

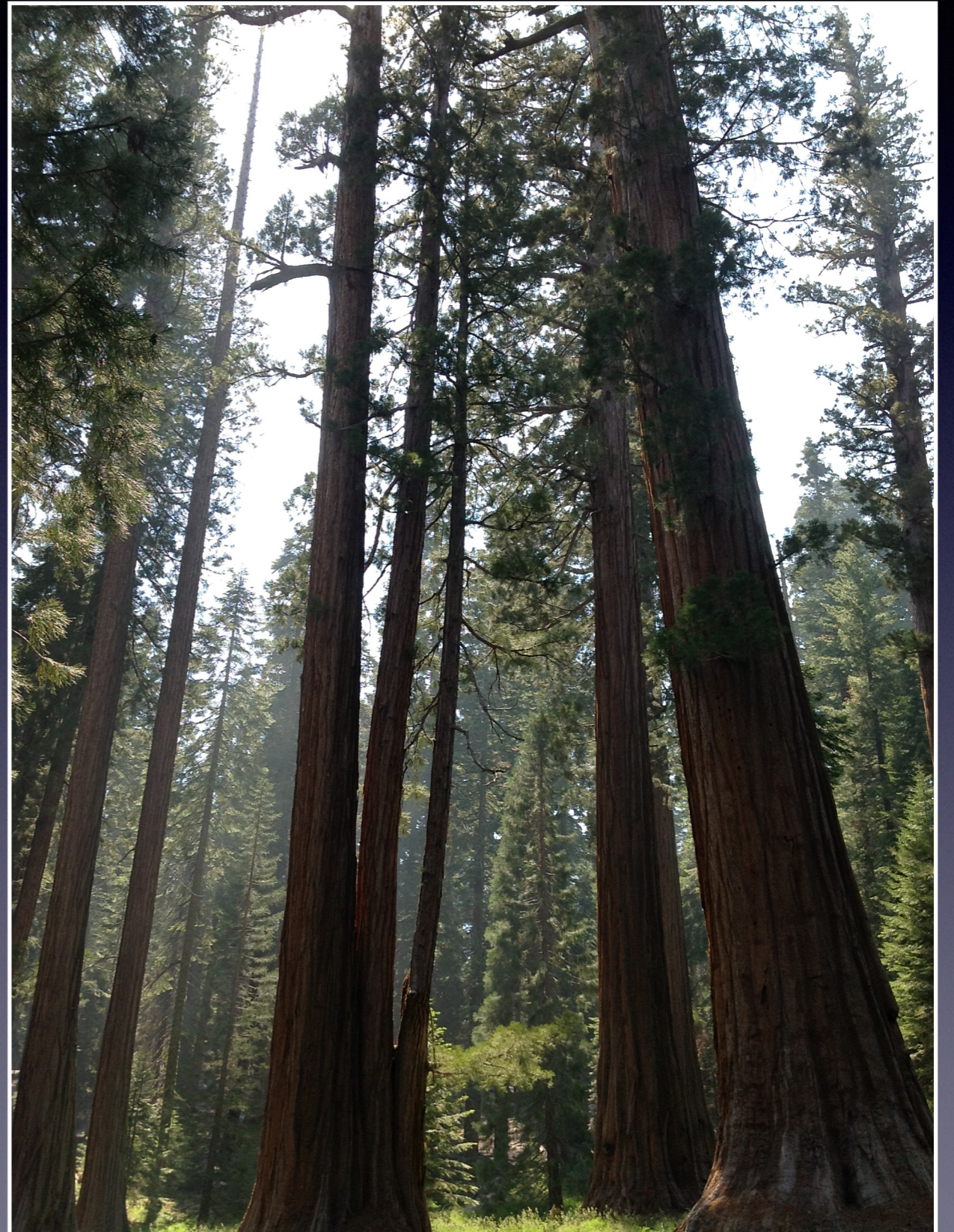
Empiricism and Rationalism

CSUF

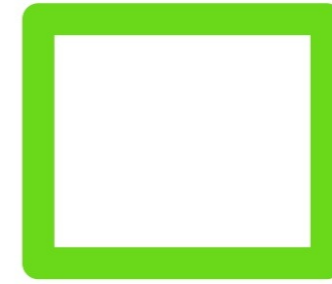
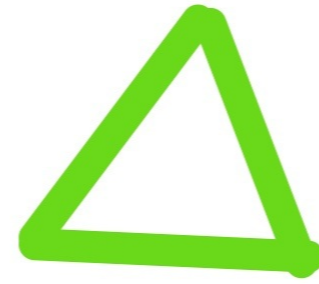
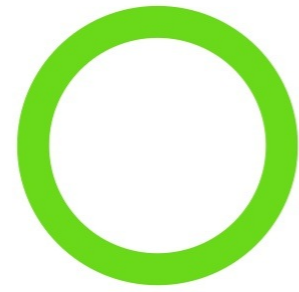
Instructor: Jason Sheley

Quick quiz:

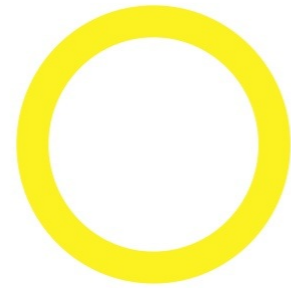
- A tree falls in a forest. Does it make a sound?
- What is Locke's answer?
Berkeley's answer? Why?



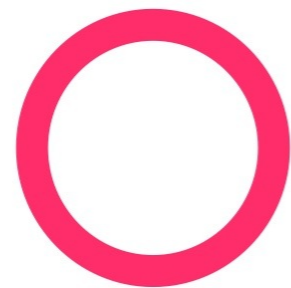
Locke



Berkeley

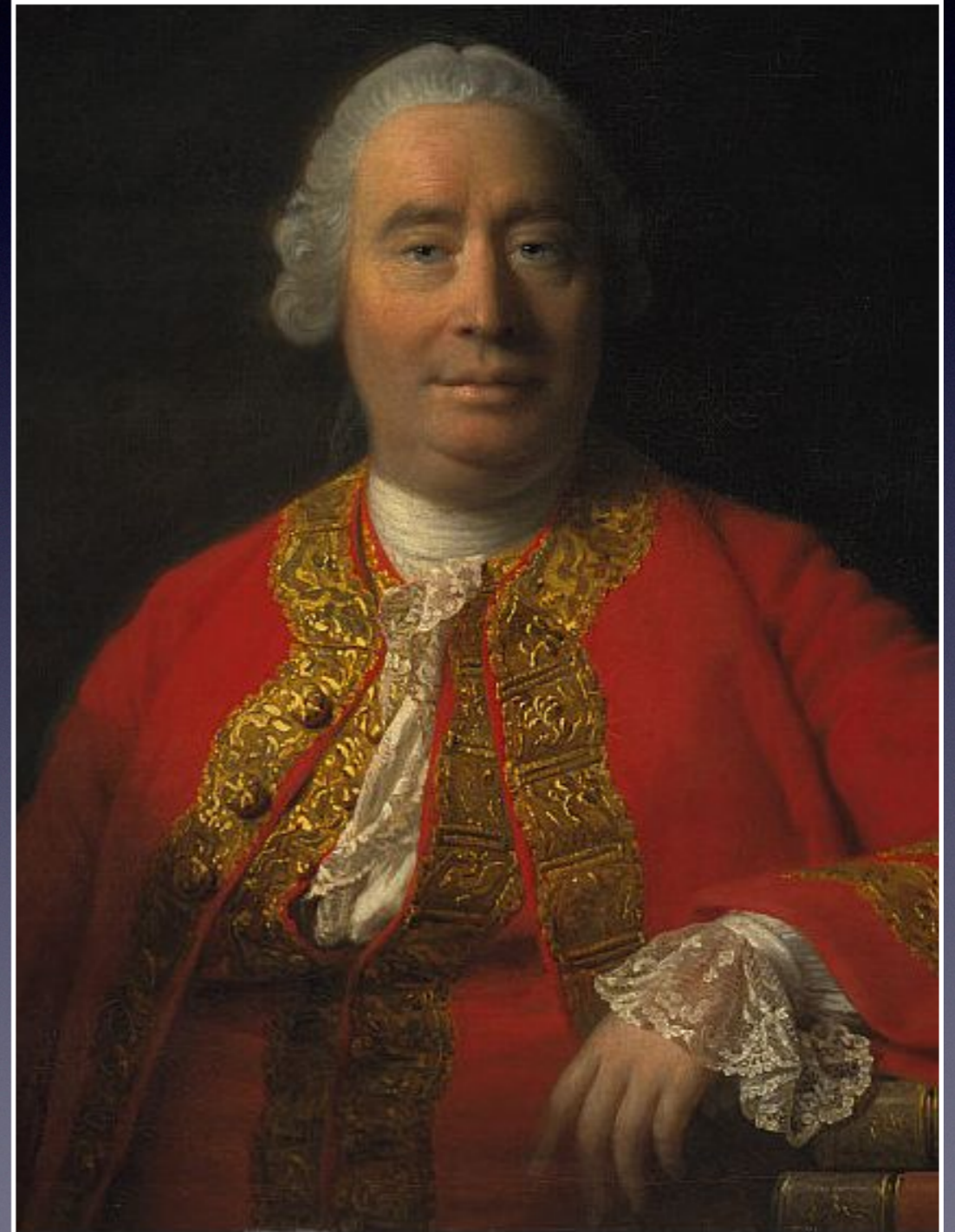


Hume



David Hume

- 1711-1776



- During his life, Hume became somewhat famous, but not as a philosopher.
- In fact, Hume's philosophy was largely unappreciated during his lifetime.
- Hume himself said of his masterpiece, that “Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my Treatise of Human Nature. It fell dead born from the press, without reaching such distinction, as even to excite a murmur among the zealots.”

- And yet, many years later, Immanuel Kant would say that it was Hume who "awoke him from "his dogmatic slumber," and provoked Kant into developing a new system.
- Now we want to know, what were Hume's views, and why did they bother Kant so much?

a. P. 307 - 2 kinds of philosophy

p. 311 - on the use of philosophy

p. 312 - against metaphysics

Section II - Of the Origin of Ideas

- "...The most lively thought is still inferior to the dullest sensation."

Two classes:

Thoughts or Ideas --
marked as less lively, often
also marked as reflections
upon the Impressions.

Impressions -- “I mean...
all our more lively
perceptions, when we
hear, or see, or feel, or
love, or hate, or desire, or
will.”



By the term impression, then, I mean all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will. And impressions are distinguished from ideas, which are the less lively perceptions, of which we are conscious, when we reflect on any of those sensations or movements above mentioned.

Two Arguments....

First Argument

- First, when we analyze our thoughts or ideas, however compounded or sublime, we always find that they resolve themselves into such simple ideas as were copied from a precedent feeling or sentiment.

Second Argument

If it happen, from a defect of the organ, that a man is not susceptible of any species of sensation, we always find that he is as little susceptible of the correspondent ideas. A blind man can form no notion of colours; a deaf man of sounds. Restore either of them that sense in which he is deficient; by opening this new inlet for his sensations, you also open an inlet for the ideas; and he finds no difficulty in conceiving these objects.

Let's look at Hume's
remarks in the rest of the
section...

Section III - Of the Association of Ideas

The next question is, how are the various ideas we have related to each other?

Though it be too obvious to escape observation, that different ideas are connected together; I do not find that any philosopher has attempted to enumerate or class all the principles of association; a subject, however, that seems worthy of curiosity. To me, there appear to be only three principles of connexion among ideas, namely, **Resemblance**, **Contiguity in time or place**, and **Cause or Effect**.

Examples of each

- "A picture naturally leads our thoughts to the original..."
- "the mention of one apartment in a building naturally introduces an inquiry or discourse concerning the others..."
- "...and if we think of a wound, we can scarcely forebear reflecting on the pain that follows it."



Notice that the picture Hume presents is much simpler than Locke's picture.

Also, notice Hume's argument in favor of this division. If you disagree with him, the challenge is to find an idea that is not produced in this way.

The Two "Humes"

Hume the Skeptic

Section IV -
Sceptical Doubts Concerning the
Operations of the Understanding

- p. 322 "All of the objects of reason or inquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit,
- relations of ideas
- and matters of fact

- Notice that relations of ideas are exemplified in geometry, algebra and arithmetic.
- This means that matters of fact are known in a completely different manner...

The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible; because it can never imply a contradiction, and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness, as if ever so conformable to reality.

- That the sun will not rise tomorrow is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction than the affirmation, that it will rise. We should in vain, therefore, attempt to demonstrate its falsehood. Were it demonstratively false, it would imply a contradiction, and could never be distinctly conceived by the mind.



- "All reasonings concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of cause and effect. By means of that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses."

Notice Hume's examples here... (p. 323)

I shall venture to affirm, as a general proposition, which admits of no exception, that the knowledge of this relation is not, in any instance, attained by reasonings a priori; but arises entirely from experience, when we find that any particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other.

Let an object be presented to a man of ever so strong natural reason and abilities; if that object be entirely new to him, he will not be able, by the most accurate examination of its sensible qualities, to discover any of its causes or effects. Adam, though his rational faculties be supposed, at the very first, entirely perfect, could not have inferred from the fluidity and transparency of water that it would suffocate him, or from the light and warmth of fire that it would consume him.

- The key argument for this idea comes at p. 325
- Notice Hume's billiard ball example.
- What is he saying here?





Cause

Effect



The key question is, how do we acquire knowledge of cause and effect in this case?

- Last time we looked at Hume's arguments for knowledge concerning cause and effect.
- Let's see if we can reconstruct Hume's argument using our own example.

Another possible target: Aristotle?

- Aristotle says that we can identify four types of cause: material, efficient, formal, and final.
- Example: a statue – bronze, hammering, the blueprint, and what it is for.
- Some interpreters read Aristotle as saying that we can identify these causes in nature.



- In part 2 of section 4, Hume expands his analysis further.

But we have not yet attained any tolerable satisfaction with regard to the question first proposed. Each solution still gives rise to a new question as difficult as the foregoing, and leads us on to farther enquiries. When it is asked, What is the nature of all our reasonings concerning matter of fact? the proper answer seems to be, that they are founded on the relation of cause and effect. When again it is asked, What is the foundation of all our reasonings and conclusions concerning that relation? it may be replied in one word, Experience. But if we still carry on our sifting humour, and ask, What is the foundation of all conclusions from experience? this implies a new question, which may be of more difficult solution and explication.

Matters of Fact

Cause and Effect

Experience

???

I shall content myself, in this section, with an easy task, and shall pretend only to give a negative answer to the question here proposed. I say then, that, even after we have experience of the operations of cause and effect, our conclusions from that experience are not founded on reasoning, or any process of the understanding. This answer we must endeavour both to explain and to defend.

Compare Descartes on this point...

These two propositions are far from being the same, I have found that such an object has always been attended with such an effect, and I foresee, that other objects, which are, in appearance, similar, will be attended with similar effects.

I shall allow, if you please, that the one proposition may justly be inferred from the other: I know, in fact, that it always is inferred. But if you insist that the inference is made by a chain of reasoning, I desire you to produce that reasoning. The connexion between these propositions is not intuitive. There is required a medium, which may enable the mind to draw such an inference, if indeed it be drawn by reasoning and argument. What that medium is, I must confess, passes my comprehension; and it is incumbent on those to produce it, who assert that it really exists, and is the origin of all our conclusions concerning matter of fact.

- May I not clearly and distinctly conceive that a body, falling from the clouds, and which, in all other respects, resembles snow, has yet the taste of salt or feeling of fire? Is there any more intelligible proposition than to affirm, that all the trees will flourish in December and January, and decay in May and June? Now whatever is intelligible, and can be distinctly conceived, implies no contradiction, and can never be proved false by any demonstrative argument or abstract reasoning priori.

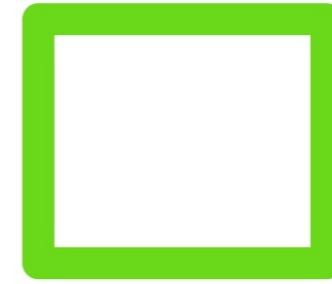
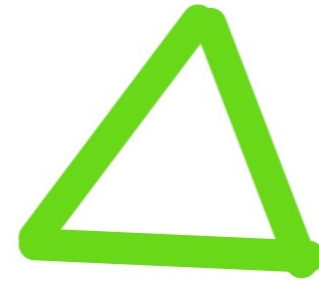
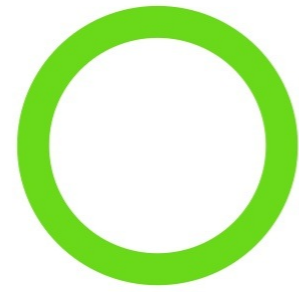


- We have said that all arguments concerning existence are founded on the relation of cause and effect; that our knowledge of that relation is derived entirely from experience; and that all our experimental conclusions proceed upon the supposition that the future will be conformable to the past. **To endeavour, therefore, the proof of this last supposition by probable arguments, or arguments regarding existence, must be evidently going in a circle, and taking that for granted, which is the very point in question.**

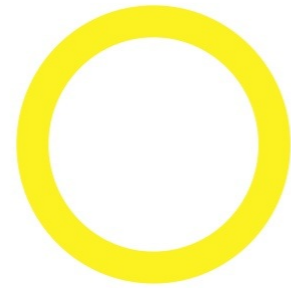


You say that the one proposition is an inference from the other. But you must confess that the inference is not intuitive; neither is it demonstrative: Of what nature is it, then? To say it is experimental, is begging the question. For all inferences from experience suppose, as their foundation, that the future will resemble the past, and that similar powers will be conjoined with similar sensible qualities.

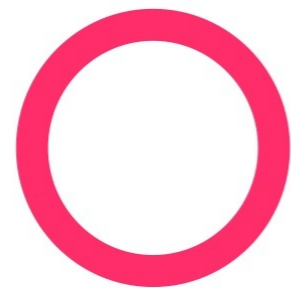
Locke



Berkeley

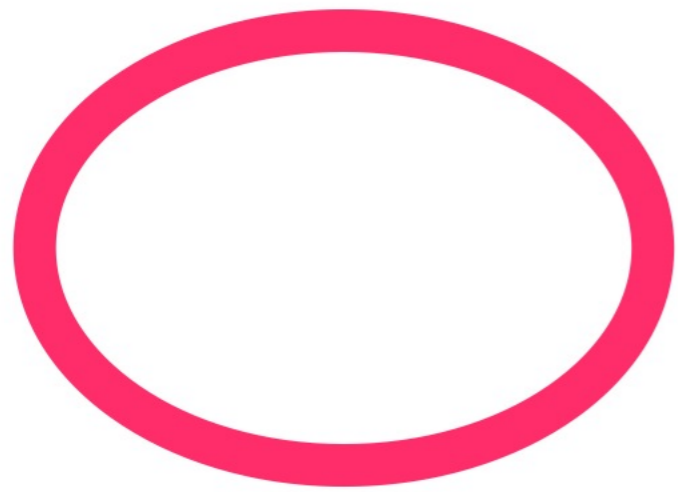


Hume



- **Hume recognizes the position he has found himself in at the end of Book 1 of the Treatise...**

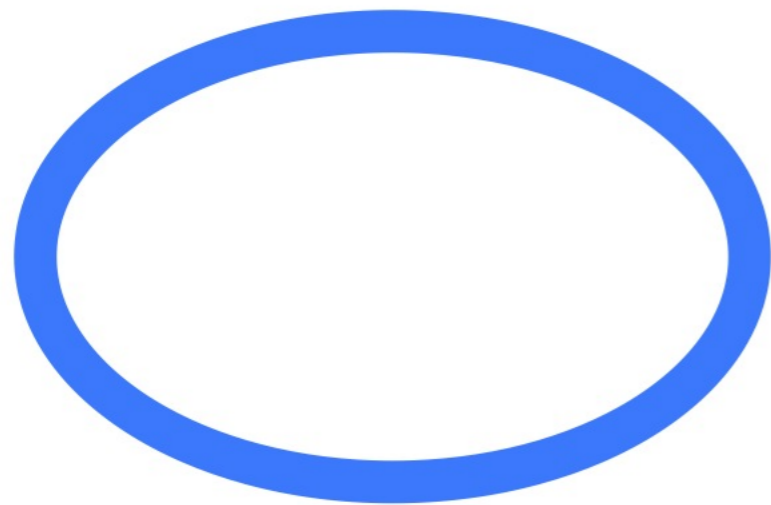
Hume's skepticism is not
as straightforward as it
seems...



Evidence



Conclusion



Evidence



Conclusion



Hume the Scientist of Human Nature

SECTION V.

SCEPTICAL SOLUTION OF THESE DOUBTS.

- How do we solve the problem that Hume has raised?

- Hume suggests that we solve it by embracing a form of skepticism

Academic or Sceptical philosophy. The academics always talk of doubt and suspense of judgement, of danger in hasty determinations, of confining to very narrow bounds the enquiries of the understanding, and of renouncing all speculations which lie not within the limits of common life and practice. Nothing, therefore, can be more contrary than such a philosophy to the supine indolence of the mind, its rash arrogance, its lofty pretensions, and its superstitious credulity. Every passion is mortified by it, except the love of truth; and that passion never is, nor can be, carried to too high a degree

- Hume suggests that we consider where we left off at the end of section 4
- Strictly speaking, we have no reason to think that the snow will be as it was in the past.
- But, nonetheless, I draw this conclusion: the snow will again be cold.
- What accounts for this?



Suppose, again, that he has acquired more experience, and has lived so long in the world as to have observed familiar objects or events to be **constantly conjoined** together; what is the consequence of this experience? He immediately infers the existence of one object from the appearance of the other. Yet he has not, by all his experience, acquired any idea or knowledge of the secret power by which the one object produces the other; nor is it, by any process of reasoning, he is engaged to draw this inference.

Yet he has not, by all his experience, acquired any idea or knowledge of the secret power by which the one object produces the other; nor is it, by any process of reasoning, he is engaged to draw this inference. **But still he finds himself determined to draw it:** And though he should be convinced that his understanding has no part in the operation, he would nevertheless continue in the same course of thinking. There is some other principle which determines him to form such a conclusion.

This principle is Custom or Habit.

Custom, then, is the great guide of human life. It is that principle alone which renders our experience useful to us, and makes us expect, for the future, a similar train of events with those which have appeared in the past.

Without the influence of custom, we should be entirely ignorant of every matter of fact beyond what is immediately present to the memory and senses. We should never know how to adjust means to ends, or to employ our natural powers in the production of any effect. There would be an end at once of all action, as well as of the chief part of speculation.

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? A simple one; though, it must be confessed, pretty remote from the common theories of philosophy. All belief of matter of fact or real existence is derived merely from some object, present to the memory or senses, **and a customary conjunction between that and some other object.** Or in other words; having found, in many instances, that any two kinds of objects—flame and heat, snow and cold—have always been conjoined together; if flame or snow be presented anew to the senses, the mind is carried by custom to expect heat or cold, and to believe that such a quality does exist, and will discover itself upon a nearer approach.

Matters of Fact

Cause and Effect

Experience

Custom/Habit

- In part 2 of the section, Hume's next step is to inquire further into how the process of custom works.
- One of the chief questions is this: how do we distinguish fictions created by the mind from beliefs that we think correspond to reality?

Descartes

Hume

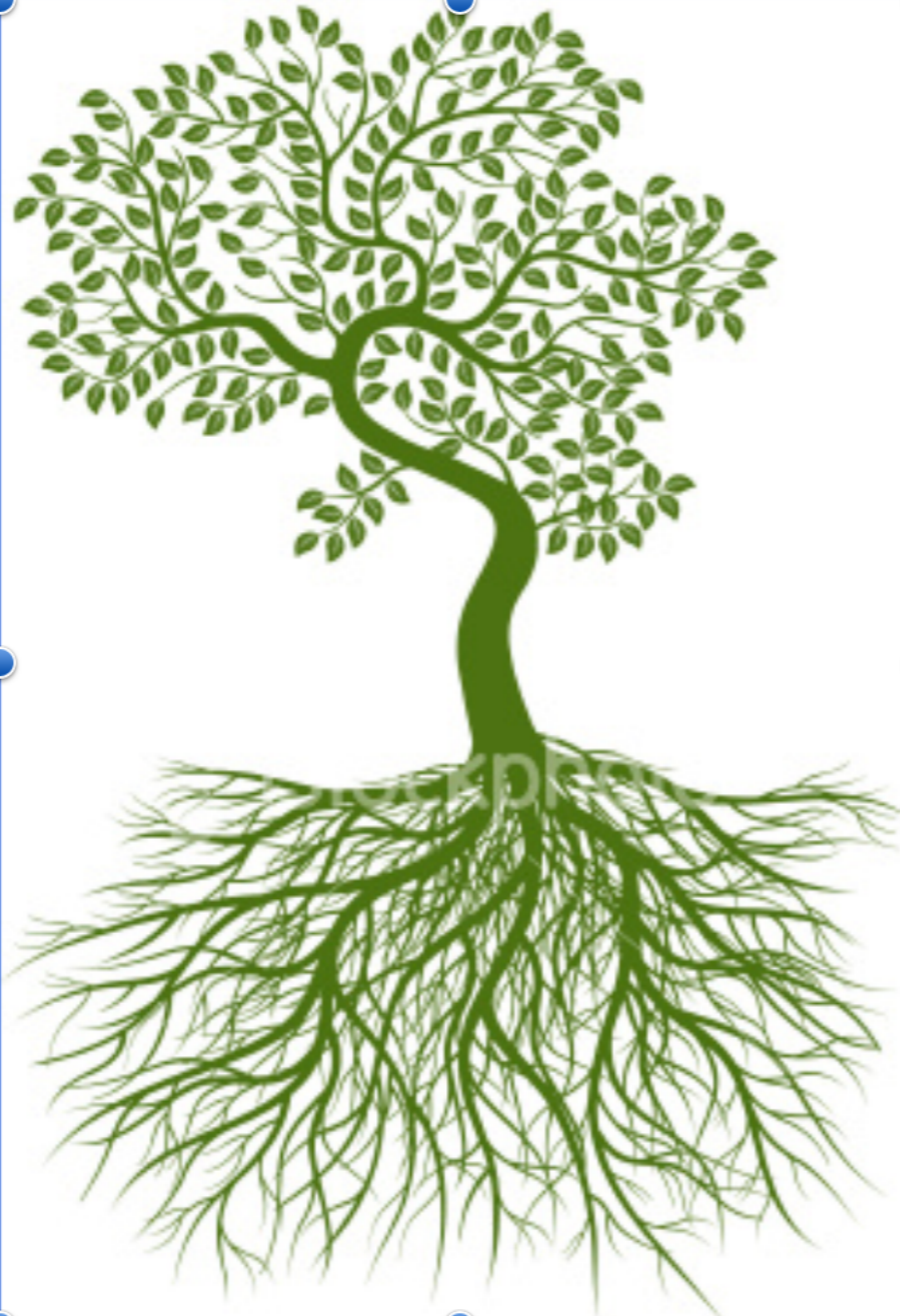
Ethics

Medicine

Mechanics

Physics

Metaphysics



Matters of Fact

Cause and Effect

Experience

Custom/Habit

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