Week 12: Hume
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Custom Principle
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Sceptical Arguments
Two Defs. and Causation
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Week 12: Hume

Takaharu Oda, PhD (odat@tcd.ie)

Southern University of Science and Technology

SS149 (社会科学中心), Spring 2024

Early Modern Western Philosophy (17th-18th Centuries)

近代西方哲学（十七–十八世纪）

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A Quiz from the Last Week

Quiz 12: In defence of his distinction of mechanical and metaphysical causation, whom did the Berkeley of *De motu* (1721) object to?

1. Cambridge Platonists, such as Henry More (1614-87) and Ralph Cadworth (1617–88)
2. Giovanni Alfonso Borelli (1608–79)
3. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716)
4. All of them

This is not related to your final grade, but intended to observe your understanding of the last class.

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Quiz 12: In defence of his distinction of mechanical and metaphysical causation, whom did the Berkeley of *De motu* (1721) object to?

1. Cambridge Platonists, such as Henry More (1614-87) and Ralph Cadworth (1617–88) ['the hylarchic principle': the metaphysical doctrine called also the 'spirit of nature']
2. Giovanni Alfonso Borelli (1608–79)
3. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716)
4. **All of them [See the 'Argument and Objection' in the last lecture slides and *DM* §20: all the above natural philosophers are accused of their metaphysical conflation]**

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1. **Deduction**—*a priori* inference by reason: **deductively** valid/invalid (valid **argument** forms: *MP, MT, disjunctive syllogism/modus tollendo ponens, reductio ad absurdum, etc.*).

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Hume's Fork: two-pronged

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Enquiry §4: 'Sceptical Doubts concerning the Operations of the Understanding'

First horn

'Relations of Ideas':
demonstrative = deductive inference (abstraction)

Of the first kind are the sciences of Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic; and in short, every affirmation, which is either **intuitively or demonstratively certain**. *That the square of the hypothenuse is equal to the square of the two sides* [i.e. Pythagorean theorem], is a proposition, which expresses a relation between these figures.

– Hume, *E* 4.1.1, clarification added

Hume's Fork: two-pronged

Weekly Quiz
Hume
Three Modes
Hume's Fork
Billiard Ball Argument
Uniformity Princ.
Fork Argument
Custom Principle
Chimera
Copy Principle
No Necessary Connection
Occasionalist Argument
Hume's Confutation
Sceptical Arguments
Two Defs. and Causation
Assignments

***Enquiry* §4: 'Sceptical Doubts concerning the Operations of the Understanding'**

First horn

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Second horn

'Matters of Fact':
probable (moral) = inductive inference (abstraction)

Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner; nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing. 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 to-morrow* is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction, than the affirmation, that *it will rise*. ...

All reasonings may be divided into two kinds, namely demonstrative reasoning, or that concerning relations of ideas, and **moral reasoning** , or that concerning matter of fact and existence. ...

– Hume, *E* 4.1.2, 4.2.18, clarification added

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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 [i.e. *a posteriori*]**; and that all our experimental conclusions proceed upon the supposition, that ***the future will be conformable to the past*** **[i.e. Uniformity Principle]**. To endeavour, therefore, the proof of this last supposition by **probable arguments**, or arguments regarding existence, must be evidently going **in a circle [i.e. circular reasoning, *vicious circle*, logical fallacy of arguing/proving in a circle (*circursus in probando*) or begging the question]**, and taking that for granted, which is the very point in question.

– Hume, *E* 4.2.19, clarification added

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A billiard-ball example: inductive inference

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Assignments

When I see, for instance, **a Billiard-ball** moving in a straight line towards another; even suppose motion in the second ball should by accident be suggested to me, as the result of their contact or impulse; **may I not conceive, that a hundred different events might as well follow from that cause?** May not both these balls remain at absolute rest? May not the first ball return in a straight line, or leap off from the second in any line or direction? All these suppositions are consistent and conceivable. Why then should we give the preference to one, which is no more consistent or conceivable than the rest? **All our reasonings *à priori* will never be able to shew us any foundation for this preference.**

– Hume, *E* 4.1.10, emphasis added (see also 4.1.8–9).

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Hume's borrowing of Malebranche's colliding-ball example:

'[...] **bodies have no action**; and when **a ball that is moved collides with and moves another**, it communicates to it nothing of its own, for it does not itself have the force it communicates to it. Nevertheless, a ball is the natural cause of the motion it communicates. **A natural cause is therefore not a real and true but only an occasional cause**' (*Search after Truth*, 6.2.3 [10])

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The billiard-ball argument against *a priori* reasoning

1. If all the demonstrative (*a priori*) inferences are able to show us the foundation for just one preference, then we observe a moving billiard ball always strike a stationary ball. **[Uniformity Principle]**
2. We *do not* observe a moving billiard ball always strike a stationary ball (for we can conceive of 'a hundred different events' about this causation, *E* 4.1.10; 4.1.2, 4.2.18). **[Conceivability Principle]**
3. Therefore, all the demonstrative inferences *cannot* be able to show us the foundation for just one preference. **[MT]**

Indcutively denying deductive **'relations of ideas'**, i.e. **causation**

Thus, 'every effect is a distinct event from its cause.' (*E* 4.1.11)

A billiard-ball example

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Uniformity Principle of Nature

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1 Weekly Quiz
2 Introduction to David Hume
3 Three Modes of Inference—Deduction, Induction, & Abduction
4 *Hume's Fork*—'Relations of Ideas' & 'Matters of Fact'
- The Billiard-Ball Argument against *A Priori* Reasoning

5 Uniformity Principle of Nature
- The Two-Pronged Fork Argument in the *Enquiry*

6 The Principle of 'Custom or Habit'
7 Chimerically *Obscure* Ideas and *Ambiguous* Terms
8 The Copy Principle of Impression
9 No *Idea of* Necessary Connection?
- The Occasionalists' Argument

10 Hume's 'Philosophical Confutation' of Occasionalism
- Sceptical Arguments

11 Two Definitions of the Term 'Cause' towards (Anti-)Realism
12 Assignments for the Next Lecture

Hume's Scepticism about the Uniformity of Nature

Week 12: Hume
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Assignments

Is there any uniformity of nature?

Inductive inference about **'matters of fact'**

It is only after a long course of **uniform experiments** in any kind, that we attain a firm reliance and security with regard to a particular event. Now where is that process of reasoning, which, from one instance, draws a conclusion, so different from that which it infers from a hundred instances, that are nowise different from that single one? This question I propose as much for the sake of information, as with an intention of raising difficulties. **I cannot find, I cannot imagine any such reasoning**.

– Hume, *E* 4.2.20 (clarification added)

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Hume's Inductive Inference *I*

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Hume's sceptical example (*E* 4.2.18)

1. 'The bread, which I formerly eat, nourished me.'
2. Therefore, 'other bread must also nourish me at another time.'

Hume's argument concerns this **inductive** inference

1. All observed instances of A have been B.
2. The next instance of A will be B.

'Inference *I*'

'Inferences which fall under this type of schema are [...] referred to as cases of "simple enumerative induction"'.

– Henderson 2018, SEP

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Hume's Fork Reconstructed

Week 12: Hume

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Weekly Quiz

Hume

Three Modes

Hume's Fork

Billiard Ball Argument

Uniformity Princ.

Fork Argument

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Assignments

Hume's fork (two-pronged) argument

P1 There are only two kinds of arguments: **demonstrative [deductive]** and **probable [inductive]**. [**Assumption**: Hume's fork]

P2 Inference *I* presupposes the Uniformity Principle. [**UP**]

First horn

P3 A demonstrative argument establishes a conclusion whose negation is a contradiction. [*Contra* **Conceivabilty Principle, CP**]

P4 The negation of the UP [i.e. **CP**] is not a contradiction.

C1 There is no demonstrative argument for the UP [Modus tollens, P3,P4 – **Billiard-ball argument** denying *a priori* premisses]

Second horn

P5 Any probable argument for UP presupposes UP. [Circularity]

P6 An argument for a principle may not presuppose the same principle. [**Non-circularity**]

C2 There is no probable argument for the UP. [**Reductio**, P5,P6]

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Hume's Fork Reconstructed

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P2 Inference *I* presupposes the Uniformity Principle. [**UP**]

C3 There is no argument for the UP.

Consequences

P7 If there is no argument for UP, there is no chain of reasoning from the premisses to the conclusion of any inference that presupposes the UP.

C4 There is no chain of reasoning from the premisses to the conclusion of inference *I*. [Modus ponens, P2,C3,P7]

P8 If there is no chain of reasoning from the premisses to the conclusion of inference *I*, the inference is not justified.

C5 Therefore, inference *I* is not justified. [Modus ponens, C4,P8]

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The Principle of ‘Custom or Habit’

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1 Weekly Quiz
2 Introduction to David Hume
3 Three Modes of Inference—Deduction, Induction, & Abduction
4 *Hume's Fork*—‘Relations of Ideas’ & ‘Matters of Fact’
- The Billiard-Ball Argument against *A Priori* Reasoning

5 Uniformity Principle of Nature
- The Two-Pronged Fork Argument in the *Enquiry*

6 The Principle of ‘Custom or Habit’
7 Chimerically *Obscure* Ideas and *Ambiguous* Terms
8 The Copy Principle of Impression
9 No *Idea of* Necessary Connection?
- The Occasionalists' Argument

10 Hume's ‘Philosophical Confutation’ of Occasionalism
- Sceptical Arguments

11 Two Definitions of the Term ‘Cause’ towards (Anti-)Realism
12 Assignments for the Next Lecture

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Enquiry §5: 'Sceptical Solution of these Doubts'

Custom Principle

[The] Principle is **Custom or Habit**. For wherever the repetition of any particular act or operation produces a propensity to renew the same act or operation, without being impelled by any reasoning [...]; we always say, that this propensity is the effect of ***Custom***. By employing that word, we pretend **not to have given the ultimate reason** of such a propensity. We only point out **a principle of human nature**, which is universally acknowledged, and which is well known by its effects. Perhaps, we [...] must rest contented with it as **the ultimate principle**, which we can assign, of all our conclusions from **experience**.

– Hume, *E* 5.1.5, emphasis added

The (Ultimate) Principle of Human Nature

Custom (Habit), not Reason.

Enquiry §5: 'Sceptical Solution of these Doubts'

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Chimerically *Obscure* Ideas and *Ambiguous* Terms

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Χίμαιρα, ‘chimera or conceit’ (*E* 7.1.2) —(mythical) illusion, figment of imagination

Figure: Chimera di Arezzo (*c.* 400 BCE), Museo archeologico, Firenze

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Contrast between induction and deduction

Morals *in contrast with* mathematical sciences (esp. geometry, dealing with *quantity and number*).

Where we trace the principles of the human mind through a few steps [i.e. premisses], we may be very well satisfied with our progress; considering how soon **nature throws a bar** to all our enquiries concerning causes, and reduces us to an acknowledgment of our ignorance. **The chief obstacle**, therefore, to our improvement in the moral or metaphysical sciences is the obscurity of the ideas, and ambiguity of the terms.

– Hume, *E* 7.1.2 (clarification added)

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Εὐκλείδης, Euclid of Alexandria (*c.* 300 BCE)

Father of geometry until the C19th. His *Elements* featured esp. the Pythagorean theorem ($3^2 + 4^2 = 5^2$). However, Hume frames 'his project on the successes of **natural philosophy**, exemplified by **Newton**' (Schliesser & Demeter 2020, 'Hume's Newtonianism and Anti-Newtonianism', *SEP*)

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Contrast between **induction** and **deduction**

Morals *in contrast with* mathematical sciences (esp. geometry, dealing with *quantity and number*).

In reality, there is scarcely a proposition in **Euclid [geometrical or deductive reasoning]** so simple, as not to consist of more parts, than are to be found in any **moral [probable or inductive] reasoning** which runs not into **chimera and conceit**.

Where we trace the principles of the human mind through a few steps [i.e. premisses], we may be very well satisfied with our progress; considering how soon **nature throws a bar** to all our enquiries concerning causes, and reduces us to an acknowledgment of our ignorance. **The chief obstacle**, therefore, to our improvement in the moral or metaphysical sciences is the obscurity of the ideas, and ambiguity of the terms.

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Moral/probable inference

ought to prevent ('bar') any **metaphysical** (*chimerical*) thinking.

The chief obstacle, therefore, to our improvement in the **moral or metaphysical sciences** is the **obscurity of the ideas, and ambiguity of the terms**.

– Hume, *E* 7.1.2 (clarification added)

Ending Two Questions (jumping from §7 to §12)

Weekly Quiz
Hume
Three Modes
Hume's Fork
Billiard Ball Argument
Uniformity Princ.
Fork Argument
Custom Principle
Chimera
Copy Principle
No Necessary Connection
Occasionalist Argument
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Enquiry §12: 'Of the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy'

Consequence When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of **divinity or school metaphysics**, for instance; let us ask,

1. *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?*
2. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?*

– Hume, *E* 12.3.34 (clarification added)

Ending Two Questions (jumping from §7 to §12)

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1. *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No.
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Commit it then to the flames: For **it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion**.

– Hume, *E* 12.3.34 (clarification added)

Ending Two Questions (jumping from §7 to §12)

Enquiry §12: 'Of the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy'

Consequence When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of **divinity or school metaphysics [which cannot satisfy the (1) mathematical and (2) empirical conditions]**, for instance; let us ask,

1. *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No.
2. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No.

Commit it then to the flames: For **it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion**.

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The Copy Principle of Impression

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The Copy Principle

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It seems a proposition, which will not admit of much dispute, that **all our ideas** are nothing but **copies of our impressions**, or, in other words, that it is impossible for us to *think* of any thing, which we have not antecedently *felt*, either by our external or internal senses. [...] Produce the **impressions or original sentiments**, from which the ideas are copied. These impressions are all strong and sensible. They admit not of ambiguity.

– Hume, *E* 7.1.4, emphasis added (see also 2.5, 2.9)

Copy Principle in moral *a posteriori* inference

No innate **ideas**, but empirical **impressions** (i.e. sensations and feelings). (Compare Locke's obscure term 'idea', *EHU* 1.1.8, etc.)

Copy Principle for the idea of **necessary connection**?

Does the CP assume any 'uniform experience'? (*E* 7.2.30)

The Copy Principle

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No *Idea of* Necessary Connection?

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The 'idea of power or necessary connexion'

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There are **no ideas**, which occur in metaphysics, more obscure and uncertain, than those of *power*, *force*, *energy*, or ***necessary connexion***, of which it is every moment **necessary** for us to treat in all our disquisitions.

To be fully acquainted, therefore, with the **idea of power or necessary connexion**, let us examine its **impression**; and in order to find the impression with greater certainty, let us search for it in all the sources, from which it may possibly be derived.

– Hume, *E* 7.1.3, 7.1.5, emphasis added

_No_ necessary connection

Ideas of power/force/energy are *uncertain* in metaphysics. Rather, the sources of certainty are 'derived' from experiences/experiments.

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odat@tcd.ie
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When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any **power or necessary connexion**; any quality, which **binds the effect to the cause**, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We **only find**, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other. **The impulse of one billiard-ball is attended with motion in the second**. This is the whole that appears to the *outward* senses. The mind feels no sentiment or *inward* impression from this succession of objects: Consequently, there is **not**, in any single, particular instance of cause and effect, any thing which can suggest the idea of **power or necessary connexion**.

– Hume, *E* 7.1.6, clarification added

No ‘power or necessary connexion’

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We find some regularity (not exactly causation):

Correlation or correlative ‘constant conjunction’ (*E* 7.2.28, etc.)

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– Hume, *E* 7.1.6, clarification added

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We find some **regularity** (not exactly **causation**):

Correlation or correlative ‘constant conjunction’ (*E* 7.2.28, etc.)

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No 'power or necessary connexion'

The impulse of one billiard-ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the *outward* senses. The mind feels no sentiment or *inward* impression from this succession of objects: consequently, in any single instance of cause and effect, there is nothing which can suggest the idea of **power or necessary connexion**.

– Hume, *E* 7.1.6, clarification added

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No ‘power or necessary connexion’

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Lockean distinction (*EHU* 2.1.2, etc.)

Outward senses: **sensation** (e.g. sight and touch)
Inward impressions: **reflection** (i.e. awareness of our own feelings)

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No necessary connection between cause and effect

But **correlation, temporal priority, contiguity, or conjunction**:
‘experience only teaches us, how one event constantly follows another; **without** instructing us in the **secret connexion**, which binds them together, and renders them inseparable’ (*E* 7.1.13);
‘we never can observe any tye between [events]. They seem ***conjoined***, but never ***connected***’ (*E* 7.2.26, clarification added).

Consequently, there is **not**, in any single, particular instance of **cause and effect**, any thing which can suggest the idea of **power or necessary connexion**.

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Was Hume rather an Occasionalist?

Week 12: Hume

odat@tcd.ie

Weekly Quiz

Hume

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How indeed can we be conscious of a power to move our limbs, when we have **no such power**; but only that to move certain **animal spirits**, which, though they produce at last the motion of our limbs, yet operate in such a manner as is **wholly beyond our comprehension**?

We may, therefore, conclude from the whole, I hope, without any temerity, though with assurance; that our idea of power is **not copied from any sentiment or consciousness of power within ourselves**, when we give rise to animal motion, or apply our limbs to their proper use and office. That their motion follows **the command of the will** is **a matter of common experience**, like other natural events: But the power or energy by which **this** is effected, like that in other natural events, is **unknown and inconceivable**.

– Hume, *E* 7.1.14–15 (emphasis added)

Was Hume rather an Occasionalist?

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Liquids within the nervous system

Descartes's definition of 'animal spirits': 'a very fine wind, or rather a very lively and pure flame' (CSM I 100) and as 'a certain very fine air or wind' (CSM I 330), central to the pineal gland (*Treatise of Man*, etc.; Lokhorst 2013, *SEP*).

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Occasionalism about denying any cause/power within ourselves?

Occasional causation expunges 'second causes' other than the **divine** cause, instead postulating **no necessary connection in nature** (Kail, 'Hume, Malebranche and "Rationalism"', 2008, 322, n. 26; Pyle 2003; McCracken 1983, etc.).

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Hume's Reconstruction of Occasionalism

> Here then, many philosophers think themselves obliged by reason to have recourse, on all occasions, to the same principle, which the vulgar never appeal to but in cases, that appear miraculous and supernatural.
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Many (?) **occasionalists**, esp. Malebranche, but also implying a Scottish occasionalist Andrew Baxter (c.1686–1750) and the immaterialist **Berkeley** (?).

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'the same princple'

The divine operation or voliitional power 'on all occasions' (probably Hume's pun).

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> **They** pretend, that those objects, which are commonly denominated *causes*, are in reality nothing but ***occasions***; and that the true and direct principle of every effect is not any power or force in nature, but **a volition of the Supreme Being, who wills**, that such particular objects should, for ever, be conjoined with each other. [...] [T]he energy of the cause is as **unintelligible** as in the most unusual, and [...] we only learn by experience the frequent Conjunction of objects, without being ever able to comprehend any thing like Connexion between them.
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1. There is no 'power or force in nature' (for Hume, if there were, then it would be 'unintelligible').
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Which premiss may Hume undermine in attacking the occasionalists?

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Which premiss may Hume undermine in attacking the occasionalists?

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1. Natural events (e.g. billiard balls) do not have a natural cause (by C of Stage 1, the idea of 'cause' in nature is *unintelligible*).
2. Natural events have either a *natural* cause or a *supernatural* cause (i.e. 'force' of the divine 'mind').
3. Therefore, natural events *must* have a supernatural cause. **[disjunctive syllogism (*modus tollendo ponens*)]**

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   Hume is sceptical about the conclusion due to P2!

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Hume's 'Philosophical Confutation' of Occasionalism

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1 Weekly Quiz
2 Introduction to David Hume
3 Three Modes of Inference—Deduction, Induction, & Abduction
4 *Hume's Fork*—'Relations of Ideas' & 'Matters of Fact'
- The Billiard-Ball Argument against *A Priori* Reasoning
5 Uniformity Principle of Nature
- The Two-Pronged Fork Argument in the *Enquiry*
6 The Principle of 'Custom or Habit'
7 Chimerically *Obscure* Ideas and *Ambiguous* Terms
8 The Copy Principle of Impression
9 No *Idea of* Necessary Connection?
- The Occasionalists' Argument
10 Hume's 'Philosophical Confutation' of Occasionalism
- Sceptical Arguments
11 Two Definitions of the Term 'Cause' towards (Anti-)Realism
12 Assignments for the Next Lecture

Hume's 'Philosophical Confutation' of the Occasionalists' Argument

But if we would have a more **philosophical confutation** of this theory, perhaps the two following reflections may suffice.

– Hume, *E* 7.1.23 (emphasis added)

Hume's Sceptical Replies

Two-pronged 'philosophical confutation' (*E* 7.1.23–25)

He *doubts* that the occasionalists' final premiss (i.e. **P2 of Stage 2**) is adequately grounded in our *reasoning*:

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2. Natural events have either a *natural* cause or a *supernatural* cause (i.e. 'force' of the divine 'mind').

Hume's 'Philosophical Confutation' of the Occasionalists' Argument

But if we would have a more **philosophical confutation** of this theory, perhaps the **two following reflections** may suffice.

– Hume, *E* 7.1.23 (emphasis added)

Hume's Sceptical Replies

Two-pronged 'philosophical confutation' (*E* 7.1.23–25)

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First Reply to the Occasionalists

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Chimera
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Hume's Confutation
Sceptical Arguments
Two Defs. and Causation
Assignments

> *First*, It seems to me, that **this theory of the universal energy and operation of the Supreme Being [i.e. occasionalism]**, is too bold ever to carry conviction with it to a man, sufficiently apprized of the weakness of human reason [...]. Though the chain of arguments, which conduct to it, were ever so logical, there must arise a strong suspicion, if not an absolute assurance, that it has carried us quite beyond the reach of our faculties, when it leads to conclusions so extraordinary, and so remote from common life and experience. We are got into fairy land [...] infinite abysses.
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> – Hume, *E* 7.1.24 (emphasis/clarification added)

Reply 1 of Hume's Argument: scepticism by *a posteriori* reasoning

1. If we observe no idea of necessary connection between natural events, then we had better not trust the argument for divine force 'remote from [...] experience' .
2. We observe no idea of the necessary connection.
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Second Reply to occasionalism

Secondly, I cannot perceive any **force in the arguments**, on which this theory is founded. We are ignorant, it is true, of the manner in which bodies operate on each other: Their force or energy is entirely incomprehensible: But are we not equally ignorant of the manner or force by which a mind, even the supreme mind, operates either on itself or on body ? [...] Were our ignorance [...] a good reason for rejecting anything, we should be led into that principle of denying all energy in the Supreme Being as much as in the grossest matter .

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Reply 2 of Hume's Argument: scepticism by *parity* of reasoning

1. If we observe no idea of necessary connection between mental and physical events, then we had better not trust the argument for the force of divine 'mind' operating on bodies .
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Week 12: Hume
odat@tcd.ie
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1. If we observe no idea of necessary connection between mental and physical events, then we had better not trust the argument for the force of divine 'mind' operating on bodies **[i.e. for Hume, contrary to Malebranche/Berkeley, mind-body causation is no less 'incomprehensible' than body-body causation of 'the grossest matter']**.
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Two Definitions of the Term ‘Cause’ towards (Anti-)Realism

1. Weekly Quiz
2. Introduction to David Hume
3. Three Modes of Inference—Deduction, Induction, & Abduction
4. *Hume's Fork*—‘Relations of Ideas’ & ‘Matters of Fact’
   - The Billiard-Ball Argument against *A Priori* Reasoning
5. Uniformity Principle of Nature
   - The Two-Pronged Fork Argument in the *Enquiry*
6. The Principle of ‘Custom or Habit’
7. Chimerically *Obscure* Ideas and *Ambiguous* Terms
8. The Copy Principle of Impression
9. No *Idea of* Necessary Connection?
   - The Occasionalists’ Argument
10. Hume's ‘Philosophical Confutation’ of Occasionalism
    - Sceptical Arguments
11. Two Definitions of the Term ‘Cause’ towards (Anti-)Realism
12. Assignments for the Next Lecture

Legitimate acknowledgement of causation?

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(Hume's famous) *two definitions* of the term 'cause'

1. *an object, followed by another, and where all the objects, similar to the first, are followed by objects similar to the second.*
2. *an object followed by another, and whose appearance always conveys the thought to that other.*

– Hume, *E* 7.2.29; for the interpretations, see Beebee 2006, §§4.5–6; 2007, 417–20, Strawson 2014, 188ff, etc.

Some questions

1. Are the definitions equivalent?
2. Are the definitions subject to counterexamples?

Legitimate acknowledgement of causation?

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Abstract of *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1740), Final Section

Principles of association [of ideas] are reduced to **three**, *viz.*

1. **Resemblance**; a picture naturally makes us think of the man it was drawn for.
2. **Contiguity**; when *St. Dennis* is mentioned, the idea of *Paris* naturally occurs.
3. **Causation**; when we think of the son, we are apt to carry our attention to the father.

'Twill be easy to conceive of what vast consequence these principles must be in the science of human nature, if we consider, that so far as regards the mind, these are the only links that **bind the parts of the universe together**, or **connect** us with any person or object exterior to ourselves. For as it is by means of thought only that any thing operates upon our passions, and as these are the only ties of our thoughts, they are really ***to us* the cement of the universe**, and all the operations of the mind must, in a great measure, depend on **them [the three principles]**.

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Sceptical Realism about Causation?

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Contemporary commentaries

Hume thinks that **causation consists in what I shall call 'real powers'**. Real powers are thoroughly **mind-independent** [in the sense 'real'] and are more than mere regular association. They are **'secret'** [because unobservable], and **Hume's definitions** [of causation] are 'imperfect', because we cannot grasp their nature, and we cannot grasp their nature because that nature is not revealed to us in sensory experience. But he believes in it and is not a sceptic about it.

– Beebee 2006, 173 (clarification added)

Sceptical Realism (Helen Beebee's thesis about Humean causation)

'Hume is a realist about causation – he believes in real powers – but is also sceptical about them, in the sense that he holds that we cannot know or even conceive of their true nature.'

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Hume thinks that **causation consists in what I shall call 'real powers'**. Real powers are thoroughly **mind-independent [in this sense 'realist']** and are more than mere regular association. They are **'secret' [but not 'connected']**, and **Hume's definitions [of causes]** are 'imperfect', because we cannot grasp their nature, and we cannot grasp their nature because that nature is not revealed to us in sensory experience. But **we believe in it and refer to it nonetheless.**

– Beebee 2006, 173 (clarification added)

Sceptical Realism (Helen Beebee's thesis about Humean causation)

'Hume is a realist about causation – he believes in real powers – but is also sceptical about them, in the sense that he holds that we cannot know or even conceive of their true nature.'

Sceptical Realism about Causation?

Weekly Quiz
Hume
Three Modes
Hume's Fork
Billiard Ball Argument
Uniformity Princ.
Fork Argument
Custom Principle
Chimera
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Occasionalist Argument
Hume's Confutation
Sceptical Arguments
Two Defs. and Causation
Assignments

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Sceptical Realism about Causation?

Week 12: Hume
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Objection: e.g. Not-So-Sceptical **Anti**-Realism

Simon Blackburn's **quasi-realism** (projectivism or non-cognitivism, i.e. requiring no judgement of truth-values, where we need 'no sentiment or *inward* impression' or 'intrinsic intentionality')

– Blackburn 2002, 269, 276: calling Hume 'a realist about this or that is hopeless'; 1993, 279; Boehm 2020, etc.

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1 Weekly Quiz
2 Introduction to David Hume
3 Three Modes of Inference—Deduction, Induction, & Abduction
4 *Hume's Fork*—'Relations of Ideas' & 'Matters of Fact'
- The Billiard-Ball Argument against *A Priori* Reasoning
5 Uniformity Principle of Nature
- The Two-Pronged Fork Argument in the *Enquiry*
6 The Principle of 'Custom or Habit'
7 Chimerically *Obscure* Ideas and *Ambiguous* Terms
8 The Copy Principle of Impression
9 No *Idea of* Necessary Connection?
- The Occasionalists' Argument
10 Hume's 'Philosophical Confutation' of Occasionalism
- Sceptical Arguments
11 Two Definitions of the Term 'Cause' towards (Anti-)Realism
12 Assignments for the Next Lecture

Final Essay Questions in Part 2: C18th

Week 12: Hume

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Weekly Quiz

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Assignments

1. Critically evaluate Berkeley's argument about occasional causes, compared with Malebranche's occasionalism.
2. Critically evaluate Berkeley's argument against one of the twelve objections in the *Principles*.
3. Critically evaluate Berkeley's argument about embodiment in the *Three Dialogues*.
4. Critically evaluate Berkeley's argument for mechanical causes as distinguished from metaphysical ones in *De motu*.
5. Critically evaluate Hume's argument about the uniformity of nature in his problem of induction (*Enquiry*, §4).
6. Critically evaluate Hume's argument that there is no idea of power or necessary connection (*Enquiry*, §7), along with Shepherd's response to that argument.
7. Critically evaluate Shepherd's argument for a necessary connection in the *Essay*, along with Hume's sceptical response to that argument.
8. Critically evaluate Reid's 'same shop' argument for trust in the senses.

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   - What is 'a problem of induction' or inductive inference?
   - Is Hume's *sceptical* argument about the Uniformity Principle convincing and sound?
   - What is a good objection to the argument?
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Next Week 13: Shepherd

Week 12: Hume

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Assignments

- Assignment 1: Read Mary Shepherd's *An Essay upon the Relation of Cause and Effect*, pp. 9–46 (ch. 1; also Advertisement & Preface); pp. 46–98 (ch. 2).
- Assignment 2: Read the 'Argument Advice' and 'Essay Questions' in PDF. And ask me or your assigned TA for anything unclear in the documents and slides.

- Keep active in the **WeCom**/**企业微信** group for this course, and pay attention to the **Blackboard** (SS149, Spring 2024), in which you can find all the basic info and `recommended references`.
- **Office hours** of the instructor (Center for Social Sciences, C111) and TAs (their offices) are Mondays 2-4pm, or any working time of appointment, by WeCom direct message or email.