion of 'Cause and Effect' is a chronological order. If we deny 'Cause and Effect', then time has no real utility for us.

The second problem was more intriguing, at least to me. If a cause has an intended effect, the effect is the cause of the cause. The question then becomes, which is which? If the cause has an unintended effect, that merely means that we do not know or cannot know who or what caused the cause. It appears that in these cases Cause and Effect are inexorably linked. This, in turn, gives rise to the idea that everything in the Universe is linked, so that the only thing that is real is unity and that it is comprised of all these linkages."

At this point and because of his wisdom, I wanted desperately to become a member of this world. Unfortunately, the alarm woke me up. Sorrowfully, I realized that all of the preceding was a dream. I was now back in the world of 'Cause and Effect', with its rapacious character, cold logic, analytical approach and divisive nature. I could not help but wonder whether my dream was going to be a cause or an effect.

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Mar. 17, 2010