Hume on Causation (from the *Enquiry*)

Thought (including memory and imagination) = dull sensation

\*compounds, transposes, augments, or diminishes material from impressions

**Ideas** = copied impressions

**Impressions** = more lively sensations (incl. 5 senses, hate, desire, will)

Association of ideas = continuum from dream logic to real logic, structured by resemblance, contiguity, and cause/effect relations

Everything we want to know is

EITHER

A Relation of Ideas

\*knowable *a priori* (= by the operation of thought alone, independent of experience)

\*real existence of things is irrelevant

\*by intuition or deduction

\*involves demonstrative reasoning (logical necessity)

\*only absolute contradictions are ruled out

\*mathematics, logic

OR

A Matter of Fact

\*only knowable *a posteriori* (= on the basis of experience)

\*concerned with real existence of things

\*by sensation or associative habit

\*involves moral reasoning (physical “necessity”)

\*the contrary is always possible

\*natural and social philosophy

Argument (Sections 4-5)

Step 1 (p. 5): All reasoning concerning matters of fact is founded on the mental relation of cause and effect. This is the only way to go beyond the evidence of memory and the senses.

Step 2 (pp. 5-7): We arrive at the knowledge of cause and effect only by experience.

Step 3 (pp. 8-11): The foundation of all conclusions from experience is *not* any kind of reasoning or any process of the understanding (= of the intellect).

\*No reasoning licenses the inference from what has happened to what will happen in the future.

\*Survey of the branches of knowledge shows that none of them justifies the assumption that similar effects will follow from similar causes.

Step 4 (p. 12): If it’s not argument (= logic) that leads the mind to draw conclusions from experience, there must be something just as authoritative as argument that does so.

Step 5 (p. 13): Only custom/mental habit produces (and justifies) inferences from experience.

\*We have a mental instinct to make causal inferences when presented with *both* memory/present sensation *and* customary conjunction.