

«Causes certainly are connected with effects; but this is because our theories connect them, not because the world is held together by cosmic glue» (Norwood Russell **Hanson**, *Patterns of Discovery. An Inquiry into the Conceptual Foundations of Science*, Cambridge: CUP, 1965, chap. III, p. 64).

Intr.

De la narration historique à l'analyse causale. Qu'un fait historique soit explicable ne signifie pas qu'il soit prédictible (Gallie: renoncer au modèle nomologique-déductif). Narration de l'historien (faire comprendre l'*intrigue*: Veyne) vs. narration de l'épidémiologiste ou du paléontologue (hypothèses causales et *scénarios*). L'explication causale dans les sciences (Wallace). Séquences causales, chaînes causales: exemples.

«We produced a cascade of hops by arranging CO molecules in staggered chains of dimers. The cascade was initiated by moving a 'trigger' CO molecule with the STM tip to form an initial chevron. This newly formed chevron then spontaneously decays and forms yet another chevron, and so on for a cascade of any length. This 'linked chevron' cascade propagates forward reliably because the energy of the system is lowered each time a molecule hops to a new site on the surface. [...] In general there is no lower limit to the average energy that must be dissipated with each hop. As this energy drops below the thermal energy, backward hops become common, and the propagation time increases» (Heinrich A.J., *et al.*, 'Molecule cascades', *Science*, 15 Nov 2002, 298: 1381-1387).

Gallie W.B., 'Explanations in history and the genetic sciences', *Mind*, 1955, 64: 161-180.

Russell Bertrand, 'On the notion of cause', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1912-1913, 13: 1-26. (Repr. in: *Mysticism & Logic*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1918, and *Our Knowledge of the External World*, London: Norton, 1929).

Wallace William A., *Causality and Scientific Explanation*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, vol. 1: *Medieval and early classical science*, 1972; vol. 2.: *Classical and contemporary science*, 1974.

Koopman Jim, 'Controlling smallpox', and **Halloran** M.E., 'Containing bioterrorist smallpox', *Science*, 15 Nov 2002, 298: 1342-1344 & 1428-1432.

1. L'enquête étiologique: les chemins causals

Le côté *détective* de l'enquête. Identification des voies par où l'influence 'passe'. Reconstruction de la 'chaîne' des événements. Les scénarios et leurs variantes. Premier présupposé de l'explication causale: tout n'est pas lié à tout. Dépendance et indépendance des événements. Notion d'indépendance statistique.

«I was compelled to ask whether cadaverous particles had been introduced into the vascular systems of those patients whom I had seen die of this identical disease. I was forced to answer affirmatively» ... «The fetus, as yet unborn and in the birth canal, does not resorb foul animal-organic matter when it is touched by the examiner's contaminated fingers, but only when its blood is organically mixed with the mother's blood that has already become contaminated. This explains why an infant never dies of childbed fever while the mother remains healthy; childbed fever does not arise in the newborn through direct resorption. Both become ill while the child and mother are in organic interchange through the placenta...» (Semmelweis, 1861).

«Principes généraux du Calcul des Probabilités:

1. Le premier de ces principes est la définition même de la probabilité qui, comme on l'a vu, est le rapport du nombre des cas favorables à celui de tous les cas possibles. [...]

3. ... Si les événements sont indépendants les uns des autres, la probabilité de l'existence de leur ensemble est le produit de leurs probabilités particulières. [...]

4. Quand deux événements dépendent l'un de l'autre, la probabilité de l'événement composé est le produit de la probabilité du premier événement, par la probabilité que cet événement étant arrivé l'autre arrivera. [...]» (Laplace, 1825, début).

Semmelweis Ignaz F., *Die Aetiologie, der Begriff und die Prophylaxis des Kindbettfiebers*, Budapest, 1861; Engl. tr. 'The etiology, concept, and prophylaxis of childbed fever', in: Buck Carol, Llopis Alvaro, Nájera Enrique, Terris Milton, eds., *The Challenge of Epidemiology. Issues and Selected Readings*, Washington DC: PAHO-WHO, 1988, Scientific Publication n° 505. .

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Laplace Pierre Simon de, 'Essai philosophique sur les probabilités' (1814, 1825), in: (1878-1912, posth.), *Oeuvres complètes*, publiées sous les auspices de l'Académie des sciences, Paris: Gauthiers-Villars, 14 vols, 1878-1912 (vol. VII, début).

Wunsch Guillaume, *Causal Theory and Causal Modeling*, Louvain: Leuven Univ. Press, 1988.

2. L'ordre causal n'est pas 'logique', il est empirique

Second présupposé de l'explication causale: l'effet ne précède pas la cause («after cannot cause before»). Propriétés 'logiques' de l'ordre causal? Importance de la chronologie: elle permet d'écarter des hypothèses 'absurdes'. Non-réversibilité (asymétrie) et non-transitivité de la dépendance causale: la dérivation causale (entre événements) est autre que la dérivation logique (entre propositions). La cause explique l'effet, non parce qu'elle l'implique (logiquement), mais parce qu'elle contribue à le produire (réellement).

«we may define a cause to be an object, followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second. Or in other words where, if the first object had not been, the second never had existed. The appearance of a cause always conveys the mind, by a customary transition, to the idea of the effect. Of this also we have experience. We may, therefore, suitably to this experience, form another definition of cause, and call it, an object followed by another, and whose appearance always conveys the thought to that other» (Hume, Sect. VII, Part II).

«I take Hume's second definition as my definition not of causation itself, but of causal dependence among actual events. Causal dependence among actual events implies causation. ... But I reject the converse. Causation must always be transitive;

causal dependence may not be; so there can be causation without causal dependence. ... We extend causal dependence to a transitive relation in the usual way. Let c, d, e, \dots be a finite sequence of actual particular events such that d depends causally on c, e on d , and so on throughout. Then this sequence is a causal chain. Finally, one event is a cause of another if, and only if, there exists a causal chain leading from the first to the second. This completes my counterfactual analysis of causation» (Lewis, 1973, p. 563).

«For want of a nail a shoe was lost; for want of a horse a rider was lost; for want of a rider a battalion was lost; for want of a battalion a battle was lost; for want of a victory a kingdom was lost - all for want of a nail» (Hanson, 1980, chap. III, p. 50).

Hume David, *Enquiry concerning human understanding*, 1772, 2nd ed. 1777; repr. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, reimpr. 1998.

Lewis David, 'Causation', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 1973, 70: 556-567.

Davis J.A., *The Logic of Causal Order*, London: Sage, 1985.

Papineau David, 'Causal asymmetry', *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 1985, 36 (3): 273-289.

Jenicek Milos & Cléroux Robert, *Epidémiologie*, St Hyacinthe, Québec: EDISEM & Paris: Maloine, 1982 (chap. 7: 'Raisonnement causal...').

3. Comment s'assurer de la réalité / de la solidité d'une dépendance causale

On ne teste qu'un lien à la fois. Le modèle épidémiologique. De la présomption de causalité (cause *prima facie*) à l'affirmation du lien causal. Soit un facteur C qu'on soupçonne d'augmenter le risque d'occurrence de E: la méthodologie statistique permet de confirmer la réalité du lien entre C et E, de mesurer sa force (indicateurs quantitatifs: risque attribuable, risque relatif), de distinguer les 'facteurs' du risque des simples 'marqueurs'. Cette méthodologie suppose la répétabilité des séquences (leur caractère générique). Critères permettant de juger qu'il y a une relation de cause à effet en l'absence d'arguments expérimentaux: les 'indices concordants'. Peut-on tester des hypothèses causales ayant trait à des séquences d'événements non reproductibles? Hypothèses sur les origines de la bipédie.

«L'évènement C_t est une cause présomptive de l'évènement E_t si, et seulement si:

$$(1) t' < t, \quad (2) P(C_t) > 0 \quad \text{et} \quad (3) P(E_t | C_t) > P(E_t). \gg$$

(Suppes, 1970), chap. 2, Définition 1, p. 12).

«The conclusion that cigarette smoke is a direct cause of cancer derives from many different types of epidemiological evidence, combined with the fact that the smoke can cause cancer in experimental animals.» (Doll & Peto, 1981, p. 1220).

«L'assèchement: un phénomène associé à l'émergence des hominidés. [...] L'hypothèse d'un lien entre les changements de l'environnement et l'évolution de l'homme n'est pas nouvelle: elle a été suggérée dès 1809 par Lamarck. En effet, celui-ci avait bien vu que l'évolution de la locomotion humaine résultait de facteurs environnementaux puisqu'il envisageait le passage d'une forme ancestrale arboricole à une forme bipède terrestre, passage lié à une modification du milieu d'où disparaissait l'arbre. Cette hypothèse est largement répandue...» (Brigitte Senut, 'L'émergence de la famille de l'homme', in: Coppens & Picq, eds., 2001, vol. 1, chap. 4, p. 195).

Suppes Patrick, 'A probabilistic theory of causality», *Acta Philosophica Fennica*, Fasc. XXIV, Amsterdam: North Holland, 1970.

Doll Richard & Peto Richard (1981), *The Causes of Cancer. Quantitative Estimates of Avoidable Risks of Cancer in the United State Today*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Susser M., 'Judgment and causal inference: criteria in epidemiologic studies', *Am J Epidemiol*, 1977, 105: 1-15.

4. Le 'mécanisme' de l'action causale

Si la cause explique l'effet, qu'est-ce qui explique le lien de la cause à l'effet? Recherche du 'mécanisme' par lequel la cause entraîne l'effet. Propagation de l'influence causale. 'Marqueurs' attestant la continuité du processus (Salmon).

«La diphtérie se contracte par contamination directe, par l'intermédiaire des gouttelettes de salive rejetées par les porteurs de germes» (Harrison's *Principles of Internal Medicine*, New York: McGraw Hill; tr. fr. Harrison T.R., *Principes de médecine interne*, Paris: Flammarion Médecine Sciences, 8e partie, Toxi-infections, § 151).

«Statistical and causal relations constitute the patterns which structure our world - the patterns into which we fit events and facts we wish to explain. Causal processes play an especially important role in this account, for they are the mechanisms which propagate structure and transmit causal influence in this dynamic and changing world. In a straightforward sense, we may say that these processes provide the ties among the various spatio-temporal parts of our universe» (Salmon, 1982, p. 175-176).

«Causal processes are distinguished from pseudo-processes in terms of their ability to transmit marks. In order to qualify as causal, a process need not actually be transmitting a mark; the requirement is that it be capable of doing so» (Salmon, 1984, chap. 5, p. 147). [the 'at-at' theory of causal propagation]

«I can think of nothing illuminating to say about scientific explanation in all possible worlds. In this world I doubt that there is any single logic of explanation. I believe that it is important to look for mechanisms, but I am convinced that the mechanisms of the quantum domain - which may well be noncausal - are very different from those that operate on a macroscopic scale» (Salmon, 1990, Preface, p. xi).

Salmon Wesley C., with contributions by Richard C. Jeffrey and James G. Greeno, *Statistical Explanation and Statistical Relevance*, Pittsburgh: Univ of Pittsburgh Press, 1971.

Salmon Wesley C., 'Comets, pollen and dreams: some reflections on scientific explanation', in: R. McLaughlin, ed., *What? Where? When? Why? Essays on Induction, Space and Time, Explanation, inspired by the work of Wesley C. Salmon and celebrating his first visit to Australia, Sep-Dec 1978*, Dordrecht: Reidel, 1982.

Salmon Wesley C., *Scientific Explanation and the Causal Structure of the World*, Princeton: PU Press, 1984.

Salmon Wesley C., *Four Decades of Scientific Explanation*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990.

Salmon Wesley C., 'Causality and explanation: a reply to two critiques', *Philosophy of Science*, 1997, 64: 461-477.

Concl. Opacité de l'ontologie causale.

«To give scientific explanations is to show how events ... fit into the causal structure of the world» (Salmon, 1977, cit. in: 1984).

«The jackrabbits which inhabit the hot arid regions in the southwestern part of the USA have extraordinarily large ears. If we ask why they have such large ears, the answer is not 'the better to hear you with, my dear'. Instead, the large ears constitute an effective cooling mechanism. If the body temperature begins to rise, the numerous blood vessels in the ears dilate, and warm blood from the interior of the body circulates through them. The animal seeks out a shady spot, heat is radiated from the ears, and the body temperature is reduced. The jackrabbit has these large ears because they constitute an effective mechanism for temperature regulation» (Salmon, 1982).