

David Hume

*An Enquiry Concerning
Human Understanding,
Pts. III-IV*

Lexi Nisita

III: *Of the Association of Ideas*

- All ideas are connected by some type of association
- Ideas “bound together by some universal principle” (AW 541b)
- Three types:
 - Resemblance
 - Contiguity in time or place
 - Cause or effect

IV: Skeptical Doubts Concerning the Operations of the Understanding

- Relations of ideas
- Matters of Fact

Relation of ideas

- “...every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain” (AW 542a)
- We arrive at these discoveries through the operation of thought, and they do not depend on any qualities of the physical world

Matters of Fact

- Not demonstratively or intuitively provable--
nor can they be disproven
- Founded on cause and effect: “by means of that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses” (AW 542b)
- “...it is constantly supposed that there is a connection between the present fact and that which is inferred from it” (AW 542b)

How do we arrive at Cause and Effect?

- All knowledge of a relation, or any matter of fact, is gained by *experience*.
- “Every effect is a distinct event from its cause” (AW 544a)

Laws and Ultimate Causes

- How can we go a step further than cause and effect, to explain the laws and ultimate causes of matters of fact?
- These things are beyond the limits of human understanding