



Philosophical Causality and Resilience as a Hope: Analysis of Traumatic Experience in Kate Atkinson's Fiction *Life After Life*

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Abstract

Aristotle's causality theory states, casual phenomenon of the normal life things are the most important things to formulate the life of an individual. The future life flow of an individual is navigated as per the characteristics and influences of the past experience and climatic condition. Causality theory functions with the working nature of Newton's Third Law, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. As per causality theory, past experience plays a role as independent action and the future is dependent on them. So, the characteristics of the dependents are based on the characteristics and quality of the past independent actions. In psychology, a person perceives inputs through the social contexts. Causality theory emits the energy of resilience. With reference to Kate Atkinson's *Life After Life* this paper reflects on how the traumatic experience of a person stimulates them to make their life successful, and how the experience of an individual actuates them to design their future. This theory elaborates the past experience of Ursula, which triggered her to contrive her future intentions as per the influence and experience of her traumatic life. The life experience of Ursula triggered her to be optimistic in behaviour. She tried to move on from her traumatic life but her new ambience effectuated her to become an assassinator of Hitler. The unexpected accidents and assaults in Ursula's life gave secret power and strong energy to overcome her hardest parts of her life.

Keywords: dependent, independent, resilience, secret power, trauma

Introduction

Causality is a philosophical term and it performs as power sources to philosophy and science. As per Aristotle, the science works with the support of the causality and related things because one subsists another (Aristotle, 37). Science is not just result but it is a reaction of an action. If, there is no action anywhere there will never be any possibility for the reaction or result. This philosophical causality is highly related to the human psychology; it impacts

the life style and experience of the human being by the causal incidents. An event may influence the person psychologically and this impact may trigger the person to take decisions accordingly.

Relocations and actions are considered as power sources of causality and it changes the life style of the person consciously or unconsciously by the changes in their life. Causality says that, majority of things are internally connected with one another. Unconsciously everything happens due to cause of



one previous independent action. It means, the impact of the past life dominates the present and future life (Aristotle, 30). Reaction happens through causes. The action may impact the dependent harder in some unexpected situations. The causality process may have two or three independent results by the process and sometimes it may have more than that. Human existence is a reaction to the action of creation, which taken place in Garden of Eden and thy made human as highest of all the creation (Genesis 1: 26-27). Human has created many technologies and ideas but these are reactions of creation. Here, the cause is creation and this cause may lead to any positive results and sometimes negative results.

The impact of the cause is not a standard thing; it may have variable powerful impacts and results and there is no need for the results to be very constant. This philosophical causality has many types; they are probabilistic, counterfactual and mechanistic in view. The results of causality may differ as per the streams and areas and the characteristics of the causality also differ as per the area of discipline. According to Aristotle, water should proceed from fire, earth from water (Aristotle, 30). Here, the dependence plays an important role to preserve the connectivity of two different things and maintains stability. This connectivity makes powerful bond among contrast things by causation and this connective process gives some results. Past events play a role of motion to move the element towards the future with the influence of past experience and secret powers.

Causality is a theory coined by Aristotle in his book *Meta Physics*. This causality is highly related and inter-connected with trauma and power in psychology. Traumatic experiences are very important one in psychological causality, because people are correcting them-selves by the reactions of their past life and their correction becomes the action to reactions of the past life. Here, people learnt things by mistakes, which is called evolution or Darwinism. This causality theory is partially working with relocation and climate condition. Because a minor change in our life may come up with huge variations so there is no use of our past life experience. Through the climatic condition the person may be commanded to different environment and it may create radical difference in behaviour of a person.

A brief literature review shows that, there is no other finding related to causality theory on Kate Atkinson's work. Scholars have published many papers and released books on scientific causality theory and philosophical causality. There are none other findings in philosophical causality, psychological causality and related fields on Kate Atkinson's works. Hume, J.L. Anderson and Albert Michotte are known for their causality and findings in science. Aristotle is the one who created philosophical perspective on causality.

Kate Atkinson is a British writer and she is known for her Jackson Brudi crime series and her own style of crime narrations. She has received many literary awards and owns a dominative place in British Literature. Her crime novels have sharp narrative structures and she used intrinsic narrative structures in few of her novels.

Atkinson's novel *Life After Life* is the perfect example to prove causality or causation. The intrinsic narrative structure is not a regular narrative structure; it has collapsed story flow and does not follow any order of narration. It has story flow of past experience and present life functioning parallelly and that flow also does not follow any chronological order during the narration.

Theoretical Approach

The Phenomenal Essence of the Causality Theory

Causality theory is about the control of past things over the future elements. The biological creation gives motion to all the species in the world (Michotte, 03). Our life requires a motion to move forward; this motion gives some force to the dependent to work further and produce some result by the pressure of the motion. This motion created a purpose to the dependent to be something different from habitual.

The "juxtaposition" is one of the main reasons to the similar character things to come up with two different results, this juxtaposition facilitates them with new environment and give them new climate to work with different manner and enable them to produce different results (Michotte, 03). Here, climate change and relocation play a major role to accommodate them. Each climatic situation energizes the thing in different directions with different motions and with different motivations. This new



climate change may design the object or material with new set of characters and this maybe in positive way or in negative way. Sunflowers have the nature of focusing sun in the day, if it is not nature radical practice of the sunflower this motion may create some biological changes in the sunflower.

Scientific Approach on Causality; Newton's third law works with characteristics of Aristotle's causality and built on the base of causality. "Similarly, that one thing invariably should subsist on account of another" (Aristotle, 37). Law of Motion works with the support of the force, without any force there is no possibility for any reaction to the action. His Third Law says, "there is always opposed an equal reaction or the mutual actions of two bodies upon each other are always equal and directed to the contrary parts" (Anderson, 37). Newton's Third Law follows the functional idea of causality, when a motion given to an object; it reacts to the motion with similar action or opposite reaction. This Law works in dependency of causality, because the energy will be a variable when mass and force are varied from another. If there is any change in the motion, there will be a change in the result so results of the Newton's Third Law is variable as per the strength of the force. A small change in the motion may increase or decrease the result of the object in the process. A strong powerful cause may chase the person till end to attain the destiny.

According to Hume in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, the hidden power is, When a man says, I have found, in all past instances, such sensible qualities conjoined with such secret powers: And when he says, similar sensible qualities will always be conjoined with similar secret powers; he is not guilty of a tautology, nor are these propositions in any respect the same. You say that the one proposition is an inference from the other. But you must confess that the inference is not intuitive; neither is it demonstrative: Of what nature is it then? To say it is experimental, is begging the question. For all inferences from experience suppose, as their foundation, that the future will resemble the past, and that similar powers will be conjoined with similar sensible qualities (27).

According to Hume, our past life has some secrets and those secrets have some hidden power and secret

energies. This hidden power gives them a strength to handle any situation with robustness. So, people are learning, experiencing things and knowledge through their past life things, which might affect them traumatically in some cases. Hume stated, our past quality experiences are conjoined with our life to be more meaningful. If, there is any change in the moment, there must be severe change in the future so there is no use with those old experiences. The usage of latent power and secret knowledge may become unworthy in the end, so there is no possibility for the clear outcome in the end with old unnoticed force and energies (Hume, 27).

The sensibility of the person does not change till the end, it has its own power and stability in discovering similar incidents, what already taken part in one's life. The sensibility reminds awake and alert in all the situations. The quality and experience of events may not be useful to the person in some cases, but the senses remain the same and cautions them to avoid the same experience to happen in future (Hume, 28).

Textual Analysis

Guidance of Philosophical Causality in *Life After Life*, Which Gears the Secret Powers

The novel *Life After Life* is about the life experience of Ursula Todd, the protagonist of the novel. Ursula experienced a lot of traumatic experiences from her childhood; she got a lot of rebirths in this novel. It started, when Ursula was very young, she drowned in water but her life was saved by someone, hence by the accident she learnt, the uncertainty of life and death as well. After some years, Ursula had some misunderstanding with her family so she left her family and tried to live alone. As a woman, living alone is not easy, she had to protect herself alone and she had to take care of her financial problems and a lot.

Rebirth after drowning in the river gave her boldness to handle any terrible situation in life. Ursula started to manage everything by her own self with her boldness. Since the accident at the river gave lot of hidden powers and energies to Ursula to manage any inflexible situation. She did not have family responsibility and she encountered death in early ages of her life, that made her to realise the meaning and worthiness of life of an individual.



Ursula managed many struggles and married a man, whom she loved. She created her own way of life and arranged everything by herself and believed that she can manage situations with her latent ability.

Ursula married Derek Oliphant a man with a suspicious mind. She started a happy life with Derek just like any other newlyweds. Derek was an abusive husband. He raped Ursula and tortured her; these incidents affected Ursula very traumatically. Her husband assaulted Ursula to die but she escaped from the terror with swells on face. Somehow, she managed things. The river accident gave secret strength to manage and overcome this traumatic incident and made her to be a resilient. Here, in this situation she got secret strength to manage her mental and physical pain through the accident. Because she might encounter lot of pain and suffering while drowning into the river. Ursula tried a lot to get out of the river by using her full strength but ended up in failure. In that situation, Ursula might have learnt to be persistent at the moment, which helped her to touch the brim of success but Ursula did not achieve it in the accident. This is a kind of situation-based learning, where situation triggers a person to learn something forcefully.

If you hesitate, therefore, a moment, or if, after reflection, you produce any intricate or profound argument, you, in a manner, give up the question, and confess, that it is not reasoning which engages us to suppose the past resembling the future, and to expect similar effects from causes, which are, to appearance, similar. This is the proposition which I intended to enforce in the present section (29).

Our body educates our mind by our hard terrible memories and past quality, through that our sensibility protects us from the problems in the future, which are highly associated and connected with the past frightful memories. Our mind starts recognizing things with the incident similarities, even though we are far from the incidents (Hume, 29).

Ursula tried a lot to tolerate everything for the future welfare of her family. Derek was dubious of the behaviour of Ursula. One day, she ran away from the home and met her brother Teddy, meanwhile Derek chased Ursula and saw Ursula and Teddy. Derek assumed that Ursula slept with another man so he hurt her brutally. Here, Ursula tried to change and

to understand her husband but she failed in it. The latent ability, that she received by the accident, helped her to handle her problems. She showed her resilience and endurance by sustaining till the end.

During the accident she tried a lot and finally she came out of the water with the help of someone. By the accident, she knew her ability to bear the pain and her capacity to handle the problems. That causal thing tested her ability and forced her to go forward.

Ursula left her home and her husband and joined in the army. She participated in World War II along with her brother Edward Todd (Teddy) and Teddy worked as a pilot in RAF (Royal Air Force). Ursula tried a lot to become a soldier in the army and participated in World War – II. Her service in armed conflict in WW – II was not an easy task and lot of people and soldiers of WW – II gone through a lot of struggles during the war. They lost their family, friends, their life and mental peace. Ursula's past life experience pushed her to take part in WW-II, because she had gone through a lot by her husband, got many insults, lot of harassment and traumatic incidents.

Ursula believed that her life as a soldier was better than her family life. So, she joined in the army and fought for her nation. Ursula's after life reflects the solidity of her past life and it helped her to retain her hidden power that she earned in her experience. Ursula's past hidden hand helped her to sense and understand equivalent incidents in her present life. She was ready to sacrifice her life for the nation because she did not have anything to lose and she was ready to accept any pain in the war because she encountered lot of pain in her marital life. Ursula's past life twirled her to prepare herself for future with experiences of past life. Ursula's body encountered lot of pains and it got used to it and it could accept any kind of pain and it had the quality to heal the wounds but it needed some time.

The biological creation is the evolution of human being (Michotte, 03), if there is no biological creation, there is no possibility of evolution of human being, likewise if there is no past experience; there is no possibility of future predictions on similar events. Because we could not learn anything without past and we cannot correct our future. Ursula planned to assassinate Adolf Hitler, through her hidden



strength of her past life and these secret qualities made her to be dauntless. Without her past life she would have not been a person with dauntless quality.

Conclusion

Causation is accommodated with fabricated phenomenon of this world and they are considered as essential matters and it helps to make cause in the world (Michotte, 04). In this world, everything has its own purpose and utility, nobody can use these things beyond its utility level and its purpose (Michotte, 05). This causality has some directives and it has some order and it requires chronological order in progress. Day comes through sun not by anything else but sun is not following the day (Aristotle, 36). Similarly, sunflower follows the direction of the sun but the sun does not rise in the direction where the sunflower faces.

Ursula joined in army after lot of struggles in her family and marital life. Derek's abuse was one of the reasons to Ursula to admit herself in the army. Ursula could not have handled the ambience of the army, if she had not experienced a cruel martial life. In case, if she got war experience first and married life after her service experience in army. She could not have handled her family life peacefully and she might have some energy to face the evils of Derek.

By the experiences, she learnt to predict her future problems. She becomes very strong by her past. If, she did not have past like this, she did not become soldier in the army and did not contribute anything in the war. If, she did not join in the army, she might spend her rest of the life like remaining people in the society. Traumatic hidden powers

made her to be strong to handle problems and made her to be flexible in the significant places. Her past life helped her to handle monstrous events in the war and she overcame her mnemonic symbols by climate change in the war. Causes of her life gave her a secret knowledge to overcome hurdles in the war. She sensed similar things of her past by the hidden knowledge of her life and gave power. She moved on her past with new climate by the hidden power and knowledge she will lead a peaceful life. Ursula's past life acted as an independent and her present or future life will be acted as a dependent. Here, dependent may not work without the support of independent in some cases, and if it is, it will cause the continuity of the causational routine. The causation requires some past experience and memories to complete the routine.

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