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«РОССИЙСКАЯ АКАДЕМИЯ НАРОДНОГО ХОЗЯЙСТВА И ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ СЛУЖБЫ ПРИ ПРЕЗИДЕНТЕ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ»

Препринт

The Issue of Causal Explanation and Meaning Understanding of Social Action

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Abstract:

This text deals with epistemological clash between positivistic and intentionalistic programs in the social sciences. The main question, raised here, is whether a social action can be comprehended in both causal and motivational terms, which is stressed to be necessary condition for the consistency of the social sciences. It enables imputing the deed to a concrete actor. The first part of the text deals with historical reconstruction of epistemological dualism between *Kulturwissenschaften* and *Naturwissenschaften*. Then the model of singular causality is critically examined. The concluding part suggests the decision of the problem basing on Wittgensteinian metaphor of changing the aspect.

Keywords

Action, explanation, causality, intention, reason, event, changing-aspect.

Introduction

Two methodological positions, relative to the issue of conceiving action, can be discerned in social sciences. The first one is grounded in positivistic conception of science and can be traced back to the works by logical positivists (and most famously Carl Hempel) on the topics of social and historical sciences' methodology. The second one is connected with hermeneutics and historical school. At the second half of the twentieth century it was picked up and considerably re-worked by Peter Winch. Some recent works (see, e.g. Hutchinson, Read, Sharrock 2008) on Winch demonstrated that it would be, at least, a little bit inaccurately to reckon his works in the interpretativistic camp; therefore, I will call the second approach intentionalistic.

These positions interest me here in the context of their assumptions regarding the nature of action. They imply two different views to the relation of action to other observable events. While positivistic theories see action as merely an exemplar among other natural events, a common feature of intentionalistic theories is that they consider human actions as a specific type of occurrences, which must be methodologically distinguished from natural events. These presuppositions are tightly linked with epistemological claims of these approaches. Positivists usually state that event of action must be causally explained; therefore it must be brought under a general nomological law, ideally, the law which is quite similar or, better, identical in its form to the laws of natural sciences. Therefore they equate actions and other events. Intentionalists, on the other hand, accentuate the necessity to grasp, interpret or reconstruct the meaning of action. By claiming this they usually presuppose that meaning is a 'thing' which is quite specific for a particular situation, context, or practice.

The clash between two camps is caused by the difference in the criteria of theoretical significance these approaches adopt. That is, positivists try to formulate their claims in a general form; they consider event of action and its situation as an instance of a general case. So far a good theory of action has to cope with it in general causal terms. Intentionalists, oppositely, are usually emphasizing uniqueness and particularity of action, its contextual and/or situated character.

This clash might be said to have direct implications for sociological theorizing and studies of social action. Quite often a social scientist faces two alternatives: either action may be said to be a meaningful occurrence which is different from 'natural' events, or it is considered identical to other events which must be causally accounted for in universal form. This clash made quite attractive an attempt to combine these approaches.

The most famous endeavor was performed by Davidson. He tried to redescribe intentional action in causal terms by accounting for its reason as a cause of agent's deeds. However an overall agreement concerning the principles of the correct way to explain action has not been

achieved since then and philosophical disputes are blazing up here and there. Recently, new 'partisans' from different philosophical and sociological camps have delivered their attacks on causal models of explanations in social sciences more and more intensively. As McGuire summarized current situation:

> According to one very popular view, explanations of intentional actions – what are often called "reason-explanations"—necessarily describe causal relations between the reasons for which agents act and their actions. Those who hold this view—we may call them "causalists"— thus insist that reason-explanations are a type of causal explanation; those who oppose this view, anti-causalists, deny that reason-explanations describe causal relations between reasons and actions and find no other significant sense in which reason-explanations should be regarded as causal explanations (McGuire 2007, 460).

The critics of the causal project initiated by Davidson may be divided into three camps. Within the first one are analytic philosophers who try to revise the principles of mental causation. They claim that reasons as mental events cannot be adequately conceived as causes of action in Davidsonian terms. Amongst others, in this group are Tanney (1995), Hutto (1999), McGuire (2007), and Uebel (2012). Some of them (e.g. Uebel 2012) do not intend to abandon the idea that action must be explained in causal terms, however they state the necessity to re-work and/or complete causal model of 'reason-explanation'.

The second camp is presented by therapeutic readers of Wittgenstein who have inherited elucidatory pathos of Baker's and Hacker's works. In their articles (e.g. Hutchinson 2007; Read 2010; Hutchinson and Read 2008) philosophical therapists criticize the view that philosophy should and can provide any sort of explanation of action, including a causal one. In 2008 they have united with the representatives of the third camp, namely, ethnomethodologists from Manchester, who also beat up the idea that human conduct may be explained from the perspective of general laws of behavior, and jointly published a special issue of *Theory, Culture, and Society* journal (25 (2)). They criticized cognitivism (Watson and Coulter 2008; Coulter 2008), internalistic and mechanistic philosophical models of mind (Read 2008, Hamilton 2008), and, in general, externalistic and 'scientistic' approaches towards explaining organized social behavior (Sharrock and Dennis, 2008).

The alliance of these two camps resulted in publication of the book '*There is no such Thing as Social Science*' by Hutchinson, Read, and Sharrock (2008). As authors claim, the aim of the book is "not to give up science, but to give up (the wrong kind of) philosophy" (Ibid, 16). So far, through re-reading Winch's book '*The Idea of Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy*' they address philosophical issues of understanding and explaining social action. They condemn approaches to explanation of action, which have been established in methodology of social sciences, and claim that these approaches are based on wrong underlying philosophical

assumptions. One of this preconception is a craving for generality. Amongst others, they address a nomological model of causal explaining social action, which was criticized by Winch. In his turn, Winch addressed the project of social science, proposed by Weber:

> [Weber] does not realize that the whole notion of an 'event' carries a different sense <…>, implying as it does a context of humanly followed rules which cannot be combined with a context of causal laws <…> without creating logical difficulties. Weber thus fails in his attempt to infer that the kind of 'law', which the sociologist may formulate, to account for the behaviour of human beings is *logically* no different from a 'law' in natural science. (Winch, 1958, 117).

Winch distinguishes explicitly methodology of explanation established in natural sciences and procedures a social scientist adopts to account for action. From Winch's point of view, the task of natural scientists is to causally connect observed events of social life basing on general (statistical) laws, whereas social scientists must be preoccupied with understanding the meaning of action (Weber's *Verstehen*) and abandon the causal models of general explanation. So far, under fire is the model of nomological causal explanation of action, which from Winch's point of view must be logically different from the model a social scientist applies to understand action.

In principle, the opposition between general causal explanation and understanding, which Winch and thereafter Hutchinson, Read, and Sharrock are pointing to, is symptomatic for the philosophy of action. Its roots can be traced back to the 1920th when positivistically oriented philosophers began to work out the issues concerning human action. Initially, the representatives of Vienna circle made themselves to develop a kind of scientifically based philosophy. So far they set off themselves against idealism and *Geistwissenschaften*, because the latter were considered anti-scientific. Hempel explicates the difference between natural sciences and cultural sciences implied by Vienna circle philosophers:

> [O]bservation in the natural sciences is contrasted, by this school of thought [Vienna circle], with procedures requiring empathy and insight in the cultural disciplines; and explanation by causes, presumed to be characteristic of the natural sciences, is contrasted with a supposedly quite different procedure in the cultural sciences, namely, the understanding of human actions and of social and historical changes in terms of immaterial reasons or similar 'meaningful' connections (Hempel, 2001, 255).

Thus, the goal of logical positivists was to develop the model of general causal explanation of action, which might be closely associated with the methodological standards of the natural sciences. Precisely this goal was accepted and developed by Hempel in his schema of nomological explanation of rational action, which has become a sort of paradigmatic exemplar for general causal models in social sciences.

Taking in consideration outlined clash between causal models of explanation and projects of meaning comprehension, I would like to answer quite a simple question here. Can we causally explain action saving its intentional and motivated character at all? In other words, is a causal theory of action, which does not reduce event of action to other 'natural' events, possible?

One can ask, why we need trying to conjoin these two perspectives at all. To answer this question I will attempt to reestablish *sine qua non* of including both causal explanation and meaning understanding into sociological comprehension of action by addressing to the early episode in the history of sociology, namely, Max Weber's position in German *Methodenstreit*. Then I critically examine Davidson's effort to combine positivistic and intentionalistic perspectives. I demonstrate its weak points, which spring from his assumption that reasons are events that causally bring about actions. Finally, I propose a theory of social events as substitution for the model of singular causal explanation. In short, the aim of the current article is *to outline new philosophical grounds for social science dealing with both meaningful character of action and its factual quality of its consequences.*

Social science with-out the dichotomy of Erklären and Verstehen

Philosophical controversy between adherents of general causal models of explanation in social sciences and supporters of what I called intentionalistic camp resembles and, in fact, inherits a lot of points from an earlier philosophical dispute in Germany, namely *Methodenstreit* (see, for instance, Feest 2010). While representatives of German Historical School stated that a historical event must be conceived through *Verstehen* perspective, the Austrian School of Economics, led by Carl Menger, insisted that any action may be explained through bringing under general scientific laws and, therefore, an appropriate method for historical study is *Erklären*. In a sense the opposition between *Erklären* and *Verstehen* defined the separation of sciences on *Kulturwissenschaften* and *Naturwissenschaften* (Phillips 2010).

The latter division was reflected and found its philosophical grounds in neo-Kantian tradition, especially in works of Henrich Rickert. He introduced an epistemological criterion of demarcation between natural sciences and cultural or historical sciences. Rickert's distinction issues from an axiological point: "Natural science and historical science are differentiated on the basis of two irreducibly different theoretical values that require corresponding difference in concept formation" (Oakes 1988, 71). Thus, different epistemological values define contrastive theoretical interests of *Kulterwissenschaften* and *Naturwissenschaften* and they flourished into methodologically divergent procedures of concept formation. If the concepts of *Kulterwissenschaften* are intended to constitute historical individuality of a phenomenon, the

Naturwissenschaften conceive phenomena in terms of regular nomological laws. So far the two sets of cognitive values constitute principally different domains of reality, i.e. culture and nature:

> Culture is the domain of meaning that is defined by reference to general values. Nature is constituted independently of values. Because nature is the domain of meaningless, any natural phenomenon can be exhaustively accounted for in terms of the causal condition of its occurrence. Because natural phenomenon merely exists and meaning cannot be ascribed to them, they are not possible objects of understanding. As a result, our cognitive interest in nature can be satisfied by explanation. This does not hold true for our cognitive interest in persons, their actions, and artifacts. The meaning of human life, which is the only possible object of our interest in understanding, cannot be reduced to the real or existential properties of life (Ibid, 97).

Rickert strictly distinguishes two domains of epistemological significance: the first one values historical understanding of an individual phenomenon, the second one puts relevance on causal explanation of general tendencies. *Cognitive interest of a science defines a particular domain of reality, which demands a unique method of its comprehension*, that is, either *Erklären* (for the nature) or *Verstehen* (for cultural sciences and social history). As far as these methods are strictly associated with epistemological values (which, in turn, constitute a particular reality, namely, natural or historical (cultural)) *they cannot be meshed one with another*. In other words, from Rickert's point of view, *one cannot simultaneously causally explain a phenomenon and comprehend its historical or individual meaning, because any phenomenon can be either cultural or natural.*

In this context the project of logical positivism seems to strip *Kulturwissenschaften's* idea of *Verstehen* of any cognitive relevance. For instance, Hempel (1942) states that although understanding can serve as a sort of supplementary procedure in history (say, for advancing a general hypothesis), it does not give any significant cognitive outcome for the scientific knowledge by its own. Theodor Abel formulates the similar claim for social sciences:

> These limitations virtually preclude the use of the operation of *Verstehen* as a scientific tool of analysis. Still there is one positive function, which the operation can perform, in scientific investigations: It can serve as an aid in preliminary explorations of a subject. Furthermore, the operation can be particularly helpful in setting up hypotheses, even though it cannot be used to test them (Abel 1948, 217).

On the other hand, it is not arbitrary that critics of positivism attacked general models of causation. They did not see any point in them either, because such models do not satisfy their

epistemological values and cognitive interest in historical or cultural singularity of a phenomenon[1].

If we accept Rickert's dichotomy of scientific methodology, which is grounded in divergence of axiological positions and cognitive interests, theoretical disputes between positivistically oriented philosophers and their opponents may be seen as a war of different epistemological values, theoretical interests, cognitive aims, and methodologies. Logical positivism proclaiming the project of general causal explanation of action defines human conduct as a natural phenomenon. This assumption grounds the positivistic attack on *Geist-* and *Kulturwissenschaften*, which deprives the procedure of meaning understanding any scientific significance. On the other hand, 'anti-causalists' from an opposite side recognize the sphere of human actions as a meaningful realm, irreducible to a set of natural phenomena. Therefore, they suggest another methodology for its investigation.

One can perceive, so far, the dispute between the general causal model and the model of understanding action as if it were merely another example of a clash between different epistemological projects. Such a position has its outcomes. *Amongst others, it implies that action can be either causally explained or meaningfully understood and these methods have not to be meshed under any condition.*

Two ways from this starting point are possible. From 'theoretical' perspective, either *Erklären* or *Verstehen* model should be chosen (and, ideally, be established as a legitimate mode for the study of action). From 'meta-theoretical' point of view, these positions are competing epistemological projects, and any of them is a permissible perspective until they are grounded in a relevant cognitive interest and until they are not meshed up.

However, initially, *the sociological project of conceiving action was not fitted* in *Erklären* and *Verstehen* dichotomy. In other words, the methodology of social science of action was reducible neither to *Kulturwissenschaften*, nor to *Naturwissenschaften* methodology. The paradoxicality of sociology in terms of *Methodenstreit* is seen from Max Weber's definition of its objectives: "Sociology <…> is a science concerning itself with the interpretative understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences" (Weber 1968, 4). By defining action (social action) as a thing of a preliminary sociological concern, Weber claims that sociology must both causally explain and interpretatively understand it. Weber was acquainted with Rickert's dichotomy of *Kulturwissenschaften* and *Naturwussenschaften* and, moreover, he shared it for some time with neo-Kantians. For instance, he defined history in his early essay "'Objectivity' in Social Science" as a cultural science aimed at "understanding of the

[1] The most prominent line of modern critique of the positivistic models of explanation inherits Peter Winch's pathos initially formulated in his *The idea of a social science* (1958).

characteristic uniqueness of the reality in which we move" (Weber 1949,72). So far, the more significant is his intentional emphasis on both causal and interpretative aims of sociology. Moreover, Weber pronounces that action must be understood adequately from both interpretative and causal perspective (Weber 1968, 11). Sociology, so far, as a science about action has to come to a 'correct causal interpretation' of action (Ibid, 12).

Weber's insistence upon the necessity to grasp both meaning of action and its causes is rooted in his project of sociology and his understanding of its aims. As Käsler puts it, "[i]n Weber's last phase, in his work on the first part of Economy and Society, we can see his efforts to found a universal historical sociology with the aid of ideal-typical concepts which would be valid across time" (Käsler 1979, 182—183). Hence the point is that sociology for Weber is a science oriented towards uncovering uniformities dealing with meaningful realm of human behavior. He preserves both *Verstehen* and *Erklären* perspectives for the sake of building up a science which deals with meaningful events of social life and, at the same time, its claims possess general validity across time.

> Weber defines his interpretative sociology as an empirical sociology of the understanding the meaning (*Sinn-Verstehen*). Its methodological procedure cannot be separated from a causal analytical procedure. Moreover Weber makes explicit an internal connection between the two heuristic strategies. It is precisely this relationship, which, according to Weber, establishes the character of sociology as a discipline orientated towards reality. (Ibid, 176).

Note, that it is not cultural or natural realm of reality, which sociology deals with. It is a reality of human conduct, more precisely, social action, which Weber's social science is oriented to. In other words, the realm of social action lies somewhere outside the neo-Kantian dichotomy of culture and nature. One, may be, would like to say that it is placed somewhere in-between them, however, Weber does not make any explicit statement which would allow to prove this assumption.

An important rationale, which may be considered to explain Weber's motivation for going out from Rickert's model of sciences, is the proximity of his theory of action to the issues legal theory faces with. Weber rests upon von Kries's understanding of the questions, which the procedure of imputation the guilt encounters: "Factual or causal imputation concerns the question whether someone has caused a certain event, and legal or normative imputation deals with the further problem of whether a person having caused an event can be held responsible for it in the light of some legal norm" (Heidelberger 2010, 243). In other words, *the question of legal theory is twofold*. First, one has to determine whether an agent indeed intended and desired to make the action considered. This procedure includes imputation of intentions and motives. Secondly, the issue of causal consequences of the action is raised. It is necessary to clarify,

which factual outcomes the action has called forth. Thereby, understood in these terms, Weber's 'adequate causal interpretation of action' concerns two 'realms': the realm of events of action in the 'world of things' and realm of intentions, motives and agent's desires and beliefs.

The requirement of causal interpretation leads to significant theoretical implications. Action is seen as a factual occurrence in the 'world of things', and its causal links with other events can be traced back and forth. However action is differentiated from the types of things *Naturwissenschaften* deal with – it is a meaningful occurrence that has motivational character and presupposes agency. This 'twofoldness' of action enables a theorist to pose a question about agent's responsibility, because *the agent has not just meant and intended to do something, (s)he has made the action under question in the world of causal links and, therefore, the action had causal consequences*. Action may be said, so far, to be a meaningful factual occurrence. This orientation of Weber's project of social science to the problems of responsibility and guilt imputation, picked up from a legal theory, made his sociology *a factual science dealing with meaningful deeds*. Methodologically, it is oriented neither solely to interpretation nor to causal explanation but *insists on combining these two perspectives*.

Ironically, exactly this effort to adopt both causal and interpretative approaches made a reception of Weber's methodology quite a complicated task for further researchers. Weber's endeavor took him out from neo-Kantian philosophy, and he did not make himself to clarify his new philosophical assumptions supporting his sociological position. Perhaps, this was the thing that forced an emergence of rather well-spread opinion that Weber's methodology of social sciences is full of inconsistences and ambiguities.

> The 'ambiguities' and 'tensions' in Weber's work have often been noted; and, despite the richness and scope of both Weber's methodological and his substantive writings, no coherent 'Weberian school' has developed. Debates over the issues with which Weber grappled, and the answers he attempted to provide, still persist. (Fulbrook 1978, 71).

To reduce the complexity of Weber's writings, scholars usually take him either as a 'positivistic' sociologist, appealing primarily to a general causal explanation based on nomological and/or statistical laws (e.g. Abel 1948; Lazarsfeld, Obershall 1965; Fulbrook 1978; Wagner, Zipprian 1986; Rex 1991; Heidelberger 2010, etc.), or as the founder of 'interpretative sociology' who intended to understand the meaning of action (Hall 1981; Turner 1983; Muse 1981; Zaret 1980 etc.). It appears that social science has not yet found philosophical and methodological resources to realize the project of 'causal understanding' of action up to the moment.

Nevertheless it seems to be quite an attractive goal to return into a sociology of action its original orientation towards both factual character of action (that is, to say that action occurs in the world of causal consequences) and its intentional dimension (in other words, to take it as motivated occurrence). However, the models of general causal explanation and approaches oriented towards discovering the meaning of singular action spring from different epistemological orientations. The formers desire to explain action in general terms, while the latters claim that meaningful action demands singular explanation.

The common feature of the approaches is that both positivists and intentionalists acknowledge that meaning of action cannot be grasped *in general causal terms*. The difference is that positivists do not share cognitive interest in meaning understanding with intentionalists, while intentionalists insist on a unique motivated character of action. Perhaps, because of this the most promising endeavor to provide a causal explanation of actions, saving its meaningful and intentional character, was the model of singular causality. Davidson's conception of singular causality was seen for a considerable period of time as allowing to develop causal explanations of action, taking in consideration intentionality, motivation, and reasons of agent. The scheme project of causal explanation of intentional action was based on an endeavor to integrate the language of motives, reasons and attitudes into the model of singular causality.

Below I critically examine resources of Davidson's singular causal model and discover its shortcomings. I demonstrate that the latter create the obstacles for sociological integration of both causal and meaning perspectives.

Reason as a Singular Cause of Action

To be sure, Davidson was quite sensitive to the issues outlined above. He confessed that causal explanation of action couldn't leave aside its meaningful character. His works on methodology of causal explanation of actions, collected in the book 'Essays on Actions and Events' acquired such an extensive popularity, that they have defined the way of speaking about events in analytical philosophy for decades. For instance, at the very end of 1980-th LePore and Lower (1989) stated:

> During the heyday of neo-Wittgensteinian and Rylean philosophy of mind the era of little red books, it was said that propositional attitude explanations are not causal explanations and that beliefs, intendings, imaginings and the like are not even candidates to be causes <...> We have come a long way since then. The work of Davidson, Armstrong, Putnam and Fodor (amongst others) has reversed what was once orthodoxy and it is now widely agreed that propositional attitude attributions describe states and episodes which enter into causal relation (LePore, Lower 1989, 175)

One can add only that since then, so it appears, a new orthodoxy has been established. Analytical philosophers have radically changed their minds about how action should be explained. They abandoned the fashion of 'neo-Wittgensteinian small red books' (Davidson 1975) and became faithful 'causalists'. The decisive factor in ending up the discussion between 'neo-Wittgensteinains' (as LePore's and Lower call them) and 'causalists', assessed from an *a posteriori* perspective, is often said to be publication by Davidson of his essay '*Actions, Reasons, and Causes*' (Davidson 1963). "So persuasive was the article that its central thesis – that reason-explanations are a species of causal explanation – has been described as 'one of the few achievements of contemporary analytic philosophy'" (McGuire 2007, 460).

Davidson's ideas provided resources for dissolution of controversy between positivistic and interpretative theories of action. As we have seen, while the former endeavored to work out the principles of general causal explanation of action based on nomological laws, the latter undertook an effort to develop a methodology of interpretation of meaning, which was closely associated (somehow wrongly) by positivistically oriented thinkers with Dilthey's hermeneutics and empathic understanding. Davidson confessed the necessity to manifest meaningful and motivated character of action, on the one hand, and to embed action's comprehension in causal perspective, on the other. So far *his causalistic project may be seen as neither positivistic, nor interpretative.* It is based on the attempt to integrate agent's intentional states into causal model of explanation of action.

Though being quite sympathetic to Hempel's aim to build up a theory of causal explanation of action, Davidson critically revised his positivistic project of social science and acknowledged that actions were immensely particular kind of events. Their peculiarity is defined by the fact that one can ask, *why* the action was done:

> When we ask why someone acted as he did, we want to be provided with interpretation. His behaviour seems strange, alien outré, pointless, out of character, disconnected; or, perhaps we cannot even recognize an action in it. When we learn his reason, we have an interpretation, a new description of what he did, which fits it into familiar picture. The picture includes some of the agent's beliefs and attitudes; perhaps, also goals, ends, principles <…> [etc.]. To learn, through learning the reason, that the agent conceived his action as a lie, a repayment of a debt, an insult, the fulfillment of an avuncular obligation, or a knight's gambit is to grasp the point of the action in its setting of rules, practices, conventions and explanations (Davidson 1963, 10).

Davidson claims, so far, that to get the point of action is to grasp for what reason it was done. Otherwise, the action is underdetermined. In this sense, human action is quite different from other (natural) events. It cannot be adequately explained exclusively in terms of 'natural' causes: "Suppose someone was injured. We could redescribe this event 'in terms of cause' by saying he was burned" (ibid, 10). However, such a description, from Davidson's point of view, would not

imply an explanation of *action*, because it does not interpret event in terms of its reasons. More likely, it specifies the event as a sort of mere natural phenomenon, overlooking its intentional and reasonable character[2]. Thus to catch the peculiar character of action means to read off agent's beliefs and attitudes (i.e. reasons) "in the light of which the action is reasonable" (ibid, 9). In other words, adequate interpretation of action implies grasping its reasons. The procedure of interpretation Davidson calls rationalization.

Nevertheless, Davidson remains in 'causalist's' perspective as far as he states "rationalization is a species of causal explanation" (ibid, 3). In his model reason is a cause of action. However, he redefines the principles of causal explanation to make it feasible to interpret concrete action in terms of its reasons. This goal made Davidson to work out the theory of singular causality. He explicitly distinguishes his own approach from Hempel's positivistic model of causal explanation in social sciences, which is based on Mill's account of general causal explanation.

Mill's causal model implies that to explain event causally, one has to give an exhaustive account of the conditions, which have caused it. Moreover, adequate explication of causal conditions suggests that they will cause similar events whenever: "Take one of Mill's examples: some man, say, Smith, dies, and the cause of death is said to be that his foot slipped in climbing ladder. Mill would say we have not given the whole cause, since having a foot slip in climbing a ladder is not always followed by death" (Davidson 1967, 150). Consequently, this scheme necessitates a nomological law, which specifies the set of conditions and consequences they

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[2] Davidson's emphasis on reasonable character of action allows him to cope with plenty of ordinary events. His theory of action distinguishes between such day-to-day actions as excuses, accusations, apologizes, unintended consequences of action, etc., by referring to their reasons. In other words, one can discriminate between these different kinds of events through stating that they are brought about by divergent reasons.

It is required to take into consideration intentionality and motivational character of action and, simultaneously, be able to speak of its causes and consequences. For:

> Jones managed to apologize by saying 'I apologize'; but only because, under the circumstances, saying 'I apologize' was apologizing. Cedric intentionally burned the scrap of paper; this serves to excuse his burning a valuable document only because he did not know the scrap was the document and because his burning the scrap was (identical with) his burning the document (Davidson 1969, 139).

And more precisely about excuses:

> 'I didn't know it was loaded' belongs to one standard pattern of excuse. I do not deny that I pointed the gun and pulled the trigger, nor that I shot the victim. My ignorance explains how it happened that I pointed the gun and pulled the trigger intentionally, but did not shoot the victim intentionally. That the bullet pierced the victim was a consequence of my pointing the gun and pulling the trigger. (Davidson 1967, 94)

So far, it would be impossible to account for one's excuse if the consequences of his or her action were not considered, on the one hand (say, the consequences of pulling trigger was shooting the victim), and her or his motivation, on the other (shooting can be said not to be intentional if one is able to account for motives the agent had and meanings ascribed to the action). The point behind these examples is that a great deal of social deeds is possible only because one considers both their causal consequences and intentional character.

inevitably cause. General causal explanation presumes that description of antecedents and event they brought about is intelligible only in the context of a nomological law.

For causal explanation in social sciences Hempel elaborated his "schema 'R'":

> Now, information to the effect that agent *A* was in a situation of kind *C,* and that in such a situation the rational thing to do is *x,* affords grounds for believing that it would have been *rational for A to do x;* but not for believing that *A* did *in fact* do *x.* To justify this latter belief, we clearly need a further explanatory assumption, namely that—at least at the time in question—*A* was a *rational agent* and thus was *disposed* to do whatever was rational under the circumstances. But when this assumption is added, the answer to the question 'Why did *A* do x?' takes on the following form (Schema *R*):
>
> *A* was in a situation of type *C*
>
> *A* was a rational agent
>
> In a situation of type *C* any rational agent will do *x*
>
> Therefore *A* did *x.* (Hempel 1961, 317).

Discussing Hempel's model of general causal explanation of a rational action, Davidson acknowledges, "This approach no doubt receives support from the idea that causal laws are universal conditionals, and singular statements ought to be instances of them" (Davidson 1967, 151). However, precisely the assumption that explanation of rational action has to be generally valid (i.e. appropriate for any typical situation) and, therefore, based on empirically established general laws devalues any singular causal interpretation of action.

It implies that the reason an agent had to perform the action in any particular situation does not have any cognitive significance. A scientist who studies social behavior must be preoccupied with testing hypotheses concerning human conduct in general to establish nomological laws of rational behavior. It undermines Davidson's idea of action as *the event, which might be asked about why it has been done*. To answer the 'Why?' question one should refer neither to the action, nor to its reasons, but to *a general law* of rational behavior considering the event under question as an instance of it. In other words, to answer why the action was done, one has to point to a general explanatory law leaving aside agent's reasons bringing about this singular event. Intentional character of a singular contextualized action is being lost.

To preserve a capacity to account for a singular action as a reasonable and intentional occurrence, Davidson introduces the idea of singular causality. He states, that one does not have to specify a complete set of antecedents, which have brought about the event under consideration, to explain it causally:

> 'The cause of this match's lightening is that it was struck. – Yes, but that was only *part* of cause; it had to be a dry match, there had to be adequate oxygen in the atmosphere, it had to be struck enough, etc.' We ought now to appreciate that the 'Yes, but' comment does not have the force we thought. It cannot be that the

> striking of this match was only part of the cause, for this match was in fact dry, in adequate oxygen, and the striking was hard enough (Davidson 1967, 156).

An adequate specification of a cause does not presuppose outlining the whole set of causal conditions which must be satisfied. This claim is rooted in a radical modification of the principles of causal explanation. Davidson underlines, that one has to grasp just the causes of singular event – *the* event that has been occurred – instead of explaining why this event had to happen in a general case. That is, causal explanation of action must not be preoccupied with universal laws. Scheme of singular causality alters thereby the claim of positivistically oriented scientists (e.g. Hempel) who argue that causal explanation has to deal rather with typical characteristics of events than with events themselves (Hempel 1942). Therefore, general nomological laws do not play a chief role in causal explanations from Davidson's point of view: "This explanation [based on Hempel's scheme of rational action implies something about <…> 'all mankind'; but there is a shorter and less informative explanation available <…> The laws that are implicit in reason explanation seem to me to concern only individuals – they are generalizations embedded in attribution of attitudes, beliefs, and traits" (Davidson 1976, 274).

Causal interpretation of action (implying knowledge of agent's reasons), as well as attribution of motivation and beliefs to an agent does not imply nomological knowledge of *what all individuals will universally do* in such a situation; there is no need to specify an exhaustive set of causal conditions bringing about the event of action, concerning 'all mankind'. What one really needs to *causally interpret* action is to specify its singular cause, that is, its reason. Though singular causal explanations, Davidson admits, possess less explanatory power, they are nevertheless causal explanations, and the only explanations available for accounting for actions.

In short, the point of the model of singular causality is the fact that it allows to explain actions as specific type of events. These events are not explained in general terms. To provide a causal explanation of the event under consideration is to account for agent's desires and beliefs which made him or her to act in a definite way (see Davidson 1963; Mele 2003). Epistemological point of Davidson's model is that singular causal explanation provides a scholar with enough information, enabling him or her to develop a causal story about any definite event of action. Underlying ontological assumption of the scheme is that event of action is a peculiar event, which has a specific causes. In short, actions are caused by mental events, namely, reasons.

The model of singular causality is based on several theoretical moves. First of all, Davidson distinguished actions as a specific sort of events which are different from other events, because one can ask what reason the action was performed for. This question is senseless for 'purely natural' events. Then he granted reasons causal power and claimed that specification of reason is a causal interpretation of action. Afterwards, he developed the model of singular causation. It

requires treating the event under question as a singular occurrence (not as an instance of a general case). The model of singular causation implies that a cause of event is not a set of antecedent conditions, but another singular event that has happened in these peculiar circumstances. Finally, this reasoning made Davidson to assume that reasons, as far as they are causes of actions, are also singular events (Davidson 1963, 5—6; 9—11). As a result, Davidson resolved in his own manner the problem of factual character of meaningful events. He saved for actions their motivated and intentional character, on the one hand, and built them into causal chains of factual events, on the other. So far, action may be described as an agent's intended deed, which had a cause (agent's reason, which makes it meaningful event) and stipulated consequences.

Current 'causalist's orthodoxy' is primarily based on Davidson's account of rational action and on his project of causal explanation of action in terms of its reasons conceived as mental *events*. However precisely this position has led to an emergence of a great deal of ambiguities and inconsistencies in this model. They are pointed to by 'anti-causalists' from the analytical camp. By developing a further critique of Davidson model, I will demonstrate that conceiving reasons as events induces skepticism about explanation of actions.

Reasons as events

Davidson's conception of singular causality allows to step out from positivistic and interpretativistic clash. It enables to build up a model of causation in social sciences, which will not be a nomological one and which will not presuppose reference to general and/or statistical laws. Singular causation permits to account for the meaning of a concrete event of action (i.e. to answer the question why this action was done) leaving aside the requirement to know universal principles of mental causation. This means that correct causal interpretation of action consists in grasping agent's reason, which is unique for a situation and cannot be derived from nomological laws.

As it appears to me, Davidson's idea of singularity cannot be reduced to the problem that a theorist of action simply does not possess enough understanding of laws, which would allow to explain human conduct [3]. Contrarily, *this contention presupposes logical difference in methodologies of social and natural sciences*. Both 'social events' and 'natural events', thus, may be explained causally, however divergent principles of causal explanation are adopted within these sciences.

By stressing the peculiarity of causal model in behavioral sciences, Davidson, may be unconsciously, underlines uniqueness and contextual character of the event of action. Causal

[3] This point is made quite often by interpreters of Davidson's theory of action (see, for instance, Uebel, 2012)

explanation of action must take into account why *the* action was performed, in other words, consider agent's ends and beliefs, his or her reasons for acting here and now. This statement may satisfy some followers of the 'interpretative' approach in social sciences.

However, it has an important methodological fallacy, indicated by analytical critics of singular causation model: "The epistemological problem is the following: if our explanatory practice is not grounded on our appreciation, however dim, of the underlying nomological regularities, what justifies our claims to discern the cause of the action of another?" (Uebel 2012, 34—35). Uebel sees the issue as twofold: "we need justification for the claim that the connection of the attributed set of propositional attitudes with the given behavior understood as action is indeed a causal connection" (ibid, 35) and "we need justification for the claim that the attributed set of propositional attitudes correctly identifies the cause of the action" (ibid, 36).

These two propositions are interconnected and spring from the problem of underdeterminacy of reason-explanations:

> Identical behaviors can be made sense of by numerous attributions of different sets of propositional attributes, even while describing it, in a narrow sense, as the same action. Yet no justification has been given why the ascription of one set of attitudes should be preferred over another (Ibid, 36).

The issue of bringing identical behaviors under different sets of propositional attitudes corresponds to Wittgenstein's argument concerning underdeterminacy of behavior in terms of rules:

> This was our paradox: no course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if any action can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict there (Wittgenstein 1953, § 201).

Wittgenstein's note opens up two facets of the issue. The first one is, indeed, epistemological. It refers to our cognitive disability to bring a course of conduct exhaustively under a definite rule or some law, say, causal law connecting agent's reasons with her course of action. As Wittgenstein and, later, Winch pointed out, this facet of the problem is closely linked with the issue of sameness of different actions (Wittgenstein 1953, §§ 215-216, Winch 1958, 26-28). Uebel's claim, thereby, concerns cognitive principles of attributing reasons to action. It copes with the problem of rule-guided behavior (say, with the rule of choosing among different possible reasons) and its resolution deserves "justification for the claim that the connection of the attributed set of propositional attitudes with the given behavior" is correct.

Epistemological dimension of the issue does not challenge *the fact that there are* (or may be) reasons of action, which causally determine a course of conduct in accord with a rule. One does

not simply know what these reasons are and what the sort of their connection with actual behavior is. Thus a model of singular causation may be seen from the perspective of epistemological critique as though being a good one, but incomplete. Therefore, the problem of underdeterminacy may be resolved by just repairing the model through introducing new variables in it. This is what Uebel, in fact, further proposes by introducing narratives in his scheme.

However, Wittgenstein's argument may be radicalized. It gives a way for a skeptical contention to Davidson's model of causal interpretation. The latter finds its roots in Saul Kripke's interpretation of underdeterminacy problem. Kripke challenges the very possibility of a person to be confident with what (s)he meant by doing an action (see Kripke 1982, 8—21). One may be made to answer that agent's knowledge of what (s)he has done is irrelevant to the problem of correct identification of the reason. Finally, a social scientist may possess more secure and valid methods to grasp the reason, which the action was made for (for instance, the methods of narrative analysis).

However, this point does not answer Kripke's question. He claims, that the issue is not epistemological, i.e. it is not reducible to the problem of acquiring correct knowledge of what one has meant. The point is that "nothing in my mental history of past behavior – not what even an omniscient God would know – could establish" what I meant and thus there is no such thing as one's meaning something (ibid, 21). Kripke's argument is settled down in Wittgenstein's assertion that there does not exist something mental, intentional, and internal what would determine, influence, or guide our behavior causally (see Wittgenstein 1953, §§ 175-180, 188-196). The claim is that the question what one's inclination, reasons, or motivation were is not a causal question. The question how one managed to act in accord with a rule is the issue of justification (§217). Kripke disagrees with the very idea that there is a 'thing' in an agent's mind, which could causally determine her course of conduct and/or her obeying a rule. This made him to conclude that the fact that an agent meant something (or intended to act in a particular way, or made action for a reason) cannot be intelligibly established. In other words, the question, what made an agent to perform this action (and not another one), cannot be answered by 'seeing into' agent and looking for a reason. Reasons are not simply unknown to us (epistemological aspect of underdeterminacy of singular causal explanation); they hardly exist. This is how Kripke's skeptical paradox is stated.

Skeptical claim undermines ontological grounds of singular causation model. Note, that for that model events are physically existent *things*: "I propose to legitimize our intuition that events are true particulars by recognizing explicit reference to them, or quantification over them, in much of our ordinary talk" (Davidson 1969, 140). Events constitute 'a fundamental ontological

category'. Hence, by stressing the fact that reasons are events, Davidson set out reasons as ontologically existent 'things'. In other words, reasons are events (things), which causally precede action. Thus, the second facet of the problem of underdeterminacy of action is ontological: skeptical argument subverts the proposition that reasons are events that factually exist.

The next point here is that both epistemological and ontological (skeptical) aspects of the underdeterminacy problem are grounded in the problem of impossibility of observation. Epistemological argument issues from a reflection that though no one can definitely know what the reason for performing action was, it, perhaps, exists and causes agent's course of conduct. Skeptical contention is that one cannot observe, grasp or get his or her previous intentional states, neither so can do a social scientist or even an 'omniscient God'. Skeptical argument therefore is based on radical doubt that reasons, that are said to be causes of actions, ontologically exist. A common foundation of these facets is nicely formulated by Uebel: we do not have any observational access to reasons:

> In cases where it may help, like spillings of ink and bendings of trees in the wind, we have direct observational access that allows us to rule out alternative explanations. In the case of reason explanations, however, the elimination of contrasting alternatives remains utterly unsupported on purely observational grounds (Uebel 2012, 37).

What does this point imply? The fact that one cannot observe reasons is not confined by the circumstance that it is impossible to create an intelligible explanation why the action was performed. *The point is that there is an infinite number of such possible explanations and we have no criteria to choose the correct one among them.* Any reasoning aimed at proving the correctness of an explanation-story is impossible. Thereby, the argument beats *the possibility of intelligible communication about events of action*. If we imply reasons as causes of actions, we cannot intelligibly communicate about actions because we do not possess any rules of argumentation – no argument is well-founded in this game.

From this point one can derive either less (epistemological) or more (skeptical or ontological) radical conclusion. Either reasons are simply unknown to us, or they do not exist accordingly. However, a consistent theory of causal explanation of action has to cope with both facets of the problem. The fact is that when we introduce the procedure of observation and the figure of an observer, the model of singular causation becomes highly problematic[4].

[4] Note, that as in Kripke's example, an observer should not be necessarily another person. Even an agent herself may face with obstacles trying to identify the 'correct' reason. This radicalization of epistemological thesis is achieved through questioning ontology of agent's intentional states: there are no such things as agent's meaning something, his or her ends and attitudes for performing action, intendings and so on.

I contend that to work out a consistent theory of causal explanation of action one has to translate the problem of action explanation from purely analytical into sociological terms. Building up his model of general causation, Hempel noted that "whatever their practical promise, these models contribute, I think, to the analytic clarification of the concept of rational action" (Hempel 1961, 315). It appears that Davidson's model of singular causation serves primarily analytical goals too. That is why it faces methodological questions launched by impossibility to observe agent's intentional states. I claim that the model of action explanation cannot be seen anymore as serving only analytical aims. It becomes a question of empirical science.

Event and observation

So far, we have arrived to a conclusion that causal explanation of action in terms of its reasons leads to epistemological and ontological problems grounded in the issue of observation. To be short, the problem is exactly that an observer cannot identify reason as event among other observable events. This contributes to the impossibility of intelligible communication about events of action. To move some further we need to consider a procedure of observation and its connection to grasping events.

If one faces with contention that reasons cannot be seen as events because they are not observed, it means that one had already implied that events are linked with procedures of their observation. My first claim therefore is that *event may be only what is observable*. Otherwise a social scientist falls into considerable contradictions and encounters epistemological and skeptical paradoxes.

This claim undermines a whole conception of singular event. Event cannot be consistently considered as a singular 'thing'. It is always connected with the procedure of observation, or "elementary event cannot be conceived as singular <…> hence for the sake of consistency of judgments about events one has to include in a scheme several events, including the event of observation, from the very beginning" (Filippov 2004, 23). In other words, any event is theoretically connected with another event, the event of observation. Thus:

> A recognition of event as an event is, in turn, also an event, an event of observing. Those who decide (make deliberated theoretical decisions) or simply register an occurrence (taking it for granted as such) as an event are observers. (Filippov 2010, Ms).

This interconnection of any event with the event of its observation eliminates a possibility of skeptical or epistemological paradoxes. A skeptic cannot intelligibly ask anymore whether the event under question has been observed or has occurred. Any event is observed, because

procedure of observation (event of observation) is included in its logical construction; any event occurs, because an observer registers it as what has happened.

Thereby, introduction of analytical pair 'event-of-observation' – 'event-observed', suggested by Filippov, defines the possibility of intelligible communication about events – and events of action as well. Foremost, an event is observable. As the skeptical paradox implies, it is impossible to communicate unambiguously about unobserved things, because one cannot bring grounds under her or his claim what the reason of agent was and, therefore, the cause of action remains underdetermined. However, what are the conditions, which define theoretical possibility of communication?

Firstly, communication deserves the difference in perspectives of observation of one 'thing', i.e. *event must be observed from different perspectives*. If we theoretically assumed two different observers, who observed event from similar perspectives, we must say that they would have two equivalent pictures of the event, therefore, information they possessed about event would be absolutely identical and, therefore, they would not have a subject to communicate about.

But this is just a part of story. Secondly, the perspectives of observation must be specifiable. Being observed from divergent perspectives, event does not appear to observers in the same light. In other words, the second assumption is that *different observers always point to different aspects of the same event*. It leads to the fact that descriptions (explanations) of the same event, they provide, are always contrasting, unlike, and sometimes may be conflicting. But what makes a particular aspect-seeing, specified in description of event made by an observer, an appropriate claim in communication about events?

Wittgenstein provides a useful intuition in his discussion of a changing-aspect, that intelligibility of the claim, that one sees something in a particular way, has nothing to do with one's perception, experience and so on. In other words, we are not interested in what it is *for someone* 'to see something as…'. The issue comes to be what it means *for us to understand her or him as seeing* this or that aspect. And we understand someone seeing event in a particular light, seeing a peculiar aspect of the event if we recognize his or her descriptions, claims or explanations as appropriate ones in our communication.

However, what makes one's claims appropriate? Consider a following example:

> Here is a game played by children: they say that a chest, for example, is a house; and thereupon it is interpreted as a house in every detail. A piece of fancy is worked into it. And does the child now see chest as house? 'He quite forgets that it is a chest; for him it actually is a house'. (There are definite tokens of this). Then would it not also be correct to say he sees it as a house? *And if you knew how to play this game, and, given, a particular situation, you exclaimed with special expression 'Now it's a house!' – you would be giving expression of the dawning of an aspect* (Wittgenstein 1956, 176, *italics added*)

The dawning of an aspect, Wittgenstein speaks about, *is not caused by changing in our experience of perceiving a chest*. We, as observers observing child's play with the chest, have seen the chest *as if* we were the child who at the moment plays with it. So far, the capacity of an observer to understand and make sense of child's claim that a chest is a house is determined by observer's ability to take up child's perspective. It implies that the observer distinguishes his or her own perspective from the child's perspective of dealing with chest. In short, the observer could make sense of child's claim that the chest is a house because (s)he could identify child's perspective of observation and see the chest from it.

Generally speaking, communication comes always about different aspects of the same observed event. To make it intelligible, an observer has to be able to differentiate between his or her own perspective and the other perspectives of observation, allowing to discern other aspects of the event communicated. Therefore, we have to introduce conditions of differentiating perspectives of observers. Why do they observe events from different points of view and see divergent aspects of the same action? They may be said to have divergent biographies, social backgrounds, etc., but *prima facie* they are different observers in time and space[5]. "Social events are not only events in time; they imply place, they need space where they do happen" (Filippov 2010, Ms).

Communication is possible and intelligible as far as observers identify events from different spatial and temporal perspectives, they can discriminate their own place in space and time, the place of the event they observed, and the place of different observers (Filippov 2004, 25). Consequently, communication is possible because observers can trace back the roots of different perspectives of observation. Any claim made by an observer about event may be made sense of by referring to observer's perspective of observation, including the place of the event of observation and its relation to the place of event. In other words, any aspect-seeing, which is revealed in communication about the event of action, is made sense of because any observer can grasp it by identifying the perspective and, primarily, spatio-temporal perspective, of another observer, that is, of the aspect's observation. Observation is in the first place the process, which happens in space and time.

However what does this decision imply for the claim that reasons are mental events that cause actions? As far as *events are observed occurrences* and *observation presupposes identification of events in space and time,* reasons are not events. They do not occur in space, because *one cannot identify the place from which mental events are observable*. More accurately, the perspectives of their observation cannot be intelligibly specified, because, amongst others, *any perspective*

[5] This also means that one observer can observe event from different perspective by changing his or her positions in space. Spatial distinction is in a sense the most fundamental element of differentiation of observers' perspectives, however this issue is left behind the scopes of the work.

presupposes explicit differentiation between place of the event of observation and the event observed. This fact introduces the ambiguities in specification of the perspective of grasping a particular aspect (such and such reason) of the event. Consequently, the whole process of aspect-seeing is broken up.

This point supports skeptical thesis. There are no mental events or, at least, one cannot make sense of them, because if they even existed the perspectives of their observation would not be identifiable and, therefore, they could not be intelligibly communicated about. So far, if one wants to speak about causes of event of action, (s)he must not consider reasons or any other 'mental event' as event which causally precedes the action. What are causes of events of actions then? The answer is quite simple: there cannot be other causes than observable events. These events occur in space and time, because an observer has to differentiate clearly between his or her own perspective, including the place in space and time, perspective of other observers and the place where event happens.

Event of action, thereby, is called forth by other observable events. Any event can be specified as cause of action. Bringing forward new causal claim is similar to seeing the event of action in a new light, noticing its new aspect. However, any aspect seeing, any causal claim must be made sense of. So far, formally, the main condition of a correct specification of the cause is that the causal claim made by an observer must be intelligible in context of the perspective of observation.

Meaning, Intention, and Cause as Aspects of the same Event

The initial aim of this text was to develop a model, which would allow to causally explain action and to account for its meaning simultaneously. Above the thesis that event of action is not caused by agent's intentional states, beliefs and desires was introduced and elaborated. The cause of action is other observable spatio-temporal event.

However, it may seem as if by stating this position we totally exclude the possibility to conceive action as a free deed of an agent, which stands out from other 'natural' events and which as brought about by her or his will. This issue is closely connected with that one raised by Davidson, namely, the question if action can be differentiated from other events at all. Note, that from the point of view of Davidson's theory of singular causality, action differs from 'natural' events because one can say, for what reason it was performed. Reason is included in the scheme by granting it a causal force. However, if we refute the position that reasons are events that may cause actions, how can one answer the "Why' question, i.e. account for intentional and meaningful character of human action? Actions are causally explained by being causally connected to other events, which occur in space and time. However, reasons, beliefs, desires,

motivation, intention and so on are not events. So far, the question is where intentionality and meaning lie in this conception? Does not this position lead us back to positivistic conception of causality or, may be, to behavioristic types of explanations?

These questions find their grounds in the idea that meaning, intention or reason is something that happens before action. Moreover, one can continue that intending, meaning, desiring or having a reason is something what agent *does* (i.e. they are an agent's deed) separately from acting. As, for instance, Giddens puts it, "[t]his concept [intentionality] I define as characterizing an act which its perpetrator knows, or believes, will have a particular quality or outcome and where such knowledge is utilized by the author of the act to achieve this quality or outcome" (Giddens 1984, 10). Knowing or believing from this standpoint is an additional characteristic of an action. These 'things' become a kind of extra features, peculiar for any meaningful or intentional action. In other words, they are a kind of act on its own, maybe mental events, that precede action itself.

However it is misleading to look for such an additional element of intentionality, meaningfulness or reasonableness of action. For instance, Elizabeth Anscombe provides us with instructive demonstration of why there is no reason to look for any feature, attendant to the action, which makes it intentional (or we may add meaningful):

> That an action is not called 'intentional' in virtue of any extra feature which exist when it is performed, is clear from the following: Let us suppose that there is such feature, and let us call it '*I*'. Now the intentional character of the action cannot be asserted without giving the description under which it is intentional, since the same action can be intentional under one description and unintentional under another. It is however something actually done that is intentional if there is an intentional action at all. A man no doubt contracts certain muscles in picking up a hammer; but it would generally be false to call his contraction of muscles the intentional act that he performed. This does not mean that his contraction of muscles was unintentional. Let us call it 'preintentional'. Are we to say that *I*, which is supposed to be the feature in virtue of which what he does is an intentional action, is something which accompanies a preintentional action, or movement of his body? If so, then the preintentional movement *+I* guarantees that an intentional action is performed (Anscombe 1957, 28)

Anscombe argues further, that if this is actually the case, then '*I'* should accompany any intentional action and to have an effect on agent's actual behavior, that is contracting muscles, flipping the switch e.t.c. So far '*I*' becomes *a distinct event or more precisely a distinct intentional action by its own*. Then we need 'another *I*`' to add to '*I*' itself to make it intentional. And so on. Anscombe concludes that this reflection demonstrates that assumption of the existence of some entity, which accompanies an action and makes it intentional, leads us to confusions. There is no any actual occurrence enabling us to call an action intentional. Instead there are different descriptions of an event which accounts for it as being intentional or not:

> And in describing intentional actions as such, it will be a mistake to look for the fundamental description of what occurs – such as the movements of muscles or molecules – and then think of intention as something, perhaps very complicated, which qualifies this. The only *events* to consider *are intentional actions themselves*, and to call an action intentional is to say *it is intentional under some description that we give* (or could give) of it (Ibid, 29, *italics added*)

Anscombe's point is following: there is nothing peculiar to investigate in events, we call intentional actions, to find out, what intention is. Neither meaning, desiring or believing is a sort of an act preceding agent's action. Reason does not go before reasonable action as well. So far the 'Why' question may be answered not because an agent desired, or believed, or intended something to do. Our capacity to account for some event as intentional, meaningful or reasonable action rests upon the possibility to provide a particular description of the event, to see it in a particular light, that is, to notice it's another aspect.

This claim has a consequence that under some descriptions event is purely 'natural event' and under others it is intentional and meaningful action. So far, the idea of seeing divergent aspects of the same event under different perspectives of observation, which was developed below, is adopted here again to explain how action might be seen as intentional and meaningful occurrence, on the one hand, and as the event causally called forth by other observable events.

The idea is that event is not meaningful action by its own; it is intentional, made for a reason and so on only under a specific description. Some descriptions accentuate intentional and meaningful character of event of action, others identify its causes and consequences. Our accounting for action in causal and intentional terms is quite similar to seeing different aspects of the same thing. To say that these causal and intentional claims are mutually exclusive is the same as to consider that a chest can never be seen as a house in a children's play. Or, to adopt a better example from Wittgenstein's discussion of a changing-aspect, it is like considering that a picture of a duck-rabbit may be only either duck or rabbit.

Indeed, one cannot notice both duck and rabbit aspects of the picture simultaneously, however, ignoring one aspect of the picture makes us to lose the whole sense of it. Causal and intentional claims refer to the same event. Turning a blind eye to any aspect of the event makes theoretical picture of it incomplete. Nevertheless, the statement that causal and intentional descriptions of action specify different aspects of the same event has another theoretical consequence. It is impossible to see both aspects simultaneously. An observer either discerns causes and consequences of action, or accounts for its meaning. However, both causal and intentional claims are necessary to accomplish the image of observed action[6].

[6] This twofold character of human action was exactly emphasized by Hannah Arendt

To summarize: I propose to see social action as an event, which allows the specification of two different types of its aspects. The first one is intentional type. Seeing intentional aspect of action, an observer provides descriptions of its meaning, reasons of an agent to act in a particular way, motivation and so an. An important point here is that all these aspects are not seen as separate events on their own. They do not precede, accompany or in any other way supplement the event of action. Contrarily to this, they are emergent features of observer's description. The second type is causal aspects of action. Seeing action in a causal stance is to discern it as event among other observable spatio-temporal occurrences. This implies that action has antecedents, which causally call it forth, and consequences it has brought about. So far, event of action is granted actual significance in changing affairs within 'the world of facts'.

An important point about a changing-aspect process is that the event of action cannot be completely comprehended if an observer has made himself or herself to see only one type of action's aspects. Action is not all about causes or intentions, like duck-rabbit is not just duck or rabbit. Looking through either intentional or causal character of action prohibits getting its sense.

Conclusion

In the beginning of the work the question how one can consider an event of action as being meaningful occurrence, on the one hand, and causally stipulated, on the other, was posed. I tried to demonstrate in the first part of the text that this question is of considerable significance for social sciences. The causal character of social action enables to conceive it as a factual occurrence, which was brought about by preceding events and has factual consequences. Meaningful nature of event of action permits to account for the reason it was done for, grasp agent's motivation, and in short – to ask why it was performed. This twofold nature of action was seen as a definitive feature of sociology of action. A social scientist has to cope with both these properties of action. Intentional systematic ignoring of either one or another facet of action prevents from understanding its sense.

> There exist two hypotheses, the hypothesis of science that there is no will, and the commonsense hypothesis that the will is free. In other words, the moment we start to act, we assume that we are free, no matter what the truth of the matter can be. This, it seems, would be fine and sufficient proof, as it were, if we were only acting beings. But the trouble is that we are not and the moment we stop acting and start considering what we have done with others, or even how this specific act fits into the whole texture of our life the matter becomes again highly doubtful. In retrospect, everything seems explicable by causes, by precedents or circumstances, so that we must admit the legitimacy of both hypotheses, each valid for its own field of experience (Arendt 2003, 129)

The intuition behind this statement, which illustrates what has been said here, is that two realms of experience exist independently and both of them have its own legitimacy. They are not competitive or mutually exclusive. In the same sense the usage of the chest as a chest does not prevents from exploiting it as a house in a child's play.

However, in contemporary methodology of social sciences a considerable clash between causalistic and intentionalistic positions is observed. Some attempts were performed to bring them together. Davidson's project of singular causation was quite sensitive to the problem of combining intentionalistic and causalistic perspectives. However, his project is under intensive critique now that has undermined its principal assumptions.

Davidsonian model of singular causation leads to paradoxes of observation and communication. Seeing event of action as a singular event, which is caused by its reason, results in the conclusion that intelligible communication about action's causes is impossible. The idea is that any communication about action is a process of making sense of aspect-changings. Presenting different or competing causal claims is similar to pointing to divergent aspects of the event. This process can be made sense of, only if the perspectives of observation are specifiable. To differentiate perspectives of observation, an observer has foremost to distinguish between the place and time of the event of observation and the place and time of the event observed. Therefore, observation is a process, which occurs in time and space.

The claim, that observers communicate their descriptions of events and any observational claim presents a particular aspect of the event observed, has far reaching theoretical consequences. Different aspects of the event communicated about cannot be seen at one time. However, concerning causal and intentional aspects of the event, one can say that it is impossible to get a completed picture of action if one of these types of aspects is ignored.

Current text presents a formal solution for the problem of combining intentional and causal perspectives. That is, it provides philosophical grounds to establishing a general possibility for their simultaneous presenting. However, I have not concerned here the rules of adequacy of providing both causal and intentional descriptions. Should causal descriptions be given in nomological terms as positivists suggested, or they should consider every event by its own, what is closer to the project of singular causality? On the other hand, what makes accounting for meaning and agent's intentions adequate from methodological point of view? All these questions are of a great importance, however, they are not considered here. They are subsequent questions relatively to the issue of this article.

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