On Singular Causal Statements

(Changed from the original title: Belief in Causation)

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In this session, I would like to deal with the problem of singular causal statements. In my opinion, this problem seems not to have been treated in public. Of course, there was an argument so far that opposed or challenged Hume’s regularity theory, which had insisted the indispensability of generalization for causal statements since a long time ago; and such an argument led to much the same conclusion as singular causal statements.

I will also choose a way similar to this argument. However before that, I think, we should clarify what is general and what is singular, in the world; and in order to answer this question, I would like to refer to Davidson’s theory of events, and formularize singular causal statements in terms of first-order logic as follows:

(1) \( \varepsilon_1 \) caused \( \varepsilon_2 \).
(2) The cause of \( \varepsilon_2 \) was \( \varepsilon_1 \).
(3) \( \varepsilon_2 \) was caused by \( \varepsilon_1 \).

Here, “\( \varepsilon_1 \)” and “\( \varepsilon_2 \)” are singular terms in the sense of contemporary philosophy of language. Again, “_ caused _,” “The cause of _ was _,” and “_ was caused by _,” are two-place predicates in first-order logic.

Yet, I do not intend to construct any formal or logical systems. By taking up these formulas, I merely want attendants to consider the problem of singular causal statements within these schemata.

Now, formularizing singular causal statements with this form, in order to treat their problem, I refer to Hart&Honoré, the jurists who wrote the famous and influential book Causation in the Law. As far as I know, they are the first person to treat the problem in the above-mentioned sense. Thus, in this session, I will mainly refer to their argument.

However, since there is not enough time to read my whole paper, I will only read the first half of my paper, to be concrete, up to page 6. My manuscript is written in English, but I attach a Japanese translation to each word that I think difficult or too specialized.