

## Rethinking the "Dual Causality Principle" in Old Testament Research – A Philosophical Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

*Reframing an old idea in philosophical theology, OT scholars have for the last half-century spoken of what has come to be known as the "dual causality principle" (DCP). The latter is supposed to denote a folk-metaphysical assumption in some OT texts characterized by the assignment of both divine and human causes to account for certain states of affairs. In this article the author challenges the consensus and argues that since the notion of causes is also a philosophical matter the theory behind the DCP may be supplemented by a descriptive metaphysical perspective. Typologies of causation show that the DCP is too simplistic and vague a concept since it ignores a host of complex metaphysical distinctions about causal types, relations and theories. Ultimately, causation in the OT is a complex phenomenon and technically not reducible to duality, causality, or to a principle of any sort.*

**Key concepts:** Old Testament, Dual Causality Principle, Causation, Typology of causes, Metaphysics of causal processes, Divine causation.

### A INTRODUCTION

Surveying the scholarly literature on the theological construction of history in biblical narratives, one will encounter the theoretical concept of a "dual causality principle" (DCP). The jargon roughly<sup>1</sup> denotes a supposed theological strategy in OT discourse according to which one may safely assume that for every significant state of affairs in the world of the text there are assumed to be both divine and human causes working together toward its actualisation. While the idea of double agency in religious language can be traced back to age-old philosophical-theological ideas, according to the official story it was Isac Seelig-

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<sup>1</sup> Different scholars define the phenomenon differently and speak of it in different terms when it comes to the details, despite there being a general consensus as to the basic idea.

man<sup>2</sup> who coined the terms "doppelte Kausalität" (double causality) about half a century ago (1963). Apparently Seeligman came to the idea inspired by related views in the writings of Gerhard von Rad<sup>3</sup> and Yehezkel Kaufman.<sup>4</sup> It was, however, only two decades later that another scholar, Yairah Amit,<sup>5</sup> began popularising and expanding the theory of the DCP in the English scholarly literature.<sup>6</sup>

Since then, numerous OT scholars have made use of the concept and theory of the DCP in the analysis of biblical texts. In most cases they have usually done so with an acceptance of the concept of the DCP, despite there being some differences in opinion regarding historical and literary aspects pertaining to the details of the theory associated with it.<sup>7</sup> A listing of all the related scholarly literature that mentions the DCP is, however, beyond the scope of this (or any) study. This is partly due to the fact that the DCP is seldom the main focus of the study in which references to it occur. In most cases it is either discussed as part of a sub-section or mentioned in a footnote.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, there seems to be a general consensus among those involved with it that the DCP is a functional concept with great explanatory value as far as causal processes in the folk-metaphysical assumptions of OT historical narratives are concerned.

That the OT texts depict both YHWH and humans as agents in the actualisation of the plot of biblical narratives is beyond reasonable doubt. The many verifiable examples thereof have motivated the continued references to the

<sup>2</sup> Isac L. Seeligman, "Menschliches Heldenatum und göttliche Hilfe, Die doppelte Kausalität im alttestamentlichen Geschichtsdenken," *TZ* 19 (1963): 385–411.

<sup>3</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays* (trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken; New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), 166-204.

<sup>4</sup> See generally Yehezkel Kaufman, *The Book of Judges (Hebrew)* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1978), 128.

<sup>5</sup> Yairah Amit, "The Dual Causality Principle and Its Effects on Biblical Literature," *VT* 37 (1987): 385-400. Amit subsequently modified some of the details of her views regarding the historical development of the DCP in the context of the theory of the historical background of the Deuteronomistic school's editing of the OT, e.g. Yairah Amit, "Dual Causality (Dual Causality: An Additional Aspect)," *In Praise of Editing in the Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays in Retrospect* (ed. Yairah Amit; trans. B. Sigler Rozen; HBM 39; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2012), 105-121.

<sup>6</sup> Amit, "Dual Causality Principle," 390. While notions of "dual" and "double" with reference to causality might not be semantically identical, Amit and subsequent researchers have equivocated to a large extent.

<sup>7</sup> See, *inter alia*, David M. Gunn and Diana N. Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 81; Norman K. Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: John Knox Westminster Press, 2001), 219 n. 6; Jonathan Grossman, "The Design of the 'Dual Causality' Principle in the Narrative of Absalom's Rebellion," *Bib* 88 (2007): 558-560.

<sup>8</sup> See for example, Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible: Understanding the Bible and Its World* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 28.

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DCP in the contexts of OT theology, the history of Israelite religion and OT narrative criticism. What seems to have been either overlooked or ignored in limiting discussions of the DCP to these disciplines, however, is that the concept of causes is also essentially a philosophical (i.e. metaphysical) notion.<sup>9</sup> Yet there has been little if any interest among OT scholars in some of the relevant metaphysical complexities associated with the concept of causation.<sup>10</sup> To be sure, OT scholars are not philosophers and the OT is not a philosophical textbook presenting us with an overt and systematic metaphysics. However, OT scholars can and need to make sense of the folk-metaphysical assumptions in the world of the text lest anachronistic notions of causation are read back into the biblical discourse. In fact, it is precisely because of the absence of descriptive and historical philosophical clarification/analyses of causation in the OT that scholarly research on the DCP have become so complacent.

The absence of a descriptive and historical philosophical perspective on causation in the OT in general and in connection with the DCP in particular constitutes both the *research problem* and the gap in the available scholarly literature this study intends to fill. As for the assumptions of the discussion to follow, the following may be noted:

- (i) Since we are dealing with a concept (causation) from a meta-language (second order) that also has philosophical dimensions, a philosophical perspective on causation in the world of the text is warranted.
- (ii) Though the OT is not a philosophical text, its discourse does contain folk-metaphysical assumptions about causation that can be clarified with the aid of appropriate historical-philosophical description (as opposed to an attempted justification or critique of biblical metaphysical assumptions).
- (iii) As a collection of diverse pre-modern texts, the OT might presuppose ideas about causation that differ radically from what is commonly understood by the concept in contemporary ordinary language (and in the theory of the DCP).
- (iv) The conceptual pluralism of the OT canon suggests that different OT texts might contain different folk-metaphysical assumptions regarding causation.

The *hypothesis* of this study is threefold:

- (i) Since scholarly discussions of the DCP in the OT have been limited to the domains of discourse of non-philosophical methods in biblical criti-

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<sup>9</sup> Jaegwon Kim, "Causation," *CDP*: 110-112.

<sup>10</sup> The reason why I speak of "causation" rather than "causality" will become clear below.

cism, past and current theorising of the concept of the DCP itself were probably not adequate as a comprehensive modelling of the possible complexity of causal processes presupposed in the biblical discourse.

- (ii) Descriptive and critical philosophical (here: metaphysical) perspectives involving conceptual clarification<sup>11</sup> might offer a useful supplementary tool that can add clarity on assumptions about causation in the OT in a manner that is able to deal with complexity beyond the scope of traditional theological, historical and narrative readings.
- (iii) The concept of the DCP as is currently understood within biblical scholarship can be shown to be prone to a committing of informal fallacies such as questionable causes, reductionism, hasty generalisation, oversimplification, confusing causation with correlation, and begging the question.

Regarding the *methodology* adopted in this study, as noted above this will involve descriptive philosophical analysis and critique aimed at conceptual clarification in such a way that it also operates historically and comparatively.<sup>12</sup> The *aim or objective* of applying this method is to offer a philosophically more nuanced manner of speaking of causation in the OT by revealing the conceptual complexity pertaining thereto, thereby exposing possible reductionist tendencies in the theory of the DCP, should it fail to attend to basic philosophical distinctions in the metaphysics of causation. As far as structuring the discussion is concerned, the following *outline* will constitute the remaining contents of this study:

- (i) A historical introduction to the development of DCP as theory in OT scholarship;
- (ii) A brief note on explicit references to divine causation in English translations of the OT;
- (iii) A dense discussion of the philosophy of causation neglected by the DCP with specific reference to:
  - a) neglected distinctions of types of causation in the history of philosophy;
  - b) neglected contemporary typological and relational causal distinctions.
- (iv) An brief overview of the DCP in relation to:

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<sup>11</sup> For more on a descriptive philosophical approach to the OT, see Jaco Gericke, *The Hebrew Bible and Philosophy of Religion* (SBLRBS 70; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 199-222.

<sup>12</sup> See Gericke, *Hebrew Bible and Philosophy*, 115-153.

- (v) a selection of contemporary theories of causation in general;
- (vi) three philosophical perspectives on *divine* causation in particular.
- (vii) The provisioning of a number of potentially relevant metaphysical questions that future philosophical analyses of any given instance of causation in the OT would do well to attend to.

All of the above make this a long article and the reader might be susceptible to information overload. However, the idea is not to offer everything written here *en bloc* as though it was a new single holistic answer to the question of conceptualising causality in the OT. Rather, this mass of data is provided so that the reader can return later to relevant parts thereof for quick and easy reference in order to determine which historical and / or contemporary issues might be of use in the exegesis of a given passage. The whole reason for the detail is to show just how complex the metaphysics of causality can be and how reductionist the notion of dual causality has been. Hence nothing to follow can be left out, not even the historical parts, since contemporary views are not always the best way to model assumptions about causation in the OT itself (with reference to which contemporary views might be anachronistic).

In sum, then, the *significance or value* of the research for the study of the OT is to be found in: 1) a challenging of the consensus regarding the conceptual adequacy of the DCP, and 2) the detailed provisioning of an entire history of philosophical distinctions to be selectively probed for the purpose of for modelling, analysing and conceptualising causation in the OT.

## **B A HISTORICAL CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF THE DCP**

If we stick to the official story told by OT scholars of the origin of the theory behind the DCP we may observe that it purportedly starts with Gerhard Von Rad.<sup>13</sup> Von Rad wrote on related matters in OT theology and in his discussion of the construction of history in theological confession. In this context he suggested that in the time of what the texts depicted as a united monarchy a new kind of historical narrative came into being. According to Von Rad's idea of what might be termed emergent dual causation, there was a transition from archaic depictions typified by episodes with mostly miraculous and mythological elements to a more obviously secular and comprehensive historical narration. Whereas in the older stories YHWH was a more full character with crudely anthropomorphic traits, eventually the divine came to be represented as more

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<sup>13</sup> Von Rad, *Problem of the Hexateuch*, 166-204. But see below on the history of causal typologies for earlier precursors to the DCP in other fields. The idea of double agency in divine/human causal processes may have been novel in contemporary OT studies but the concept was much older and has appeared in many forms under many names through the centuries.

transcendent. As causal agent YHWH was moved to the background of history while human agency became the primary focus.<sup>14</sup>

A second noted precursor to the conceptualising the DCP is said to be Yehezkel Kaufman.<sup>15</sup> Writing in his commentary on Joshua, Kaufman believed he could identify the emergence in DtrH of a new form of story-telling involving the construction of YHWH as an indirect governing force in human history. Kaufman's theory of dual causality saw the phenomenon as a typical feature of deuteronomistic biblical narration in which events can be seen to occur "through both natural causes and divine guidance, which determine a purpose for the events."<sup>16</sup> However, the divine contribution is thought to stay determinative, with human causes only ending up supervening on the divine will. Thus in Kaufman's pre-DCP theory, human actions work towards the realisation of YHWH's plan, thus revealing the superiority of the Creator over the creation / creatures.<sup>17</sup>

It was, however, Isac Seeligman who drew the different strands together and become the first among OT scholars to actually use the term "double causality" ("doppelte kausalität").<sup>18</sup> According to Seeligman's theory metaphysical causes in the world of the text can be seen as the outcome of historical forces on the one hand and divine providence on the other. Here narrative ("Geschichte") turns out to be the thought pattern ("Denkform") of faith ("Glaube"). YHWH has set history in motion which then plays out according to its purpose. Yet also human agents can be seen to act causally in history, which shows that the worldview not only allows for divine providence but also for the human element. Interestingly, Seeligman's main exemplars for double causality were the "hero stories" featuring David. In these Seeligman believed he could identify a dual causality at work, one which to modern readers may seem like a logical contradiction but which the OT authors held in creative tension.<sup>19</sup>

In the 1980's Seeligman's "double causality" was taken up, refined and popularized among English speaking OT scholars by Yairah Amit's and her notion of a "dual causality principle."<sup>20</sup> Building on the work of Von Rad,

<sup>14</sup> Von Rad, *Problem of the Hexateuch*, 166-204. The discussion occurs in Von Rad's chapter entitled, "The Beginning of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel."

<sup>15</sup> Kaufman, *Judges*, 128.

<sup>16</sup> Kaufman, *Judges*, 128.

<sup>17</sup> See Charlotte Katzoff, "The Selling of Joseph—A Frankfurtian Interpretation," in *Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities: Essays on the Importance of Alternative Possibilities* (ed. David Widerker and Michael McKenna; Burlington: Ashgate 2006), 327-338. See also Charlotte Katzoff, "Divine Causality and Moral Responsibility in the Story of Joseph and His Brothers," *Iyyun* 47 (1998): 21-40.

<sup>18</sup> Seeligman, *Heldentum*, 137.

<sup>19</sup> Seeligman, *Heldentum*, 137.

<sup>20</sup> Amit, "Dual Causality Principle," 385-400.

Kaufman and Seeligman, Amit was the first to refer to a "principle" (as in the DCP). This made it seem like a narrative strategy which one could presuppose in the reading of almost any OT narrative, almost like some long lost hermeneutical key. Amit, however, limited the scope of DCP's appearance to certain types of OT narratives. With this she also theorised a different context for the manifestation of dual causality compared to her predecessors. Instead of locating the DCP's operations in "history," Amit's notion of dual causality is best understood as referring to a technique in edited OT story-telling.

Amit identified what she believed to be the essential features of DCP in narrative-critical terms, namely a) a realistic plot; b) complex character portrayal, including dialogue and introspection; 3) reasonable time frames and representations of space; and 4) the mediated or indirect involvement of YHWH (dreams, prophets, narrative comments and so on).<sup>21</sup> One of Amit's classic examples for the operations of the DCP was, as with Kaufman, the role of YHWH in relation to the acts and intentions of Joseph's brothers (Gen 37-45; the other is the story of Ehud in Judg 3). Given how Joseph's brothers' evil acts are later revealed to have been part of the divine plan, the twin combination of human psychology and divine providence is supposed to warrant speaking of a DCP operative in the world of the text.<sup>22</sup>

As Roland Boer<sup>23</sup> subsequently noted in his brief discussion of Amit, the dual causality technique involves some tensions. The DCP is thus supposed to denote a "combination of two systems of reasoning, which, when successfully achieved, produces two equally plausible ways of understanding the narrative."<sup>24</sup> In addition, while agreeing with the basic conception, Alison Joseph<sup>25</sup> has argued that the DCP is not similarly conceived of across all narrative worlds in the text. While the attribution of double causes (divine and human) is said to be at play in Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic composition (generally), the DCP clearly does not function homogeneously in all of the more "history-like" narratives of Samuel-Kings (as opposed to more uniformity in Judges). In DtrH's original compositions, the DCP is thought to be more integrated into the narrative, while in the more "historical" stories of DtrH (espe-

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<sup>21</sup> Amit, "Dual Causality Principle," 391.

<sup>22</sup> Amit's other example involves the apparent providential elements in the tale of Ehud (Judg 3).

<sup>23</sup> See Roland Boer, *Jameson and Jerobeam* (SemeiaSt; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 155.

<sup>24</sup> See Boer, *Jameson*, 155.

<sup>25</sup> Alison L. Joseph, *The Portrait of the Kings and the Historiographical Poetics of the Deuteronomistic Historian* (Ph.D. diss.; University of Berkley, 2012).

cially in Samuel-Kings) the divine causality is seen as being differently configured given how the narrative is constructed from cultural memory.<sup>26</sup>

The identification of the DCP in the OT, though initially limited in scope, has by now been extended to a staggering number of scenarios (still mostly from DtrH). In each case, both the deity and humans are implied to be conjointly involved in the actualisation of a particular state of affairs.<sup>27</sup> This, in a nutshell, is roughly what has come to be generally understood by the DCP as it occurs in the OT. And while no one would deny that the OT often depicts both divine and human characters as bringing about certain states of affairs, it is might be asked to what extent we are justified in speaking about *causal* – as opposed to other related – processes.

### C EXPLICIT REFERENCES TO DIVINE CAUSATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In a sense, the theory of DCP is completely inferential. That is, biblical Hebrew has no direct equivalent for the English *word* "cause." The *concept* of causation, however, can presumably be inferred, first of all from what is understood to be a correct interpretation of functions within Hebrew grammar. Here the verbal system is said to contain forms indicative of causation (e.g. especially in certain types of *pi'el*, *pu'al* and *hip'il* formations). This is why English translations have a few instances where the word "cause" occurs in the rendition. For example, a simple word search in the RSV with "cause" as the only extension and pertaining to divine agency shows only a number of cases. These occur across a variety of sources and shows complex causation in all instances, for example:

- (i) And when God (Hebrew: "gods") caused me to wander from my father's house... (Gen 20:13)

In Deuteronomic (DtrD) and Deuteronomistic (DtrH) texts:

- (ii) "The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you; they shall come out against you one way, and flee before you seven ways (Deut 28:27);

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<sup>26</sup> The double agency is not seen as mutually dependent as in the Joseph / Ehud narratives. And while they were inseparable to DtrH's world view, divine causality in DtrH is considered to be an ideological and theological attempt at understanding historical events. As an important element of the rhetorical method of Dtr, political descriptions are often accompanied by theological ones to show the work of YHWH in history.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Avioz, "Divine Intervention and Human Error in the Absalom Narrative," *JSOT* 37/3 (2013): 339.

- (iii) Behold, I will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land" (2 Kgs 19:7);
- (iv) and I will not cause the feet of Israel to wander any more out of the land which I gave to their fathers, if only they will be careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them" (2 Kgs 21:8).

In Priestly circles of the prophetic literature:

- (v) And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances (Ezek 36:27).

And in the writings like various post-exilic Psalms:

- (vi) Thou hast caused lover and friend to shun me, my companions are in darkness (Ps 88:18);
- (vii) He caused them to be pitied by all those who held them captive (Ps 106:46).

Besides interpretations of grammar, also lengthier depictions of YHWH as causal agent as well as theological propositions implicating YHWH in the actualisation of certain states of affairs seem to constitute the other side of the textual data from which causation has been inferred. In addition, textual representations of the working of both human and divine characters in tandem are held to warrant the inference of a duality in causation, especially if these two agencies are the only ones that are kept in view, and internally undifferentiated at that.<sup>28</sup>

## **D THE DCP AND THE COMPLEXITY OF CAUSAL TYPES**

The basic idea of double agency involving both divine and human causes actually goes back much further than the jargon of the DCP in OT studies. In fact, the perceived duality in the folk-metaphysical assumptions of the OT has long been fossilized in the contexts of a variety of problems in both systematic theology and philosophy of religion. These include discussions of providence and history, divine power and human free will, election and determinism, repen-

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<sup>28</sup> Mark Z. Brettler, "Historical Texts in the Hebrew Bible?" in *Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in the Ancient World* (ed. Karl L. Raflaub; Oxford: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2013), 213-232.

ance and grace, the problem of moral evil and theodicy, *etcetera*. So technically there is in fact nothing new under the sun, at least in this regard.<sup>29</sup>

Philosophically speaking, moreover, the DCP as it appears in the study of the OT is not only not novel; it actually involves an overly simplistic representation of what is involved in the folk-metaphysics of causation presupposed in the OT. Just how complex the implicit assumptions about causal processes in the religious language might actually be can, however, not be discerned purely *via* historical, narrative or theological types of biblical criticism. Not that the insights by Von Rad, Kaufmann and Amit need to be discarded. Instead, they can be supplemented in order to remove the vagueness inherent within the DCP when it comes to causation. The need for this becomes readily apparent when we consider distinctions in philosophical typologies of causation, something which the DCP completely ignores because it falls outside the scope of other more traditional types of biblical criticism attached to the theory.<sup>30</sup>

## 1 Historical Typological Diversity

We begin the historical-philosophical overview in the traditional if problematic manner with the major Greek thinkers.<sup>31</sup> While Plato did remark on formal causes, it is Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes that offers the first interesting and perhaps functional complex of causal distinctions that the DCP overlooks.<sup>32</sup> Reapplied to the discourse of the OT we may summarise them as follows:

- (i) A *material cause* is the physical material constituting whatever state of affairs (henceforth abbreviated to S and as such includes artifacts,

<sup>29</sup> Graham White, "Medieval Theories of Causation," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 ed.), n.p. [cited 15 March 2014], (ed. Edward N. Zalta). Online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/causation-medieval/>.

<sup>30</sup> Allowing for the possibility that biblical folk-metaphysical assumptions might presuppose notions of causality no longer credible, any in-depth analysis of causation in the OT must operate both philosophically and historically and take cognizance not only of contemporary theories of causality (which are discussed in the next section) but also of outdated philosophical distinctions. Needless to say, given limitations of space, the discussion below cannot offer anything other than an introductory overview of the relevant conceptual complexity. As such it only highlights of might be the more notable and relevant typological variables in the history of the philosophy of causation.

<sup>31</sup> Of course, one could argue that folk-philosophical ideas about causality predate the Greek philosophers, e.g. in ANE mythological, wisdom and science texts. This is granted, but it is outside the scope of the present study to discuss additional historical background and the cut of in terms of space and time is purely for the sake of practicality.

<sup>32</sup> See Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (ed. Jonathan Barnes; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), i-ii.

events, abstract objects, actions, persons, *etcetera*) that YHWH / Human(s) (henceforth abbreviated to Y / H) operate on in a given text (henceforth abbreviated to T);<sup>33</sup>

- (ii) A *formal cause* is the form or pattern S took in the minds of Y / H in T (or just in T);
- (iii) An *efficient cause* is Y / H who produced S in T;
- (iv) A *final cause* is what the S in T brought about by Y / H aimed at.

These distinctions can easily be teased from the biblical discourse, yet they are easily misunderstood, as Mark Cohen reminds us,

It is natural for post-Humeans to think of what Aristotle calls "causes" in terms of the notion of cause-and-effect. This is misleading in several ways: Only one of Aristotle's causes (the "efficient" cause) sounds even remotely like a Humean cause. Humean causes are events, and so are their effects, but Aristotle doesn't limit his causes in that way. Typically, for Aristotle it is substances that have causes and while the traditional fourfold picture is Aristotle's, the names of the causes are not.<sup>34</sup>

In the same way, whereas Aristotle was mainly concerned with the coming about of concrete physical artifacts or objects (substances), the DCP is itself limited in a different sense. After all, it caters explicitly only for efficient causes and limits these to two causal agent categories (divine and human). In as much the DCP recognises divine objectives it does unwittingly include the notion of final causes, yet never sufficiently so. In addition, in terms of effects the DCP theory is limited to political events within narrative-historical states of affairs. As such it does not even reckon with Aristotle's material and formal causes. The former type is only very roughly approximated only when the theory behind the DCP relates to the fates of individuals. The latter only with the idea of a divine plan (in the divine mind), although in the DCP theory this pertains to states of affairs rather than to objects.

Aristotle's efficient and final causes were also called *dynamic causes* in as much as they explain why change occurs. The material and formal causes were also called *static causes* since they pertain to how things are at a given

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<sup>33</sup> I realise that the use of abbreviated formal language may be off-putting for some readers but it is part and parcel of analytic philosophical discussion and allows for an avoidance of tedious repetition.

<sup>34</sup> Marc S. Cohen, "The Four Causes," n.p. [cited 20 May 2013]. Online: <http://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/320/4causes.htm>. For an extended discussion from which Cohen summarised the data, see Richard Sorabji, *Necessity, Cause and Blame: Perspectives on Aristotle's Theory* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980).

moment. Ultimately, however, whether anything other than a reductionist notion of Aristotelian efficient causation is recognised by the DCP is an open question. By contrast, while the OT never speaks of causation *verbatim*, it is not difficult to see that an Aristotelian analysis of the folk-metaphysical assumptions in a given context in the OT will not have a hard time identifying all four causes, whether with regard to substances or extended to states of affairs. That is, however, if this somewhat dated fourfold distinction is considered functional to begin with. That it is not even recognised by discussions of causation in the OT though is an oversight that has impoverished the theoretical basis of the DCP itself, thus showing it to be reductionist in its conceptualisation of causal processes.

While Aristotle's four "causes" remain standard repertoire in popular introductions to the metaphysics of causation, a philosophical typology of the phenomena constructed for the purpose of analysing the OT data cannot be so limited. Many additional distinctions of causal types have been made in the history of philosophy<sup>35</sup> that refined, revised or expanded the fourfold scheme. The next ones of note were introduced by some 13th century philosophers. They distinguished two types of *efficient causes*, namely *primary* and *secondary* causes. In this context a *primary cause* was assumed to be something analogous to YHWH as the originative creative power, while a *secondary cause*, by contrast, involved both divine and human sources of motion or change in created things.

A closer look at the theory behind the DCP shows it to involve a contemporary recasting of secondary efficient causes, albeit a selective one. On the one hand, since the DCP never views YHWH in isolation (hence duality) it does not work with primary causation explicitly. On the other hand, since the DCP limits its concern to only two causal agencies (divine and human), it is much narrower in scope than the medieval distinction. Not only because primary causation is left out but also in as much as medieval understandings included all created phenomena under secondary causes. Here the DCP definitely require expansion, especially since the OT also recognises other causes (e.g. the elemental, fauna and flora, *etcetera*). All of these represent what in the medieval sense and as secondary efficient causes were also called *instrumental causes*.

The philosophical-theologian Thomas Aquinas made the next distinction between *loose* and *tight* efficient causes.<sup>36</sup> If these are present in the OT, we should be able to discern cases of *tight causes* in contexts where something necessitates effects independently of any other causal circumstances. By con-

<sup>35</sup> The rest of this section is heavily indebted to and basically a selective summary of the overview provided by Menno Hulswit, *From Cause to Causation: A Peircean Perspective* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Publishers, 2002). 1-21.

<sup>36</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, "The Five Ways," *Modern Introduction to Philosophy* (ed. Paul Edwards and Arthur Pap; 3rd ed.; London: The Free Press, 1973), 408.

trast, *loose causes* in the world of the text require that other conditions be fulfilled. *Tight causes* will be hard to find outside of presuppositions featuring hard determinism. On most other occasions the OT will assume only *loose causes* since in texts all variables need to function in a certain way before certain states of affairs can become reality. In many cases the absence of just one variable leads to an alternate effect, as can be seen when YHWH or the people repents and a particular predicted outcome is averted. This distinction is also ignored by the DCP, yet it would do no harm to introduce it for the sake of precision in the analysis of causation in OT folk-metaphysics.

In addition to the above, Aquinas also distinguished two types of *final causes*.<sup>37</sup> These are called *internal* and *external* final causes. The former is present in the OT wherever there is the idea of creaturely self-realisation. In connection with this would texts implying some sort of striving for an ultimate goal, also called the *external final cause*, which might perhaps be implied as being YHWH himself. Though these distinctions might be taken for granted by some scholars as implicit in the DCP, the jargon and therefore the distinction as such is absent from the theory. The latter has a general tendency to note but essentially to focus less on ideas of "purpose" (*final causes*) in favour of a one-dimensional emphasis on "reasons why" (*efficient causes*).

At the birth of the modern era we encounter another interesting distinction relevant to our discussion of what the DCP tends to leave out. Like Aquinas, René Descartes<sup>38</sup> distinguished two different concepts of efficient causation. These were *particular efficient causes* vis-à-vis one *general efficient cause*. As such they are to be distinguished from Aquinas' *tight* and *loose efficient causes* and should also not be confused with the idea of *primary* and *secondary efficient causes* (despite some overlap between *primary* and *general efficient causes*). Technically, however, the DCP cannot be faulted for bracketing this modern distinction since despite being theistic it is not easily linked either to the folk-metaphysics of the OT. The reason for this is because it is formulated in scientific terms that have little place for human [*sic*] agency in the popularly understood sense. So while the divine is seen by Descartes as having the status of a *general cause* that ensures the constancy of the quantity of matter in the world, the *particular causes* are not the motions of the individual parts of matter, initiated by either gods or humans, but *general principles* or laws of nature.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Aquinas, "Five Ways," 409.

<sup>38</sup> See René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* (trans. Valentine R. Miller and Reese P. Miller; Dordrecht: Reidel, 1983 [1644]), 36-37.

<sup>39</sup> Descartes, *Principles*, 37.

Baruch Spinoza (1632-77) made the next distinction of interest. This was between *free causes* and *necessary causes*.<sup>40</sup> On this view *free causes* act from the necessity of their own nature (as the initiators of a change) while *necessary causes* are necessitated by other causes (as inactive nodes in a chain). In the OT we see that YHWH was initially the only *free cause*, by which is meant that while YHWH might have had to create what he did, he was presumably not assumed to have been forced to do this by some external cause. Of course, it all depends on how we interpret the biblical creation myths (as presupposing creation ex-nihilo or not). Given that some constraints on the creator are sometimes presupposed in the OT, this distinction is on the whole not always amenable to its folk-metaphysical assumptions. Much easier is to identify the presence of *necessary causes* in the discourse. In OT narratives both divine and human actions are at times assumed to be necessitated as effects of prior causes. Thus in some OT folk-metaphysical assumptions it was assumed that both divine and human actions are determined by their relation to previous events as these impede of both divine and human nature.<sup>41</sup>

A very important distinction for the study of the OT comes from John Stuart Mill (1806-73).<sup>42</sup> Mill wrote about *partial causes* as opposed to *real causes* and held that under causation most people erroneously limit the discussion to the former category only. On Mill's theory, the very idea of (only a) dual causation would be reductionist since it involves singling out just two necessary conditions (divine and human actions) from a whole set (of conditions), which together are in themselves not sufficient for the effect to occur. This selectivity involves a misrepresentation of the folk-metaphysics of causal processes presupposed in the OT since there is always a multiplicity of causal agencies, factors and processes taken for granted as operative at any given time. Besides the divine and human, an indefinite assortment of other causes was equally necessary for a state of affairs to occur. Hence the "real cause" of an occurrence in the world of the text is a completely (impossibly) detailed set of conditions which, when they are all met, is invariably followed by a certain effect.

During the modern era there came a shift in the discussion of causation, with much of the theorising moving from the context of philosophy proper to that of science (mirroring the split between the two disciplines which used to be

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<sup>40</sup> See Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics* (trans. James Gutman; New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1949 [1677]), 7.

<sup>41</sup> On the question to what extent the OT presupposes divine freedom or not, see Jaco Gericke, "Divine Freedom in the Old Testament: A Philosophical Clarification," *OTE* 26/2 (2013): 334-347.

<sup>42</sup> See John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic* (8th ed.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1874), 234-266.

one, for example, natural philosophy).<sup>43</sup> On the philosophical side, however, causation was now discussed as much in relation to epistemology as to metaphysics. In this regard, two notable and presumably familiar modern philosophical (as opposed to scientific) views may be distinguished (there being many others, and many versions, of course).<sup>44</sup>

- (i) According to *rationalists* like Kant<sup>45</sup> and Leibniz,<sup>46</sup> causation is a *logically necessary connection*, thus giving it a metaphysical quality that is beyond observation. For Kant this logical relation was due to the way our minds construct the world, rather than representing the world in itself. On this view, in Y/H and a given S in T will always and must seem to go together.
- (ii) According to *empiricists* like Hume,<sup>47</sup> when Y/H and S go together in T, Y/H is the "cause" of S in T only in the sense of representing an observed factual relation which is currently empirically linked in the world of the text, but never as a necessary relation as though a different

<sup>43</sup> According to Hulswit, *From Cause*, 5: "Probably the most radical change in the meaning of cause happened during the seventeenth century, in which there emerged a strong tendency to understand causal relations as instances of deterministic laws. Causes were no longer seen as the active initiators of a change, but as inactive nodes in a law-like implication chain."

<sup>44</sup> Since the focus will be only on different causal types distinguished in the history of philosophy, details of the views of many major figures are left out to the extent that they did not add to the *philosophical typology*, even if they produced otherwise great advancements in its causal conceptions. Examples here are the theories of Kant, Leibniz, as well as many scientists and philosophers after them.

<sup>45</sup> See Hulswit, *From Cause*, 6. The classic background here is Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. Norman K. Smith; London: MacMillan, 1781-87 / 1963) and Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (trans. Lewis W. Beck; LLA; Indianapolis: The Bobbs Merill Company, 1950 [1783]).

<sup>46</sup> See Hulswit, *From Cause*, 7. The background material is Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "First Truths" in *Philosophical Papers and Letters* (ed. Leroy E. Loemker; Dordrecht: Reidel Publishing Company, 1976 [ca. 1680-84]), 267-272; Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "Tentamen Anagogicum: An Anagogical Essay in the Investigation of Causes," in *Philosophical Papers and Letters* (ed. Leroy E. Loemker; Dordrecht: Reidel Publishing Company, 1976 [ca. 1696]), 477-485, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "Metaphysical Consequences of the Principle of Reason," in *Philosophical Writings* (ed. George H. R. Parkinson; trans. Mary Morris and George H. R. Parkinson; London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1977 [ca. 1712]), 172-178.

<sup>47</sup> For the overall background of Hume, see David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (ed. Lewis A. Selby-Bigge (1888); 2nd ed., rev. Peter H. Nidditch; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978 [1739-40]); and also David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals* (ed. Lewis A. Selby-Bigge (1777); 3rd ed., rev. Peter H. Nidditch; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975 [1748]).

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possible effect is ruled out *a priori*. A good example of this tension is prefigured mythically in the tension between the power and weakness of the divine word.

As a theory of causation in the OT, the DCP does not attend to this distinction, perhaps primarily because, as is the case with folk-metaphysics in the text, it has also neglected the folk-epistemology presupposed in the OT in connection with the modal logical notions of necessity and possibility.

Finally, at least for the purpose of this section, cognisance may be taken of *post-modern* views of causal types. In the world of the text such an approach might tend to see causation as *social causation* in the form of "*intertextuality*," that is, as a complex and variable interweaving of divine and human actions and reactions, many of them in some sense blind to ultimate purpose and destiny, yet some quite deliberate in both goal and means.<sup>48</sup> This understanding is more on the level of meta-textual perspectives to the OT as a whole and features wherever direct linear causalities among YHWH and humans are few and ideological needs, such as in the theologies of DtrH, so beloved by those who work with the DCP, actually simplify and reduce complexity to a linear pattern. This view is functional in as much as causal agents are sometimes difficult to locate as they form part of a larger, interconnected tapestry of which the effects are part and parcel of the greater causal complex (especially if emergent causation as a result of editing and reception is allowed for). Analogous to the OT as a whole, the postmodern view of causality exhibits variety, difference, otherness, opposites, contradiction and plurality.<sup>49</sup>

## 2 Additional Neglected Contemporary Distinctions

### 2a Types of Causation

In addition to those noted in the historical overview of the previous section, contemporary talk about types of causation offer additional philosophical distinctions for reconstructing the folk-metaphysics of causation in the OT.<sup>50</sup> The following list constitutes other types of causation also ignored in the DCP theory and cognisance thereof is required to enhance philosophical nuance and clarity.

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<sup>48</sup> Pauline Rosenau, "Health Politics Meets Post-Modernism," *JHPPL* 19/2 (1994): 304-333.

<sup>49</sup> Rosenau, "Health Politics," 304-333.

<sup>50</sup> These distinctions are based on a summary and revision of the outline provided by Chris Taylor, *A Formal Logical Analysis of Causal Relations* (D. Phil., University of Sussex, 1992), 16-18. In each case the theory of Taylor is summarised and reapplied to the OT.

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- (i) *Necessary versus non-necessary causation:*<sup>51</sup> Y/H is a necessary cause of an event S in T if and only if S in T could not occur (if S is a produced effect) or could not fail to occur (if S is an inhibited effect) without Y/H; whereas Y/H in T is a non-necessary cause of S in T if and only if Y/H is one of several independent causes of S in T.
- (ii) *Sufficient versus insufficient or contributory causation:*<sup>52</sup> Y/H is a sufficient cause of an event S in T if and only if Y/H on its own is enough to cause S in T. Conversely, an insufficient or contributory cause is one in which Y/H produces (or inhibits) S in T only in combination with the occurrence or non-occurrence of certain other events.
- (iii) *Productive versus inhibitive causation:*<sup>53</sup> a broad distinction can be made between productive causation, in which an effect S in T is made to occur by Y/H, and inhibitive causation, in which an effect S in T is prevented by Y/H.
- (iv) *Positive versus negative causation:*<sup>54</sup> Y/H in is a positive cause of an S in T if and only if Y/H’s actions’ occurrence (possibly in combination with the occurrence and non-occurrence of certain other events) produces / inhibits S in T; Y/H is a negative cause of S in T if and only if Y/H not acting (possibly in combination with the occurrence and non-occurrence of certain other events) produces/inhibits S in T.
- (v) *Potential versus actual causation:*<sup>55</sup> Y/H is a potential cause of S in T if and only if it could (given any other conditions required) cause S in T; Y/H is an actual cause of S in T if and only if it is a potential cause of S in T and the causation of S in T by Y/H actually takes place.
- (vi) *Sole versus multiple causation:*<sup>56</sup> given that S in T was produced or inhibited by Y/H, S in T or the actions of Y/H might have been preceded by just one immediate actual cause (perhaps a “necessary” cause, although that need not always be the case); or S in T might have been preceded by two or more mutually independent actual causes, each of which would have sufficed on its own (given the occurrence and/or non-occurrence of any other events required).
- (vii) *Immediate or direct actual versus remote or indirect actual causation:*<sup>57</sup> Y/H is an immediate or a direct actual cause of S in T if and only if Y/H

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<sup>51</sup> Taylor, *Formal Logical Analysis*, 16.

<sup>52</sup> Taylor, *Formal Logical Analysis*, 16.

<sup>53</sup> Taylor, *Formal Logical Analysis*, 16.

<sup>54</sup> Taylor, *Formal Logical Analysis*, 17.

<sup>55</sup> Taylor, *Formal Logical Analysis*, 17.

<sup>56</sup> Taylor, *Formal Logical Analysis*, 17.

<sup>57</sup> Taylor, *Formal Logical Analysis*, 18.

is an actual cause of S in T, and there is no intermediate event, such that Y/H actually caused that event in T, and the event actually caused some S in T. By contrast, Y/H would be a remote or an indirect actual cause of S in T if and only if Y/H were an actual cause of S in T, but not an immediate actual cause of S in T.

(viii) *Ultimate versus intermediate causation:*<sup>58</sup> this type is sometimes alluded to in discussions of the DCP. Y/H in T is an ultimate actual cause of S in T if and only if Y/H in T is an actual cause of S in T, and there is no event, such that it is also an actual cause of S in T, and it is an actual cause of the acts of Y/H in T; otherwise (i.e. if there is such an event), Y/H is an intermediate actual cause of S in T.

Since the various causal types are to some extent independent of one another, they can be combined in several different ways to describe various causal relations for various folk-metaphysical contexts in the OT. For instance, one text might assume "potential sufficient positive productive causation," while another text presupposes "indirect necessary contributory negative-inhibitive causation" *etcetera*.<sup>59</sup> But despite the refinement this allows in the face of complexity, none of these types of causation are as of yet distinguished in the theory behind the DCP.

## 2b Logical Distinctions (Fallacies)

In addition to the above metaphysical types, it may be noted that the theory behind the DCP is also not adapted to discern instances of informal logical types, that is, *questionable cause fallacies*. These can be found in the OT wherever Y/H as cause of S in T is incorrectly identified or overlooked. In this regard, four fallacies (amongst others) may be distinguished:

- (i) *The fallacy of post-hoc ergo propter hoc* (assuming that the occurrence of S in T after Y/H acted means the latter necessarily caused the former);
- (ii) *The fallacy of cum hoc ergo propter hoc* (assuming that the occurrence of S in T together with the acts of Y/H the former is the effect of the latter);
- (iii) *The fallacy of ignoring a common cause* (ignoring the fact that sometimes an act of Y/H and S in T occur together because they share a common cause);
- (iv) *The fallacy of oversimplified cause* (sometimes there are many cause of S in T and not just Y/H as linked).

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<sup>58</sup> Taylor, *Formal Logical Analysis*, 18.

<sup>59</sup> Taylor, *Formal Logical Analysis*, 18.

Ultimately, while other types of causation have been distinguished in the philosophy of science, in philosophy of law and in ordinary language, the typology provided in this section, though not exhaustive, suffices for the purpose of its part of the overall introduction to a descriptive metaphysical analysis of causation in the OT.

## 2c Relational Distinctions and DCP's Reductionist Notion of "Causality"

An interesting yet important distinction has completely been overlooked in non-philosophical discussions of the DCP. Technically, there is a difference between the "causation" and "causality." Many OT scholars use these terms interchangeably and as modern readers have been more concerned with causality than with causation.<sup>60</sup> Technically, however, "causality" is a more limited category pertaining only to relations between cause and effect (as any dictionary entry will show). Research on the DCP is therefore unwittingly supposed to be focussed only on the latter. Yet even philosophical typologies of causal relations are neglected by the DCP theory. Below follows a list of such relational types that may be of use in the clarification of what the OT presupposed in this regard in the context of Y/H *vis-à-vis* S in T.<sup>61</sup>

- (i) A *spurious relationship* is one in which Y/H and S in T are related, but only because of a common cause. There is no formal causal link between Y/H and S in T;
- (ii) A *bi-directional or reciprocal causal relationship* is one in which Y/H has a causal influence on some S in T, which in turn, has a causal impact on Y/H in another S in T;
- (iii) A *moderated causal relationship* is one in which the relationship between Y/H and S in T is moderated by a third variable. In other words, the nature of the relationship between Y/H and S in T varies;
- (iv) An *unanalysed relationship* is one in which Y/H and S are related in T, but the source of the relationship is unspecified.

These are some of the basic possible relations between Y/H and S in T within philosophical typologies of causation. They represent functional distinctions that the DCP in its current reductionist format does not acknowledge but which would enrich any philosophical clarification of causal relations in the OT.

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. Hulswit, *From Cause*, 9.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. James Jaccard and Robert Turrisi, *Interaction Effects in Multiple Regression* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2003).

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## E DCP AND SOME GENERAL/SPECIFIC THEORIES OF CAUSATION

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Currently many *general theories* of causation are available. Many are not applicable to the study of the OT as they involve complex mathematical concerns unrelated to the metaphysics of causation in the biblical discourse. However, some of the more notable general theories of causation include, *inter alia*, the following:

- (i) According to *manipulation theories of causation* Y/H causes S in T only in the case that one can change Y/H in order to change S in T. Y/H is the cause of S in T if a change in Y/H brings a change in S in T;<sup>62</sup>
- (ii) According to *counterfactual theories of causation*, the phenomenon is a process where S in T would not have occurred if Y/H had not been present;<sup>63</sup>
- (iii) According to *probabilistic theories of causation*, a cause is an act of Y/H, the occurrence of which makes the occurrence of S in T, more likely than Y/H had not occurred;<sup>64</sup>
- (iv) According to *process theories of causation* the important concept for understanding Y/H and the causation of S in T is not causal relationship or causal interactions, but rather identifying causal *processes*;
- (v) According to *instrumental theories of causation*, the main point of this approach is that Y/H is a cause of S in T only from the perspective of persons who are *practically* concerned with certain kinds of events;<sup>65</sup>
- (vi) According to *singularist theories of causation*, Y/H did cause S in T, namely Y/H's presence itself sufficed to the occurrence of S in T;<sup>66</sup>
- (vii) According to *INUS-condition theories of causation*, Y/H as a cause of S in T is "an insufficient but non-redundant part of a condition which is itself unnecessary but sufficient for the result."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the theory, see James Woodward, "Causation and Manipulability," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2013 Edition), n.p. [cited 8 August 2013], (ed. Edward N. Zalta). Online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/causation-mani/>.

<sup>63</sup> David Lewis, "Causation," *JP* 70 (1973): 556-67.

<sup>64</sup> Hans Sachsse, *Kausalität, Gesetzlichkeit, Wahrscheinlichkeit: die Geschichte von Grundcategoriën zur Auseinandersetzung des Menschen mit der Welt* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979).

<sup>65</sup> Curt J. Ducasse, "On the Nature and the Observability of the Causal Relation," *Introduction to Metaphysics: The Fundamental Questions* (ed. Andrew B. Schoedinger; Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books 1991), 148.

<sup>66</sup> Ducasse, "On the Nature," 141

Perhaps even more immediately relevant to the study of the folk-metaphysics of causation in the OT are theories of *divine causation*. The problem, as Alfredo Freddoso implied, involves of the following questions: if YHWH ultimately is the first and direct cause of everything, including whatever occurs and exists in nature, can there be any causal activity on the part of creatures?; and if there is secondary causation, how does this causal activity fit in with YHWH's causal activity?<sup>68</sup> In response to these questions, three positions have appeared historically: "conservationism," "concurrentism," and "occasionalism."<sup>69</sup>

- (i) According to *occasionalism*, which was espoused by several important medieval and early modern thinkers, Y alone causes S in T; natural substances make no genuine causal contribution at all to any such effect. In short, there is no creaturely or "secondary" causation of S in T;
- (ii) *Conservationism* is the view that Y contributes to the ordinary course of nature in S in T solely by creating and conserving natural substances such as H and their accidents, including their active and passive causal powers. When such substances directly produce an effect, they (e.g. H) alone are immediate causes of S in T, whereas Y is merely an indirect or remote cause of S in T by way of conserving H; consequently, the actions of H *vis-à-vis* S in T are in some straightforward sense their own actions and not Y actions;
- (iii) In *concurrentism* S in T is produced immediately by both Y/H as well as other created substances, so that the latter make a genuine causal contribution to S in T and indeed determine its specific character, but they do so only if Y cooperates with them contemporaneously as an immediate cause of S in T in a certain "general" way which goes beyond conservation and which makes the resulting cooperative transeunt action to be in all relevant respects the action of both Y and the secondary causes of S in T.

In the context of the history of philosophical views on causation and divine causation, the DCP might be seen as a subtype of concurrentism. On this point at least the DCP seems to belong to the category most amenable to the folk-metaphysics of causation implicit in the OT. Yet the DCP is still too gen-

<sup>67</sup> John L. Mackie, *The Cement of the Universe: A Study of Causation* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1974); and John L. Mackie, "Causes and Conditions," *APQ* 2/4 (1965): 245-64.

<sup>68</sup> Alfredo Freddoso, "God's General Concurrence with Secondary Causes: Pitfalls and Prospects," *ACPQ* 67/2 (1994): 131-156.

<sup>69</sup> See the relevant subsection in Sukjae Lee, "Occasionalism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), n.p. [cited 21 February 2014], (ed. Edward N. Zalta). Online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/occasionalism/>.

eral and there are important differences between concurrentism and DCP when it comes to the details, the former being more reductionist.

## F QUESTIONS FOR A DESCRIPTIVE FOLK-METAPHYSICS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

From a philosophical perspective there are many standard questions that have remained unanswered in the theory and application of the DCP in the analysis of causation in the OT. In this regard, the following represents a possible checklist of concerns for the exegete hoping to work comprehensively in order to avoid the dualistic reduction involved in the traditional clarification of the folk-metaphysics of causation in particular contexts of OT discourse.<sup>70</sup>

- (i) What were the *causal relata* in a given text in the OT assumed to be? When Y/H are said to bring about S in T, what are the terms of this causal relation? An account of the causal relata should reveal what sort of thing they are, how many of them there are, and what job each does. In short, it should reveal their *category*, *number*, and *role*.<sup>71</sup>
  - a. What was the *category* of the causal relata assumed to be in a given text in the OT? What sort of thing are they?<sup>72</sup>
  - b. Are the causal relata in a given text in the OT assumed to be *immanent, or transcendent?*<sup>73</sup>
  - c. How, according to a given text in the OT were the causal relata in a given occurrence of causation assumed to be *individuated*?
  - d. What was assumed by a given text in the OT to be *the number and role* of the causal relata?<sup>74</sup>
- (ii) What was assumed by a given text in the OT to be the *causal relation*? When Y/H brings about S in T, what is the basis for this causal link? In

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<sup>70</sup> This list is indebted to the outline provided for the metaphysics of causation by Jonathan Schaffer, "The Metaphysics of Causation," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2014 Edition), n.p. [cited: 3 April 2014], (ed. Edward N. Zalta). Online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/causation-metaphysics/>.

<sup>71</sup> Schaffer, "Metaphysics," <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/causation-metaphysics/>.

<sup>72</sup> Schaffer, "Metaphysics," <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/causation-metaphysics/>.

<sup>73</sup> Schaffer, "Metaphysics," <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/causation-metaphysics/>.

<sup>74</sup> Schaffer, "Metaphysics," <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/causation-metaphysics/>.

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short, it should reveal the basis for *connection, direction, and selection*.<sup>75</sup>

- a. What was assumed by a given text in the OT to be the metaphysical basis for *causal connection*? That is, what is the difference between causally related *versus* causally unrelated sequences?<sup>76</sup>
- b. What was assumed by a given text in the OT to be the metaphysical basis for *causal direction*? That is, what is the difference between sequences related as cause to effect *versus* those related as effect to cause or as effect to joint effect of a common cause?<sup>77</sup>
- c. What was assumed to be the metaphysical basis for *causal selection*? That is, what is the difference between cause to effect sequences involving real causes vs. mere background conditions?<sup>78</sup>

Though these are abstract philosophical questions, they are perfectly legitimate if only because the OT, though not philosophy in the modern technical sense does contain assumptions regarding the nature of causation. The prerequisite for all this may well be limiting the practice of philosophical analysis to specific OT contexts so as to avoid generalisation. There is no need for coming up with general principles. This in itself is reason enough to consider the possibility of abandoning the concept of the DCP, if not in already operating methodologies then at least in future philosophical approaches to causation in the OT.

## G CONCLUSION

In conclusion then, the following reasons can be given for why the DCP should now be considered as being a dysfunctional notion in descriptive philosophical exegesis:

- (i) Technically the naming of the DCP has confused causation and causality, the latter being taken up in the concept and limiting its metaphysical scope;

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<sup>75</sup> Schaffer, "Metaphysics," <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/causation-metaphysics/>.

<sup>76</sup> Schaffer, "Metaphysics," <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/causation-metaphysics/>.

<sup>77</sup> Schaffer, "Metaphysics," <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/causation-metaphysics/>.

<sup>78</sup> Schaffer, "Metaphysics," <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/causation-metaphysics/>.

- (ii) If one is discussing causation cognizance must be taken also of philosophical typologies attached to the concept, something which the DCP does not and cannot attend to sufficiently in non-philosophical approaches;
- (iii) Because of its vagueness, the DCP has never been sufficiently correlated with general and specific theories of causation;
- (iv) Many descriptive metaphysical questions exist that the DCP in its dualist reduction brackets, yet which should part of analysing causation in the OT.
- (v) Since different texts might assume a different folk-metaphysics of causation, to speak of a principle of causation is a hasty generalisation.

In view of these problems it is proposed that the jargon of the DCP be abandoned, at least in any philosophical approach to causation in the OT. This will allow for a philosophically more nuanced manner of speaking of causal processes in the OT that through typological distinctions can be shown to be far more complex than is catered for by the theory of the DCP.

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