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The Notion of Causality in Edo Metaphysics: a hermeneutico philosophical study

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ABSTRACT

One of the most important and most discussed problems of traditional and contemporary metaphysics and philosophy of science is the problem of causality. The problem has generated a lot of controversies and debates from scholars. One clear point amidst these discussions on the causality problem is that the last has neither been written nor heard. It remains an open-ended issue for philosophical consideration. The causation problem itself is not just a problem but a cluster of problems with puzzling questions such as; how do causes bring about their effects? Our concern in this paper is not to examine all the problems that are embedded in the relationship between cause and effect, but to focus on the metaphysical problem of how cause, conceived as a separate event is related or connected to the effect. Several theories have been postulated by Western scholars like Aristotle, Spinoza, Hume, Hempel, Russell, Kant, Mill, among others to explain the kind of causal connection obtainable between causes and effects. Some of these theories of causation are traditional view or common sense view, Humean, and the host of others. It is a fact that some of these theories have failed in proffering a philosophical solution to the traditional causation problem. In an attempt to further reflect on the traditional causation problem, this paper undertakes an exposition of the nature of causality, determinism, freedom and predestination in traditional African thought with the aim of proffering better explanation towards resolving the traditional causation problem.

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Introduction

Granted that H. S. Staniland has defined philosophy as "criticisms of the ideas we live by" (Staniland, 2000: 5). This paper is not concerned with the issue of the existence or nonexistence of African philosophy rather it tries to explain the African view of the causation controversy. The theory of causation has received several attacks and counterattacks and it has defiled several attempts at resolving it. Specifically, this paper examines the African understanding of the theory of causation. One of the most important and most discussed problems of traditional and contemporary metaphysics and philosophy of science is the problem of causality. The problem has generated a lot of controversies and debates from scholars. One clear point amidst these discussions on the causality problem is that the last has neither been written nor heard. It remains an open-ended issue for philosophical consideration. The causation problem itself is not just a problem but a cluster of problems with puzzling questions. Such questions are: how do causes bring about their effects? What is it that plays the role of cause and effect: events, property instances, objects, variables, and facts, states of affairs or propositions? What is the connection between cause and effect? Or better still, is there a distinction between causes and effects? Our concern in this paper is not to examine all the problems that are embedded in the relationship between cause and effect, but to focus on the metaphysical problem of how cause, conceived as a separate event is related or connected to the effect, another event, that is, the traditional causation problem. Several theories have been postulated by Western scholars like Aristotle, Spinoza, Hume, Hempel, Russell, Kant, Mill, among others to explain the kind of causal connection obtainable between causes and effects. Some of these theories of causation are traditional view or common sense view, Humean, and the host of others. It is a fact that some of these theories have failed in proffering a philosophical solution to the traditional causation problem. In an attempt to further reflect on the traditional causation problem, this paper undertakes an exposition of the nature of causality, determinism, freedom and predestination in traditional African thought with the aim of proffering better explanation towards resolving the traditional causation problem.

Furthermore, the paper exposes the thrust of the causation problem, bearing in mind the traditional account as well as Hume's reflections on the problem. In this regard, notable theories of metaphysics of causations are discussed with some notes on their shortcomings. More so, the paper shows that the traditional causation problem, a core problem in the Western traditional metaphysics does not arise in the analysis of the nature of causes in Traditional African Thought. In other words, the analysis of the nature of causality in Traditional African Thought can be used as an African solution to the traditional causality problem and as an alternative approach to the existing contradictory theories of the Western traditional metaphysics. The paper employs the method of hermeneutics to study the nature of causality in Traditional African Thought as a basis for further reflections on traditional metaphysical theories of causation. It argues that the concept of causation in Traditional African Thought can be taken as an African solution to the traditional causation problem. Thus, in this paper we shall attempt to resolve the problem of causality using

the Edo experience as an alternative approach. The problem of causality is not just one but a cluster of problems, it has to do with issues relating to determinism, chance and others. It attempt to answer the question: what do we mean when we say this event causes this event? Thus, this paper presents the Edo experience of causality using the method of hermeneutics. This method provides us the tool to critically reflect on the Edo experience as a solution to the two broad views on causality.

In the end our suggestion is that causality in the light of the Edo understanding should be further research into and used as an alternative view to the two broad opposing theories of causation. Finally, this paper shows that to move beyond the conflicts and confusion created by Humeans and Causationists' theories of causation, the African view of causation should be used as an alternative approach to the resolution of the two broad opposing theories. Sadly, no Edo writer has researched into the causation problem, hence the data used in this paper is based on oral interview and works on African notion of causation as exemplified in Yoruba, Akan, Igbo, etc. belief system. The reason for this is the homogeneity or similarity that exist between African systems of thought.

Conceptual Clarification

Edo people are in the southern part of Nigeria and their metaphysics or worldview is predicated on their view of life, death, Being and their environment. Granted that Aristotle has defined metaphysics as the study of "Being as Being" (Aristotle, 2012: 2) or the first causes of things we can therefore say that Edo metaphysics is the critical reflection on the Edo notion of Being and its causes. Although Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy* identified African idea of being with vital force. The Edo idea of being is not solely a spiritual entity but also a physical entity. Perhaps, the Rwandian priest Alexis Kagame probably have the most interesting and influential elaboration of Edo notion of being since he believes in the existence of a unified and immutable collective Bantu thinking. He proposes four Bantu categories to the ten categories of Aristotle. The names are taken from Kinyarwanda and it is always the root *–ntu* attached to different prefixes. They are: 1. *Muntu* - human being – the plural is *Bantu* 2. *Kintu* - the plural is *Bintu* - the name of the thing, a being not endowed with intelligence; 3. *Hantu* - is the name of localization in space or time; and 4. *Kuntu* - is the name for modality (Kagame, 1976: 120-123; also see: Muntu, 1961: 100-101). The first two stands for Aristotle category of substance and the subject matter of metaphysics for Aristotle is *Ousia* and its accidents (Substance and its features) such as Space, time, quantity, quality, relation, activity, passivity, position, and possession. One major vacuum in Kagame's categorization and a unique difference him and Edo metaphysicians is that Kagame's use of the root word *-ntu* was corrected identified with the "life force" of Tempels by Janheinz Jahn (Muntu, 1961: 67). The word "muntu" has since been used by proponents of Bantu philosophy as well as by its critics. Another scholarly work which fits into the Edo categorization of ontology is a work by Mogobe Ben Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*. Ramose attempted to provide a detailed linguistic analysis of a non-fragmented Being, *umuntu*. Thus, Edo metaphysics presents a detailed analysis of a non-fragmented Being *Ogbia* (man) as a being-in-the-world and a being-with-others. This

being is different from the one identified in Sartrean and Heideggerian metaphysics as a being-unto-death, a being whose existence or finality is death but for the Edo metaphysician death does not mark the end of a man's life as he can either reincarnates or become *enikaro*. Thus, Edo metaphysics is a unique system of thought that is distinct from the Western system of thought. It is a unique whole in which there are no sharp distinctions or cleavage between the physical and the spiritual. The other world is here on earth as dramatize in Prince Akenzuwa's *Pot of Life*. The spiritual controls the physical and as we shall see in the notion of *ehi* or predestination. Hence, abstruse questions such as how does the material influence the immaterial as we have in the mind and body problem of Descartes is alien to the Edos. Bearing in mind the traditional meaning of metaphysics as the study of Being as being, we shall refer to Edo metaphysics as an enquiry into the fundamental question of Being from an African (Edo) perspective. What then is the Edo notion of causality and what are the core issues that makes it different from the Western notion of causality? Before attempting to proffer answer to this question let us attempt a quick survey of the notion of causality in Western metaphysics. But in the mere, suffice it to say that the Edo notion of causality cuts across their belief in reincarnation, chance, determinism and freedom, perhaps it is in this light that we will be discussing the Edo notion of causality.

But what then is causality? Causality is the view that we can trace present occurrences to previous happenings. It is the view that every cause has an effect. By causality we shall hold that there are chains of causes that connect one event to another. But are events connected to one another? What is it when we say this event causes that event? Also by Western traditional metaphysics, we intend to point attention to the early views on metaphysics. In particular here, the works of Aristotle, Hume and others. Traditional, because in this glorious days of the queenly rule of metaphysics, metaphysics was considered as an autonomous discipline and metaphysical truths were seen as *a priori*. However, with the onslaught on metaphysic by the Vienna circle and the earlier Humean temper, Wittgenstein and Comtean relegation of metaphysical truth, scholars such as Dewey, Willrd Sellars, James Ladyman, Don Ross, etc attempted a futile task of a disciplinary rescue. They attempted to save metaphysics from itself. Thus, emerged works such as *Scientific Metaphysics*, *Everything Must Go: Metaphysics Naturalized* etc. It is in contrast to views/works expressed by these scholars that we coined 'Western traditional metaphysic' to distant our view on metaphysics from this current debate of naturalizing metaphysics. Thus, our idea of causality in Western metaphysics could go as far back as the views of Thales but not as recent as the works of Quine, James Ladyman etc.

The Notion of Causation in Western Metaphysics

There are divergent views on the notion of causality but for the sake of brevity, we shall examine few of them, those that believe in the possibility of causality and those that denial the possibility of causality. The traditional conception of cause and effect is one which modern science shows to be fundamentally erroneous, and requiring to be replaced by a quite different notion, that of laws

of change. In the traditional conception, a particular event A caused a particular event B, and by this it was implied that, given any event B, some earlier event A could be discovered which had relation to it, such that;

1. Whenever A occurred, it was followed by B.
2. In this sequence, there was something "necessary," not a mere de facto occurrence of A first and then B.

According to Bertrand Russell the second point is illustrated by the old discussion as to whether it can be said that day causes night, on the ground that day is always followed by night (Russell, 1921: 231). The orthodox answer was that day could not be called the cause of night, because it would not be followed by night if the earth's rotation were to cease. A cause, it was held, must be such that under no circumstances could it fail to be followed by its effect. As a matter of fact such sequences as were sought by believers in the traditional form of causation have not so far been found in nature. Everything in nature is apparently in a state of continuous change. So that what we call one event turns out to be a process, if this event is to cause another event, the two will have to be contiguous in time and if there is any interval between them something may happen during that interval to prevent the expected effect. Cause and effect according to Russell will have to be "temporary contiguous processes" (Russell, 1921: 231). This notion informs his thinking that it is difficult to believe, at any rate where physical laws are concerned, that the earlier part of the process which is the cause can make any difference to the effect, so long as the latter part of the process which is the cause remains unchanged. However, Russell says that "we have to the cause as one event and the effect as another, both must be shortened indefinitely" (Russell, 1921: 233). The result of such thinking is that we merely have, as the embodiment of our causal law, a certain direction of change at each moment. Hence we are brought to differential equations as embodying causal laws. A physical law does not say "A will be followed by B", but tells us how the particle's motion is changing at each moment, not where the particle will be at some future moment. (Consider Newtonian laws of motion). Science therefore starts from the generalization of the form "A is usually followed by B." This is the nearest approach that can be made to a causal law of the traditional sort. It may happen in any particular instance that A is always followed by B, but we cannot know this, since we cannot foresee all the perfectly possible circumstances that might make the sequence fail, or none that none of them will actually occur. Thus, science starts by lack of universality, necessity and uniqueness in causes. Thus Russell argues that "cause means nearly invariable antecedent" and since we cannot obtain an antecedent which is quite invariable, for this would require us to take account of the whole universe, since something not taken account of may prevent the expected effect.

Before, Russell, Aristotle sees causation as an explanation. Aristotle see causes as "something without which the thing could not be," hence he identified four causes namely, formal cause, material cause, efficient cause and final cause. In response to the question 'what is this?' Aristotle

said it can be broken down into 'what is it made of,' 'who is this made by?' 'What is this made for?' and 'for what end was it made?' Today, the average man understanding sees causation in the sense of the efficient cause - things responsible for – "efficient cause is a thing that by its activity brings about an effect in another thing. Thus, the efficient cause was defined by reference to some substance performing a change".

The stoic rejected Aristotle's notion of causation as explanation or change, rather they hold a universal conception of causation. They rejected the idea of chance, luck, coincidence or probability as an ignorant of the causal connections between events. Thus, emerge a crude form of determinism. Without any room for freedom, chance or change.

In the medieval era, St. Thomas Aquinas attempted to prove the existence of God via his five cosmological arguments. In the causation argument, he concludes that God is the uncaused cause, the final cause or the first cause. This argument is a development of his religious interpretation of Aristotle's unmoved mover. Although, for Aristotle, the unmoved mover is not the first mover as if motion can be trace back to where it began, regard it is the reason for or the principle of motion, but for Aquinas the unmoved mover is the first mover, God the reason or explanation for motion. The idea of uniformity of nature as a major factor in causality is attributed to Aquinas in his view of nature. According to Menno Hulswit, by saying that "all natural things happen in the same way," Aquinas meant that things belonging to the same type act similarly in similar causal circumstances. By thus relating efficient causality to natural necessity, and natural necessity to law-like behavior, Aquinas would have a major impact on the development of the modern conception of causality (Hulswit, 2002: 19).

The modern conception of causality enjoys an intellectual frame of mind which is associated with science. The modern era, the age of science marks a development in the conception of causality. In this era, the conceptions of formal and final causes were dropped for a new interpretation of efficient causes. The medieval understanding of causality as a sufficient reason for determinism was re-emphasized with radical steps to initiate the notion of freedom. In short the contours of causality in modern philosophy can be understood within the notion of God or substance as understood by the pillars of modern philosophy, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz. These three strands of thought argued that substance is either a two-fold phenomenon, a single reality or many substances.

Descartes, for example, erected a mechanistic worldview since he held that the "principles of nature were identical to the principles of mechanics" (Hulswit, 2002: 19). Hulswit, noted further that:

> Descartes endorsed two very different concepts of efficient causality. There are *particular causes* and there is one *general cause*. Descartes attributed to God the status of a general cause, which insures the constancy of quantity of motion in the universe ... Interestingly, the *particular causes* are not the motions of the

> individual parts of matter, but the *general* principles or laws of nature ... In the beginning, God created matter and motion, and he conserves exactly the same quantity of motion for all time. God is the efficient cause of any change of motion in an otherwise inert matter. And He does so according to the laws of nature, which became secondary causes. Thus, Descartes attributed some efficient causality to the laws of motion, which determine all particular effects. By doing so they provide causal, mechanical explanations. The only 'active initiator of change' that remained was the cause of all causes: God. Descartes' theory entailed a radical change in the concept of cause: by thus identifying efficient causes with deterministic laws, causes were no longer conceived as particulars, but as *types*. Moreover, they were no longer identified as the 'active initiators of a change,' but, instead, as some *inactive* instruments of God. This change had a tremendous impact upon the scientific view of the world (Hulswit, 2002: 17).

Thomas Hobbes like Descartes also rejected formal and final causation, and thought that causation was only relevant to motion. He explained all phenomena, even psychological and sociological ones, in terms of causal relations between moving bodies. The Hobbesian idea of cause is that cause is the aggregate of accidents in the agent requisite for the production of the effect. Perhaps, Hobbes defined an *effect* as "that accident, which is generated in the patient" But, given that the accidents themselves are motions of parts of the body that is changed, causation consists, ultimately, in motion (Quoted in: Hulswit, 2002: 18). Thus, the causal *relata* are not particular bodies or substances, but their motions; causation is a relation between the motions of different bodies. Nothing would happen if nothing moved, and the only things that move are bodies. Moreover, all causation occurs by contact, that is to say, it consists in motion of contiguous bodies. There is no action at a distance. In this Hobbes's universe everything happens by necessity: "all the effects that have been, or shall be produced, have their necessity in things antecedent" (Quoted in: Hulswit, 2002: 21). Moreover, given the cause, "it cannot be *conceived* but that the effect will follow.

Spinoza argues that God is the only free cause or genuine cause. In short there is a necessary condition, according to Spinoza for cause and effect. In his words "From a given determinate cause an effect necessarily follows; and, on the other hand, if no determinate cause be given it is impossible that an effect can follow" (Quoted in: Hulswit, 2002: 24). Given the reciprocity of the necessary relation between cause and effect, and given that "the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things" (Quoted in: Hulswit, 2002: 16) the necessity involved in the causal relationship must be understood as *logical necessity*. Causes logically necessitate their effects, and, conversely, effects logically necessitate their causes.

Hulswit noted that Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason refers both to the logical ground and to the real cause of things: "there is nothing without a reason, or no effect without a cause"

(Huslwit, 2002: 34). In an attempt to escape the criticisms leveled on Descartes dualism (thought and extension). While Descartes has argued for two causes, Spinoza holds that there is only one cause and different *modes*, Leibniz's attempt to argue that Descartes thought and extension were one and the same cause, he ended up in the in existence of different causes (monads) and his theory of pre-established harmony agrees fully with his conception of a world which is even more deterministic than the one created by Descartes and Spinoza.

On the other side of the debate, Justin A. I. Champion writes that "Once upon a time it was more or less taken for granted that the three British empiricists were linked by their views on substance: Locke had two, mind and matter; Berkeley analyzed Locke's matter away and so had only mind; Hume used Berkeley's analytical method to dissolve mind and thus was left with no substance at all" (Champion, 1999). For John Locke we should understand the notion of *Power* being the source from whence all Action proceeds, the Substances wherein these Powers are, when they exert this Power into Act, are called *Causes*; and the Substances which thereupon are produced … are called *Effects* (Huslwit, 2002: 36). Huslwit put it thus:

> A cause is a particular substance putting its power to work. Apparently, Locke conceived causes and effects as *particulars.* In his entire discussion of power there is no reference to either uniformity or necessary connection. 'Power' and 'necessary connection' are kept separate in Locke's thought, for although we do perceive powerful or changing objects and thus have the ideas of power and cause, we do not perceive any necessary connections between ideas. By linking causation to power, but not to necessity, Locke clearly upheld what is nowadays called a singularist approach to causation. This view conflicts with the modern received view of causation (ever since Hume), according to which causation involves uniformity or necessary connection according to law (Huslwit, 2002: 38).

In his masterpiece, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica,* Isaac Newton set forth the mathematical laws of physics and "the system of the world." The world system consists of material bodies (masses composed of "solid, massy, hard, impenetrable, moveable particles") at rest or in motion and interacting according to his three famous laws of motion, which are stated, according to Hulswit, in implicitly causal terms:

> (1) Everybody perseveres in its state of rest, or of uniform motion in a right line, unless it is compelled to change that state by forces impressed thereon.
> (2) The alteration of motion is ever proportional to the motive force impressed; and is made in the direction of the right line in which that force is impressed.
> (3) To every Action there is always opposed an equal Reaction; or the mutual actions of two bodies upon each other are always equal, and directed to contrary parts (Newton**,** Quoted in: Huslwit, 2002: 16-42).

According to Hulswit, Newton's implicit reference to causation in expressions such as "motive forces impressed upon" a body, which "compel" the body to move differently than if they had been absent, and the relationship between the concept of cause, these compelling motive forces, and the laws of motion, can only be understood by studying the Scholium. Newton sees *causes as forces or constraints that compel moving bodies to behave differently than they would have done without them.* Thus 'caused' means constrained or compelled. Newton used the expression "free" motion to refer to unconstrained motions. Thus, every body that continues in its state of rest, or of uniform behavior in a straight line, is uncaused or free. In his study of Newton, Collingwood argued that "*in Newton there is no law of universal causation;* he not only does not assert that every event must have a cause, he explicitly denies it." Any movement that happens according to the first law of motion is an uncaused event. Thus if a body moves freely from A to B to C, the event which is the movement from A to B, is in no way the cause of the event which is the movement from B to C; it is not caused at all. The first law of motion is in fact a law of free or causeless motion (Quoted in: Hulswit, 2002).

David Hume on his part searched for the necessity of connecting two events together. Hume examined the idea that causal relations of two events is characterize in threefold factors viz: (1) contiguity (in space and time) of cause and effect, (2) priority in time of cause to effect, and (3) a necessary connection between cause and effect. Hume holds that the third factor is more important since there is no justification for this necessity. And as such the principle of causality is only by a habit of association. Huslwit's puts it thus,

> in accord with the empiricist principle that ideas are derived from impressions, Hume explained that in order to clarify and justify our idea of causation, we must find the impression that has given rise to it. The idea of necessity cannot be derived from our experience of individual cases of causation. For, in a single instance of causation, we can never discover any necessary connection or power. Instead, the idea of necessity arises from our experience of a great many similar instances. The constant conjunction produces an *association* of ideas - so if we see a flame, by sheer habit an idea of heat will come to mind. But the constant conjunction also produces a feeling of necessary connection in the mind. Thus, there are two roots of our idea of necessity: *constant conjunction* of the objects, and the *feeling of necessary connection* in the mind. The habitual transition from impression to idea *feels* like a necessitation, as if the mind were compelled to go from one to the other. The necessary connection is not discovered in the world but is projected onto the world by our minds (Quoted in: Hulswit, 2002).

Immanuel Kant on his part tried to reconcile the empiricists and rationalists movement by his concept of cause as synthetic a priori. Kant agress with Hume that substance is not an empirical category acquired through sensation. At the same time, it is not some metaphysical reality beneath

the appearances as Descartes and Locke thought instead substance is a logical category by means of which the mind picks out various groups of sensations from the flow of experience and unifies them into meaning units that we identify as objects (Lawhead, 2002: 332-333). While Hume thought that causality was purely a subjective addition to what is experienced. For Hume all experience consists of a succession of unrelated impressions. Contrary to Hume, Kant argues that: We do distinguish between the statements 'Every lemon has a sour taste' and 'Every event has a cause.' Although the first statement has been confirmed by all our experience, we could imagine a world in which this was not true. However, we could not imagine a possible world in which there were no causal order at all (Lawhead, 2002: 332).

Kant's position is that the statement about lemon is a contingent *a posteriori* truth and a statement about events is a synthetic *a priori* truth that describes the sort of structure the mind gives to experience. Kant's epistemology presupposes the principle of causality—the very principle doubted by Hume—in its investigation of the origins and limits of knowledge. In his reading of Kant, John Christian Laursen puts it thus,

The category of substance is vindicated by the principle that all determinable alteration must be of something that is presumed to persist; the category of causality is defended as presumed by the necessary principle that the determination of objective succession requires a rule-governed relation between earlier and later states; and the category of community is shown to be required for the determination of how things objectively coexist (Laursen, 1999: 499).

Summarily, the plain man understands how to use the word cause. Most transitive verbs expresses causation e.g. make, produce, influence, cure, fell, cook, raise, build. If the plain man is ask what do u mean by a cause? He will probably reply "what makes a thing happen." He knows that the child died from pneumonia, it was a fused wire that set the house on fire. Thus the plain man means something definite when he says, "You won't find a cure for cancer until you know its cause. This correct use of the notion of causation is, however, compatible with an extremely confused conception of what exactly causation is. The discussions of philosophers have done little if nothing to clear of these confusions. There is some justification for Russell's remark that the word cause is so inextricably bound up with misleading associations as to make its complete extrusion from the philosophical vocabulary (Russell, 2004: 231). But whatever may be the case with philosophy, it is not possible to expel the word or the conception from science. Cause expresses a concept indispensable to the earlier stages of the attempt to order the facts of experience. It is by reference to this concept that the conception of uniformities may be determinate. When we consider the statement that the rain wets the pavements. This might be expressed as the rain causes the pavement to be wet. The notion of cause, then seems to arise when we observe a change in something, this is to say the notion of cause is applied to a change in the character of something. Thus our common sense will pay a striking attention to the striking of changes. Thus, this view seeks causes as base on change. This selection is due to the practical

attitude of the plain man who wants to know not only what has caused a given effect but how to produce such an effect on another occasion. Thus, the occurrence is the effect while the change is the cause. And since the standpoint of the plain man is strictly practical, common sense can afford to ignore those conditions that are usually present and can therefore be taken for granted. For example, the plain man wants to light a match. He rubs it on the side of the match-box and obtains the desired result. He would say that the friction caused the flame. If, however, the operation were performed inside a jar from which the air had been exhausted, it would be found that the match did not light. He would thus found out that the presence of oxygen is also necessary for the production of the effect. Since, however, air is always present when the plain man strikes a match, he takes its presence for granted and pays attention to those factors only in the total situation which he is aware of as changing.

As practical agent we start from a complex situation within which we desire to bring about changes. Provided that the desired result is achieved what else is achieved can be neglected. Similarly with what is not desired. It is what is always present when death is present that matters from a practical point of view. Hence, death stands for a set of properties abstracted from a complex set of conditions. Whenever a man is shot through the heart, he dies, whenever a man is dead, he ceases to respond to our entreaties. Death therefore becomes an abstraction which require analysis. It is this analysis that takes us away from the standpoint of common sense. It involves looking retrospectively into the situation and not prospectively. The former attitude is that of the scientific investigator while the latter is that of a practical agent and while the scientific investigator is concerned with knowing, the practical agent is concerned with doing, however, both are concerned with uniformities i.e. regular connections. The practical agent however is content with a relation that is determinate only in the direction from cause to effect: wherever A occurs, B occurs, and B does not occur unless A has occurred.

Thus the common sense notion of cause seems to involve three assumptions: (i) that it is things that enter into the causal relation (ii) that the characteristics which belong to the thing, or, as common sense would say, 'the nature of the thing', is relevant to the causal situations (iii) that things left to themselves do not undergo changes. According to Susan Stebbing "the development of the common sense notion of cause brings out several points of importance" (Stebbing, in P. V. Inwagen; D. W. Zimmerman, 2004: 229 – 243).

The consideration of these will enable us to make clear certain distinctions with regard to which common sense is confused.

1. A causal uniformity is an abstraction since it connects sets of recurrent characteristics belonging to events which do not occur.
2. It makes a distinction between a thing and its states and a distinction between the qualities that things has and the way it behaves in relation to other things. However, these distinctions are not clearly drawn and it throw light upon the

distinction, so vaguely conceived by common sense, between cause and condition: such that when a sufficient condition is given between A and B. then we can say A causes B.

3. It follows that the distinction between cause and effect cannot be made as sharply as common sense makes it. Common sense therefore relies on the practicability or striking which leads us to neglect of other factors that are relevant, and hence to the conception of the causal relation as being not only asymmetrical but also many-one. But it is usually assumed that if the cause and the effect are determined with equal precision, the relation will be one-one, so that given the effect, the cause is thereby determined, given the cause, the effect is thereby determined.

4. Common sense assumes that it in a system in which no change has been occurring, a change begins to occur, then that system must be in causal relation to something outside it which causes the change. Such causation is called transcunt. Thus we are led to the distinction between a thing to itself and a thing not so left. But this distinction is vague. It must be replaced by the distinction between isolated system and a system in causal relations to something outside the system.

Our discussions of causation has shown that there is a close interrelation between causal uniformities, or, as we may call them, causal laws, and things. The attempt to determine more precisely the nature of this interrelation takes us beyond the standpoint of common sense, the Western thought to the Edo conception of causality.

The association between causation and necessity is old, it occurs for example in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 'when the agent and patient meet suitably to their powers', an extra feature is needed to determine the result:

> What has a rational power of necessity does what has the power to do it has the power, what it has the desire (Aristotle, 2012: 211).

Overlapping the centuries we find it an axiom in Spinoza 'given a determinate cause, the effect follows of necessity and without its cause, no effect follows' (Anscombe, 2004). Hobbes also held that "a cause simply, or an entire cause is the aggregate of all the accidents…" (Anscombe, 2004). It was this last view, where the connection between cause and effect is evidently seen as logical connection of some sort that was overthrown by Hume. After Hume, Kant tried to established causality as an a priori conception and argued that the objective time order consists in that order of the manifold appearance according to which, in conformity with a rule. Hence, Kant sought to give back to causality the character of justified concept which Hume had taken from it.

The denial of causality in modern philosophy has been associated with the name of Hume but according to Kwame Gyekye the denial actually started from Al-Ghazali. In his article 'Al-Ghazali

on Causation' Gyekye argued that Al-Ghazali opens the chapter in which he denies necessary causal relation by declaring that the connection between what is usually believed to be a cause(sabab) and what is believed to be an effect (musabab i.e. caused) is not necessary (Gyekye, 1973: 31). By necessary connection al-Ghazali must be taken to mean 'logically necessary' for he talks of or makes reference to the logical relation of identity when he says (loc. cit) that of any two things, A and B, A is not B, nor B is A: that is, A is A, and B is B. Thus, for al-Ghazali the existence of A does not imply the existence of B. While some Scholars argued for the existence of causality by observation or experience, al-Ghazali denies that we can get the idea of cause and effect through experience because for him "observation shows merely that one occurs with the other not that it occurs by it" (Gyekye, 1973: 33). That is to say, co-existence does not imply causation.

Gyekye further writes that having denied causal connection al-Ghazali attempts to discover the source of the notion of cause, i.e. necessary causal connection and finds it in the thinking habits of men:

> Protracted habit (or, custom: istimrar al-adah) time after time fixes their occurrence in our minds according to the past habit in a fixed impression (Al-Ghazali quoted in Gyekye, 1973: 34).

However Gyekye tells us to understand al-Ghazali's view within its theological or metaphysical ambience.

According to Benson M. Akinnawonu in his article titled "The Concept of Cause and Chance in African Thought: The Yoruba Perspective," Hume's discussion of cause will be that which is related to effect in such a way that one concrete thing or an abstract thing, sometimes situations and events are said to cause another, thus Hume considers the concept of cause from the view point of event (Akinnawonu, 1980). According to Hume when we look about us towards external objects and consider the operation of causes, we only find out that the one causes the other due to priority in time, constant conjunction and contiguity in time and space but none of these according to Hume implies necessary connection. However, we hold that every event has a cause and that such a cause is as a result of the uniformity in nature. The whole argument of Hume thus is that there is no causation; that what will call cause and effect is nothing but a psychological habit of association (Stumpf, 1997).

In a similar way Akinnawonu argued that despite J. S. Mill's acceptance of the basic details of Hume's doctrine of causality, he still recognized certain basic flaws in it. The main observation by Mill is that when we talk of cause and effect, it is hardly ever the case that we isolate individual event and look at them separately and abstractly apart from the rest of the world and consider their relations. According to Mill this is an oversimplification on the part of Hume because when event takes place, it takes place in a complex form. This informs Mill's definition of the notion of 'cause' as "the sum total of the conditions positive and negative taken together; the whole of the

contingencies of every description, which being realized, the consequent invariably follows" (Akinnawonu, 1998: 86).

Given the inability of Western philosophers to come up with a single understanding of causation, let us examine the Edo notion of causality using same as a solution to the problem of causality in Western metaphysics.

The Notion of Causality in Edo Metaphysics: a hermeneutico-philosophical study

What then is the Edo notion of causality and what are the core issues that makes it different from the Western notion of causality?

According to Chidozie Okoro:

> The life-line of African metaphysics is that causality cannot be rationally and empirically perceived or conceived, but only spiritually intuited through the consultation of the supernatural (Okoro, 2014: 66).

He further noted that:

> …the world of aesthetic quality and aesthetic continuum imply the transmutation and transformation of forces. In such a world the form of entities is altered by the animating and de-animating dynamisms of spirit or force. What the West regards as lifeless or inert is for the African alive, energized by spirit. This explains why witches can affect one psychically, it explains why hunters appease the spirits of their hunting tools, it explains how it is possible for sorcerers to use objects as vessels for executing their evil intentions, and it also explains why Africans appease the spirits of the land in order to ensure social and spiritual balance (Okoro, 2014: 66).

From the above it can be argued that the spiritual nature of African metaphysics stems from the fact that "Africans regard spirits as part of the furniture of the world, not merely as local constructions out of certain unaccountable manifestations" (Okoro, 2014), hence, Edo understanding of causality is religious, supernatural, spiritual and mystical. It is a reality and a myth. Okoro vehemently argues that the metaphysical notion of causality informs a people's (Edo) notion or approach to science and technology and as a follow up if Africa (edo) wants to radically address the question of a sound metaphysical foundation for science and technology the notion of causality should be given an intellectual rigour beyond the spiritual dynamisms of forces.

Sylvester Akpologun conjectures it thus, "The African metaphysical thought is a re-affirmation of dynamism and *vitalism* that does not limit causation to the empirical world but freely blends and relates empirical causation with supernatural causation" (Apologun, 2020). The whole idea of causality according to the Edos is anchored on the notion of events and its predictions. It gives room for the Edos to explain meaningfully events that happen to them. Thus the notion of causality brings to light their beliefs in reincarnation, chance, determinism, freedom and even destiny. It is also evident from Sodipo and Akinnawonu exposition of Yoruba thought that most African notions

of causality is religious. In this light, the Edos will ascribe causes of events to gods, spirits, deities, witches, ancestors and even to charms. Thus, these are causal agents in the Edo understanding.

For the sake of brevity we shall also follow Sodipo in classifying these causal agents into two, namely the ultimate cause and the secondary causes (Sodipo, 1973). Talking from the Yoruba understanding, Sodipo argued the key aspect of the Yoruba world-view is known as "Olodumare" or "Olorun". This notion is not too far from the Edoexperience, this is so because according to the Edo's "Osanobua" is the ultimate cause of all things visible and invisible and the secondary causes are attributed to lesser gods, ancestors, spirits, witches etc. For example while the Yoruba's in Sodipo's analysis emphasize Ori as the bearer of one's destiny: whether one is going to be rich or poor, barren or fertile the Edo's sees ehi as the determinant of one's journey in life.

For the Edos, things do not just happen, whatever happens to a man happens as a result of something. Thus, there are chains of events and since the gods or spirits partake in causes, then the notion of chance is watered down. According to Akinnawonu It is also important to conclude here with Sodipo's analysis of the Yoruba people that the Edo understanding of experience can be contrasted to the western or scientific way of thinking (Akinnawonu, 1998: 89). That is to say in Edo understanding of causality, it is personal explanation that counts. Osanobua can be the course of fortunes, ill-luck and death. The notion of witchcraft is also a reality in the Edo world-view and the Edo understanding is not far from the exposition of Barry Hallen and S. O. Sodipo in their *Knowledge, Belief and Witchcraft* (Hallen; Sodipo, 1986). For example, there was a case of a politician who has a Jeep and who contested for councillorship in my local government area and the youngest wife was a witch. The man lost the election and the Jeep that was park in its lot one night refuses to start the next day. The youngest wife latter confessed how she and her fellow "azen" has caused the man's failure and also driven his Jeep to the coven which is the cause or explanation of the Jeep's fault. The point here is that causation which has been defined as "explanation" since the time of Aristotle is not foreign to the Edos.

The Edo notion of causality can also be explicated from the conceptual idioms or language of the Edo people. The Edos would say "wuosiee" meaning 'what caused it?' For example in Edo language we have phrases like 'wuosie amen na?' which can be translated roughly to mean "what caused the rain?" More often than not the answers to some of these issues and questions show that there is a connection between cause and the effect, making events to be related. This is why the Edos can actually claim all events are connected together in a chain. For example, the Edo might say *ovennodei o sia men na* meaning that it was yesterday's sun that cause this rain. It is a popular believe among the Edos that after a heaven sun, the rain will surely fall to cool than the temperature. It is pertinent to say here that the Edo idea of cause and effect is predicated on the belief that whatever happens has its cause. One problem with excavating Edo notion of causality from their conceptual idioms is the problem of indeterminacies which results from translations as spelt out by Quine.

How then is cause considered as a separate event related to the effect in Edo metaphysics? To address this issue, let consider the interconnectedness of phenomenon in Edo worldview. In Edo cosmology, everything is that exist both spiritual and physical are connected to each other. Nothing happens haphazardly. Chance plays a minute role in Edo metaphysics. Everything that exist is a divine whole. The separatist theory of Cartesian metaphysics is absent in Edo metaphysics. As example the separatist theory of thought and extension which led Descartes to ask such abstruse question as to their relationship does not exist in Edo metaphysics because in Edo the body and spirit are one. Thus, any events that occur have a cause. Events and happenings in Edo can at best be described in a circular order of hierarchy with the spiritual at the apex.

Having said this, one may ask, how is the Edo notion of causality different from the Western notion of causality? It should be noted upfront that the scientificity and rigorousity of Western metaphysics coupled with the logic of language as exemplified in English is quite absent in Edo metaphysical beliefs. What gave shape, tenacity to Edo metaphysical beliefs include the religiosity of the people (African Traditional Religions) and linguistic disposition of the people. In the broad sense of science as coherent and systematic knowledge, Edo notion of causality is a science and given our stand in the debate whether there is an African science, Edo notion causality its science but not in the strict sense of science. Perhaps, the language factor cannot be overlooked when discussing Edo modes of thought as their philosophy can easily be gleaned from their language. This idea is justified given that other authors has attempted similar task. For example, the works of Alexis Kagame and Janhanez Jahn concerning bantology was gleaned from the linguistic evidence in Bantu's modes of thought.

Reincarnation, Determinism, Freedom, Predestination and Destiny as an explanation of the relationship/connectedness between causes and effects in Edo Notion of Causality.

In the Western conception of causality, we see a controversy over the concepts of determinism/freedom. However, the Edo notion of causality is not mechanistic as we have in Western metaphysics. Perhaps, the conceptualization of *ehi*, reincarnation, determinism, freedom, predestination and destiny brings into question the notion of Edo ontology and uniformity of nature and how this ontology is the foundation for the doctrine of causality in Edo worldview. Ontology is the study of Being, existence, God, Man etc. Edo ontology is the science of Being or existence from the perspective of the Edos. This ontology which is also part of the Edo worldview is a unified system of whole. In Edo ontology every being or existents are interconnected. Nothing exists on his own and anything that happens has a cause. The notion of *ehi*, enikaro etc are evidential of this deterministic but free cosmic system of the Edo.

The Edos believe that at death the person do not pass into extinction or oblivion but rather suffers death and continue to exist in other realms. This is the notion of the afterlife in the Edo understanding and the whole argument about the soul taking a new body is predicated on the Edo understanding of causality. Though there are several critiques of reincarnation but Godwin

Azenabor has tried to settle this matter, when he said that we know somebody who has reincarnates as a result of their names (like Babatunde, Yetunde), bodily marks, memory transfer etc. we will not examine the possibility of reincarnation. Thus according to Azenabor while the Edos preached the possibility of reincarnating fourteen times, the nature and manner in which one reincarnates is based on his previous existence. Thus, a man who has lived a moral life according to the dictate of the society and given a befitting burial will be ushered into the ancestral home. The cause of many people not entering the ancestral is as a result of their past life. Thus, they reincarnate to fulfill their mission in this world. Africans in general and Edo in particular, conceive the essence or nature of anything, as "force". It will be incorrect to say that 'being' in the African thought has the necessary element or quality of force. The precision of their concept of being, Temples said will not be attained if their notion of being is expressed, as "being is that which possesses force." (Izibili, 2008). Rather, "the concept of force is inseparable from the definition of 'being.' What this paper is establishing here is that what drags event A to cause event B is the force, it is the force of being that makes A to cause B in Edo Ontology. Another issue here is the notion of 'enikaro.' The Edos believe that when a man dies at an old age and after such a man has been given a befitting burial he goes to join the ancestral train and from their he intercedes for his progeny who in turns prays to Osanubua through him. This dead people becomes enikaro or ancestors and they are responsible or the causes of some good deeds or evil deeds that befalls man in his daily life. Thus, they are also agents of causality.

The Edo notion of causality is also in keeping with their view of determinism, this is while C. S. Momoh in his article "Intra-Causality, Inter-Causality and Determinism" attempted to resolve the determinist notion of events within the frame work of the libertarians which he attributed to the Auchi people of the defunct Bendel State (Momoh, 1982). In Edo experience of causality, every event are said to be connected and if this is the case it therefore follows that there is no room for chance. Everything that happen, happens for a reason and are determined to happen as such. This does not rule out the issue of freedom and responsibility because according to the Edos one's action can still be right or wrong since one will account for his action and whatever happens to that person is as a result of his action. So, the case of soft determinism can be argued for the Edos. In Edo metaphysics if a bird cries at night and a baby dies in the morning, there is no problem with this because, the bird killed the baby. But what is this connection between the cry of the bird and the death of the baby? Is this not a kind of a false cause: post hoc ergo porter hoc? Again, in Edo understanding, it is possible to throw a stone today, and the stone will kill a bird tomorrow. Thus, this deterministic view is not as watertight as we find in Western science or metaphysics and it is as a result of this deterministic nature of African ontology, that one phenomenon determines another that causation comes into play.

According to Iroegbu, the African notion of causality does not eliminate freedom but it explains it (Iroegbu, 1995). One therefore is free to choose one course of action or another and even after

the choice, he is able if he knows how, to manipulate the forces of nature, to utilized the good spirit's aid, to implore the assistance of his ancestors and to work out in consort with fellow humans in the community, the path of the good and progress that will merit him a crown: human and ancestral (Iroegbu, 1995).

Thus, the notion of causality brings to the limelight the Edo notion of morality, religiousity and explanation of the ways things are. Since every cause are connected to their effects, to have good effects, that is for good event or things to happen to somebody, then he must be moral in his actions as he will reap what he sows.

At the end, since the notion of causality gives no room for chance because it is strictly deterministic, that is given the cause, the effect is thereby determined and that given the effect the cause is thereby determine. How then can we account for the freedom of man in the Edo world-view? The freedom of man is anchored on the fact of man's morality. That is to say, we are moral if we conform to the dictates of the society in which we belong, this is to say that we can choose either to conform or to rebel. Thus one has the choice to choose and when one choose then we are responsible for the consequences of our action. This all sounds like the existentialist notion of freedom, however this is no problem as it has been shown by D. Jung that methodology commensurability between the West, East and Africa is possible.

Criteria of Causality: The Edo Experience

Granted that we have defined causality in Edo metaphysics as the connection between two events we are led to asked what are the criteria or features that must be satisfied for event A to cause event B the effect? Nils B. Kvastad in his article "Ideas and Causality" has given us some criteria which we shall add a rejoinder to in other to have a comprehensive understanding of the Edo notion of causality. However why Kvastad focuses on those casual relations involving ideas, our aim in this paper are those causal connections involving events as it occurs in the Edo world-view (Kvastad, 1977). Thus, the criteria are:

Priority

One characteristics of causality following Humean tradition is that the cause must precede the effect. According to Kvastad, "this is important in the history of ideas" (Kvastad, 1977). This is to say, that the cause A must precede the effect B. For there to be B which is the effect then we must have the cause which is the A.

However, what is novel about the Edo notion of explanation is that we can have B before A. Kvastad will call this relation symmetry and absurd. But the reason for this is simple; let us say for the sake of argument that the Edo idea of the causation between Thunder and Lighting is true. This notion of causation holds that the cause is the lighting (A which comes first) and the effect is the thunder (B which is comes last). Then it follows by common sense that the cause of the thunder is the lighting. Many scholars often disagree on notions like this because they are trained in Western

science which sees thunder and lighting as occurring at the same time, however it is imperative to note that Robin Horton has given reasons why we should not compare African culture with Western science (Wiredu, 1980). Thus, for the Edos the effects can be prior to the cause because even the gods sometimes are explanations for causation. There is nothing strange in this view, after all Aristotle once said that the actuality comes before potency (Asia, 2013). It is a common phenomenon in the Edo communities to sort through divination and rituals for the causes of some sickness and ill-luck. This therefore means that we can have effects prior to the causes and pending our discovery of the causes, the effect stands to be prior to the cause.InEdo understanding, the cause can determine the effect and the effect can determine the cause.

Connection

Connection is another characteristic of causality. Cause and effect are connected in some ways. That is, when we say A causes B, there must be some links or connections between A and B. in other words, there must be a sort of contiguity between cause (Balogun, 1997). This connection according to Kvastad is transitive but not reflexive, this means that if A caused B, A was also the cause of itself. Now Kvastad will say the assumption that causality is symmetrical is absurd, and Balogun will say it is not pattern along with science. For these two scholars to be transitive means that A causes B and B causes C etc. but we might want to ask, what causes A and what causes that thing that causes A? This question can either led us to infinite regress or to the uncaused cause of Aristotle. However, the Edo explanation is a better alternative for this puzzle of series of causation. For the Edos causation can be linear or cyclical in nature. To be linear means in a straight line, which means A can cause Band B can cause C and in some other cases it can be cyclical in the sense that A can cause C without B as when we say imina no mi na o siuwu (meaning his dream led to his death) or the story of the bird cries and a baby dies the next day, what is it that led to the death of the baby. It is not a direct cause from the cry of the bird, but the bird has perform some things, probably touching the baby with its fingers, but these are not explain in the Edo causal series.

One salient feature of causality in the light of the Edo understanding is that it gives them the room for prediction and explanation. The Edos are able to predict future occurrences by making references to past experiences, even for Aristotle, the notion of cause meant explanation.

Critical Comments on the Edo Notion of Causality

From our analysis above, we can see that the notion of causality according to the Edo understanding is that causality unfolds in two ways, the ultimate and the secondary, corresponding to and manifesting in gods and lesser spirits respectively. However, there have not been any critics on the Edo notion of reality, but since we have critics leveled on other notions of reality that are similar to the Edo experience, we can start by noticing this critiques and see how we can manage them within the Edo experience.

On this note Makinde attack the unscientific claims of causality within the Yoruba experience has presented by Sodipo. Makinde was actually debunking the claim which tried to establish a connection between the crying of the bird and the death of the baby, or the sneezing of a man in one village with the death of an old man in another village (Makinde, 1985). For Makinde, if the hypothesis were true then we could claim a necessary relation between two unrelated events. What Makinde failed to understand is that we have in African thought system in general and Edo metaphysics in particular some metaphysical presumptions. The first of this type of presumptions is that most of these explanations are religious and this portends the claim of J. S. Mbiti that the people of Africa are notoriously religious (See, Mbiti, 1970). Secondly, in African metaphysics how can we explain the connection between the event of my sneezing in Lagos with the calling of my name in the village. This is a reality, but it does not pass the scientific test, but then why should we even try to use the method of science as a paradigm to judge the validity of rationality? However, this notion should not be a problem as R. Horton in his article titled "African Thought and Western Science" has explained why we shouldn't compare African thought with western science (Horton, 1977).

Another unfounded objection leveled on Edo metaphysics and metaphysicians generally is that metaphysical statements are meaningless statements or that they are like music and art poetic, nonsensical and as such the enterprise should be abolished, committed to flames because the claims of metaphysics like the Edo notion of causality cannot be empirically verified (Stumpf, 1997: 231). However, this objection ought not to be a problem because it has been shown that the verification principle itself is suspect and that science is not the only paradigm of rationality, above all we have pass the positivistic stage in the history of philosophy and we should not compare African traditional thought with Western science.

Conclusion

Given the foregoing, it is pertinent to state that the watertight distinction between the cause and effect of causation, that led to the traditional problem of causality and induction is absent in Edo concept of causality. Better still is the view that the Humean attack on causation will not occur within the Edo framework and understanding, that is to say the idea of causality as a psychological habit of association do not occur in Edo experience. It is incorrect and inconceivable to talk of the Edo concept of "priority" when they do not attribute causes in a transitive connection. The causation problem of how A causes B, is non-existent in Edo philosophical thinking. The Edos believe that the basis of activities, like thinking that the bird cries is the cause of the baby's death etc. can be located in the harmony or order in the universe which Osanobua creates. It is on this basis that we would like to suggest that in order to move beyond the conflicts and confusion created by Humeans and causationists theories of Western traditional metaphysics, the conception of causation in traditional African thought, as exemplified by the Edo understanding, must be further researched into and decolonized by contemporary African philosophers using the hermeneutic

narrative model. This will be with a view to solving the other fundamental aspects of the ageing problem of causation in Western philosophy. The necessity and urgency of this charge cannot be ignored at this time in order to strengthen the veracity of the nature of metaphysics in traditional African thought as a basis for further reflections on western traditional metaphysics.

One final issue which we should quickly note here is that why we uphold the hermeneutic-narrative model of philosophy as a proper trend of doing philosophy in African, this Edo notion of causality should be further reflected into by scholars and they should produce critical comments and elaborate findings to strengthen the Edo notion of causality.

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