

Fernando Pessoa

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Swedenborg's treatment of Cause is very extraordinary. His disciples call mechanical production of otherness «sequence» and state that Cause is originating power. This does not make, as would appear, a revolution in philosophy: it is only a change of philosophical nomenclature. If in geometry I call a triangle ABC, it is to be doubted whether a great geometrical revolution is caused when another man calls it DEF. I call a *table* a *table*, but I might call it a door without mischief (except to philology). The *word* «table» does not contain the idea of *table* but only five letters T, A, B, L, E, making a certain sound.

Is cause unproduced originating power? Absolute cause is without doubt. Is the Absolute cause the only cause existing? Not in our sense.

Let us see the rules of Cause:

1. What is Cause? (in the common philosophical meaning of the word). Cause is that by which (in time and in space) a phenomenon is, and without which it would not have been. (Remark: I say «in time and in space» because time and space are conditions of a phenomenon's existence).
2. Cause is exterior and anterior to effect (by definition) .

Another proof.

(a) Cause is in space and in time.

3. Cause of same nature as effect.

First law. Cause is exterior and anterior to effect.

Cause and effect being in space and in time, if anything were not anterior and exterior to its cause, it were synchronous and in the same place (for cause *after* is not conceivable) it were its own cause, that is, had no cause at all — which is absurd.

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