

Why?
Because . . .

I Causation

II Explanation

I Causation (yah boo!)

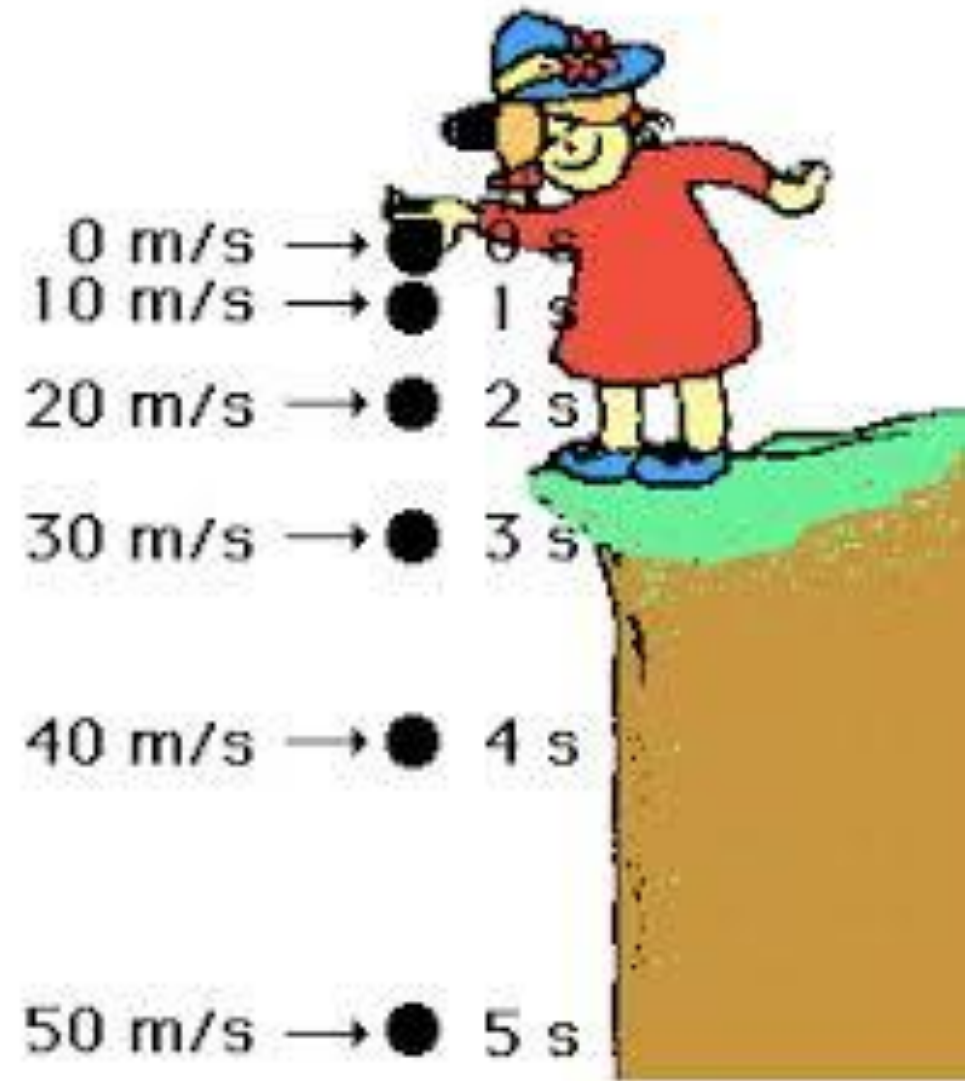
II Explanation (huzzza!)

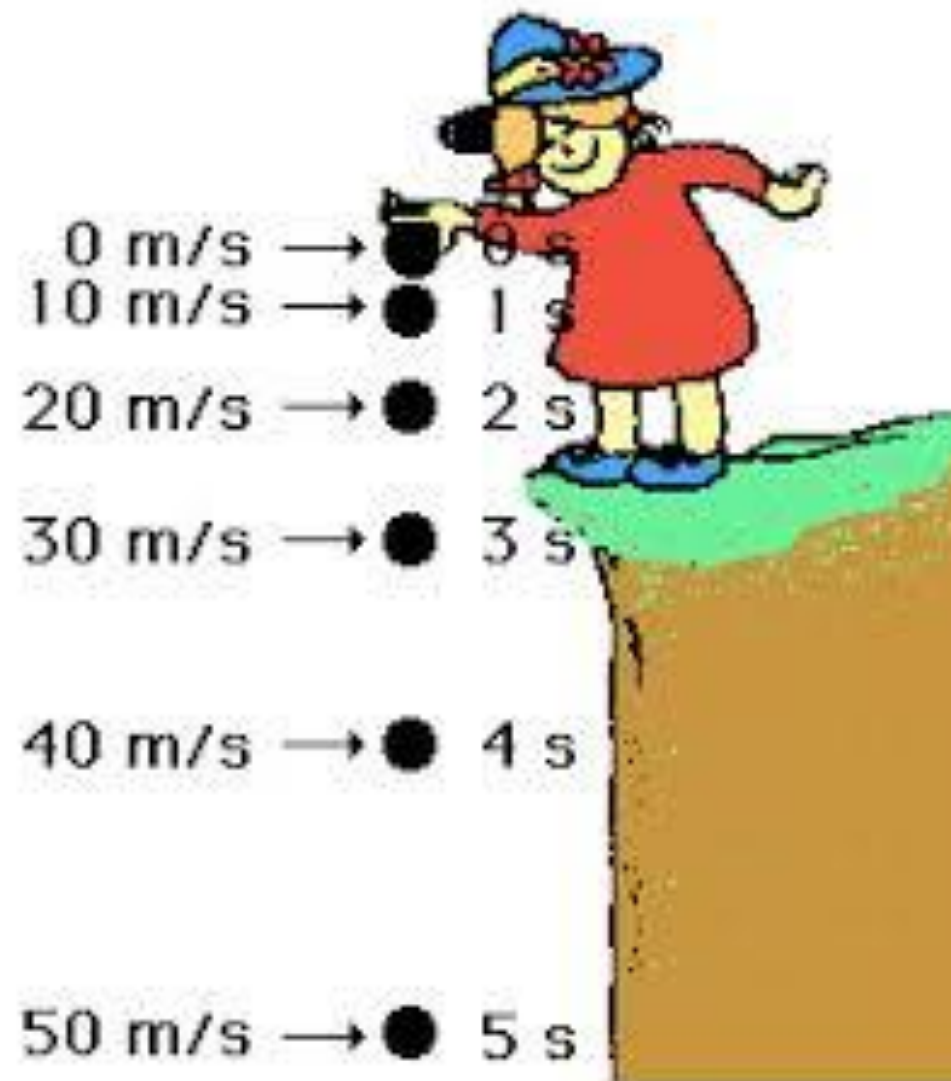
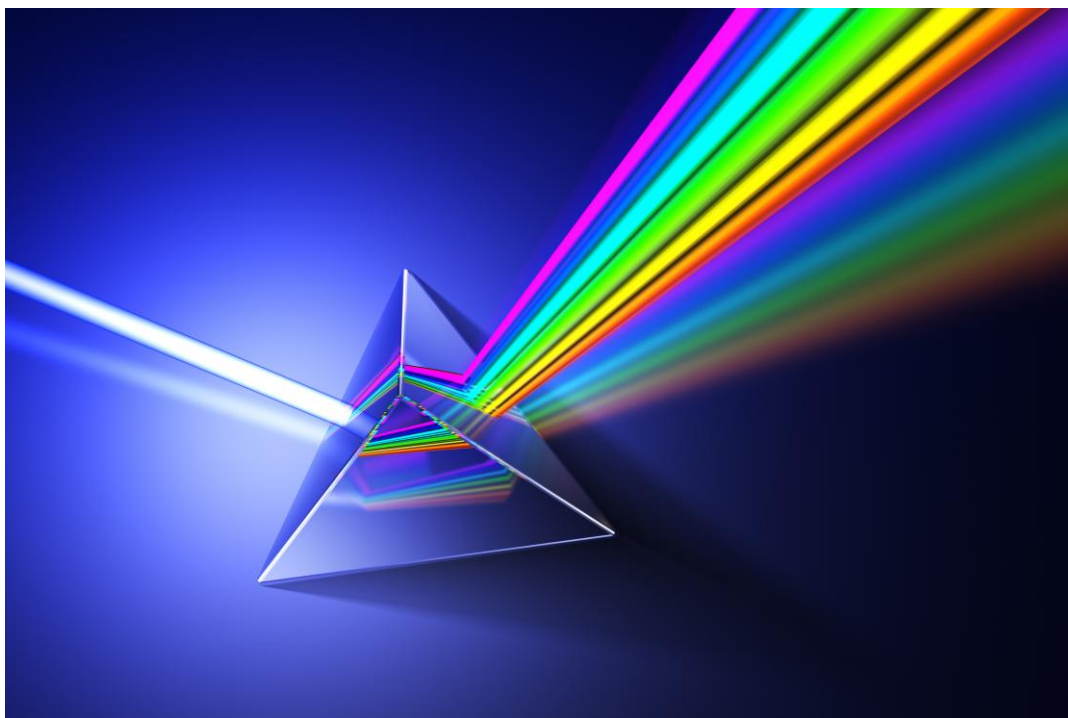
I Causation (yah boo!)



This calls for
~~a beating . . .~~
castigation







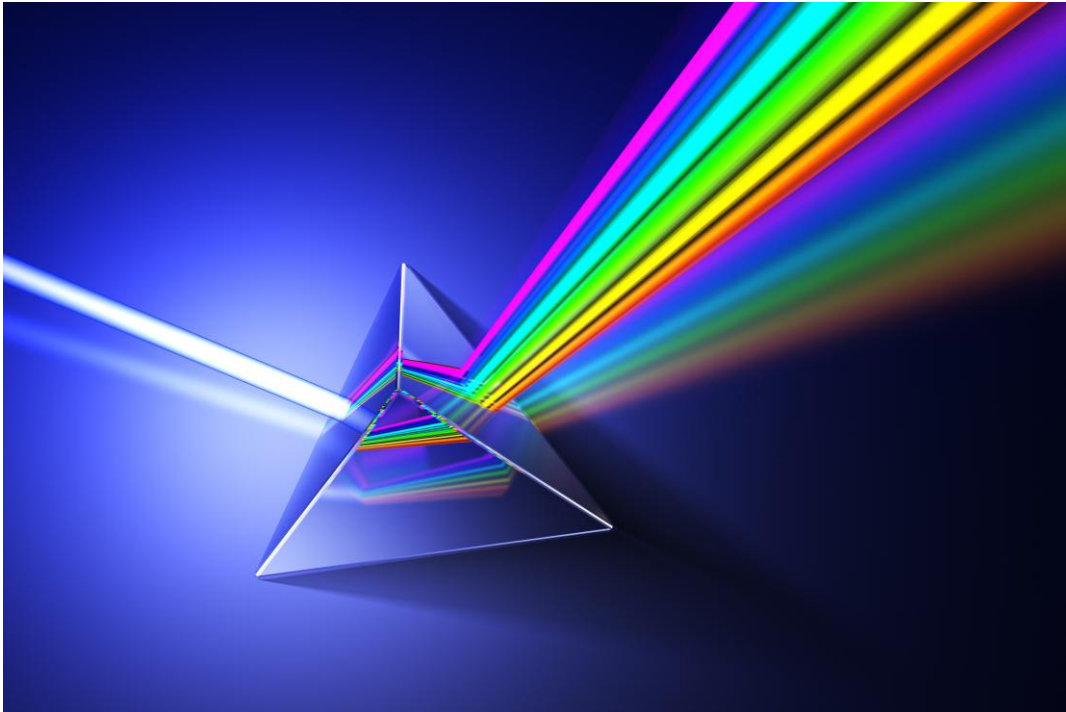
we are never *sensible** of any
connexion betwixt causes
and effects

David Hume *A Treatise on Human Nature* 1.4, #165

*ie we never *observe* such a connection,
never *perceive* causation at work.















Light travels in straight lines

~~Light travels in straight lines~~

LIGHT CAUGHT BENDING



Spectrum



Ball falls

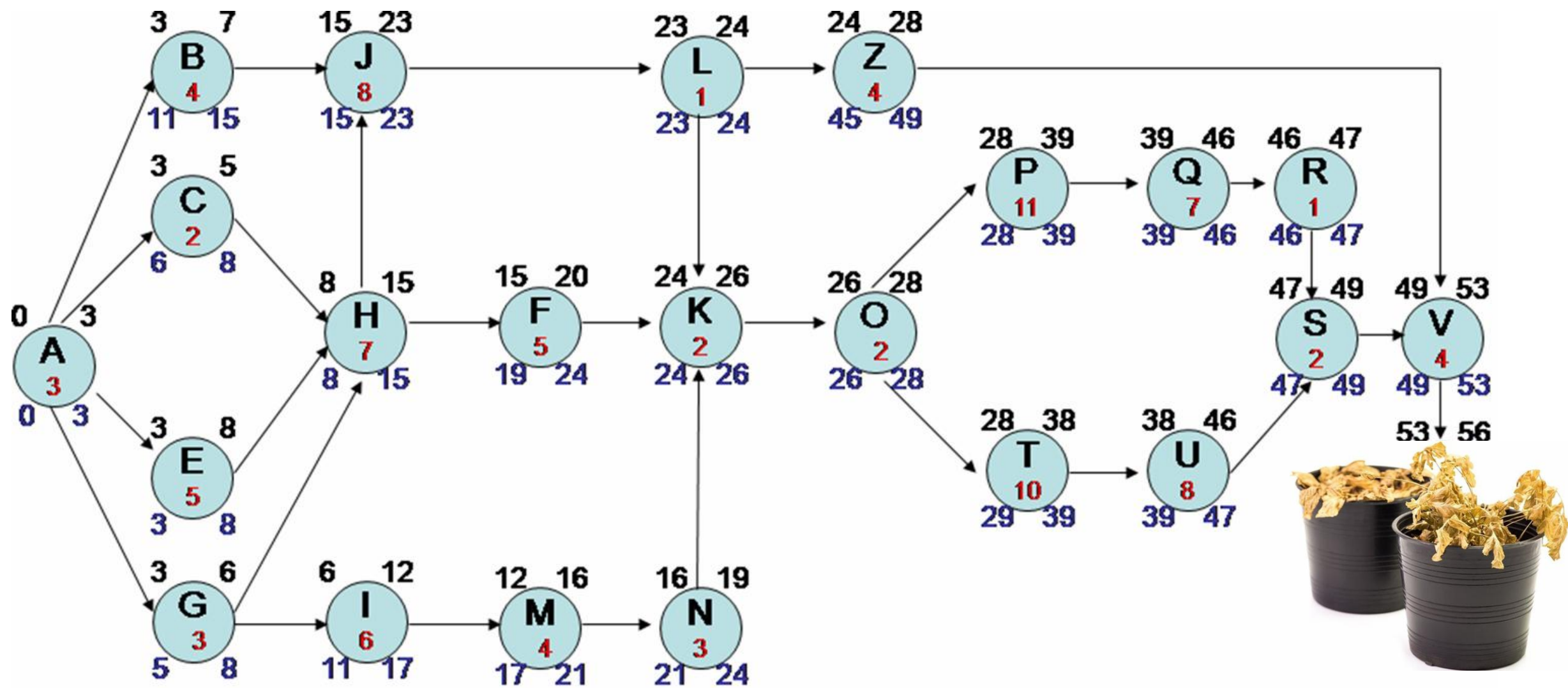
?







And everywhere, people rejoiced.





~~whenever X, always Y,~~



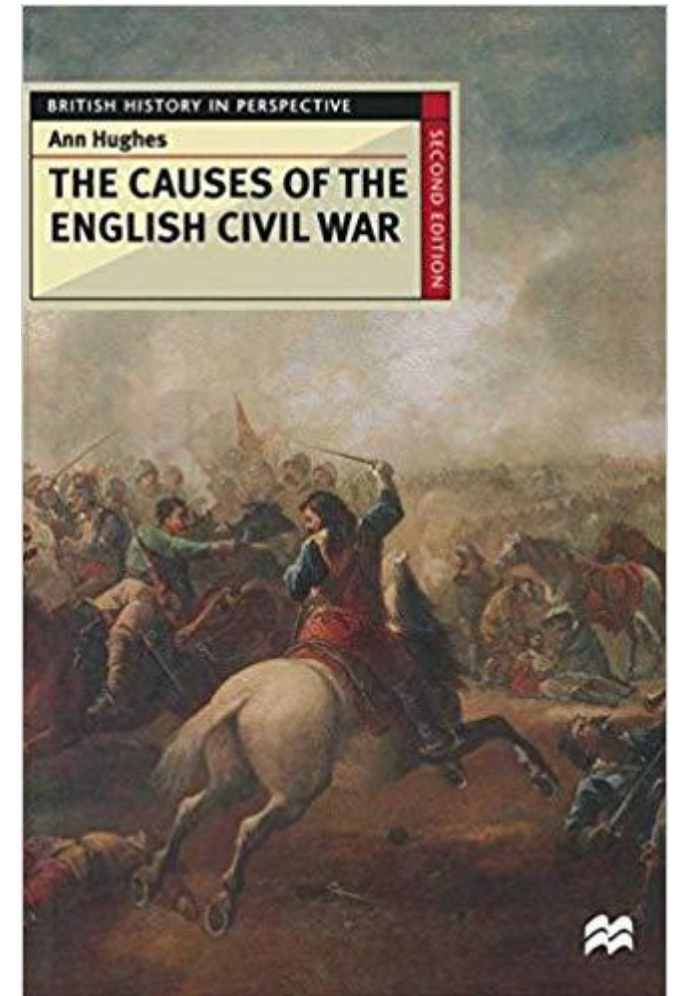
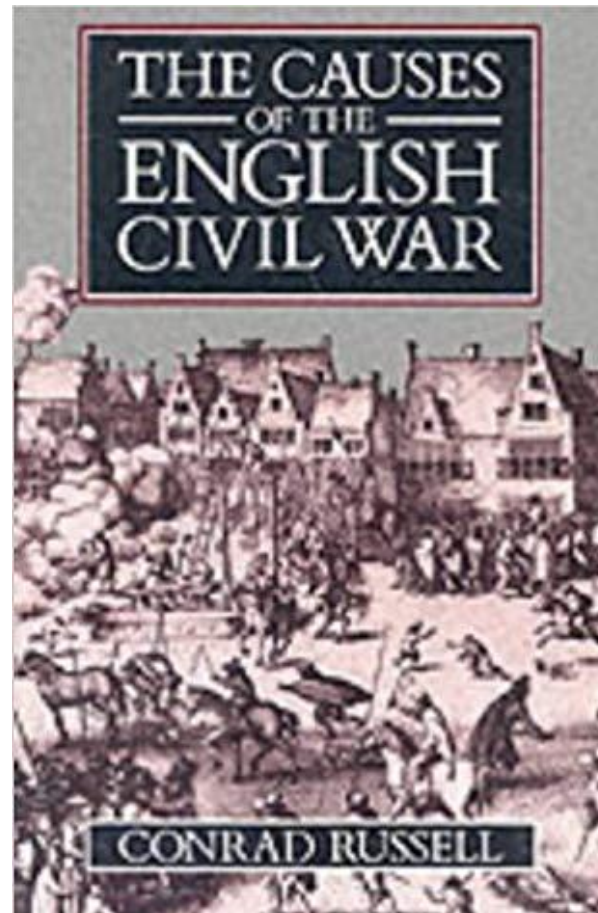
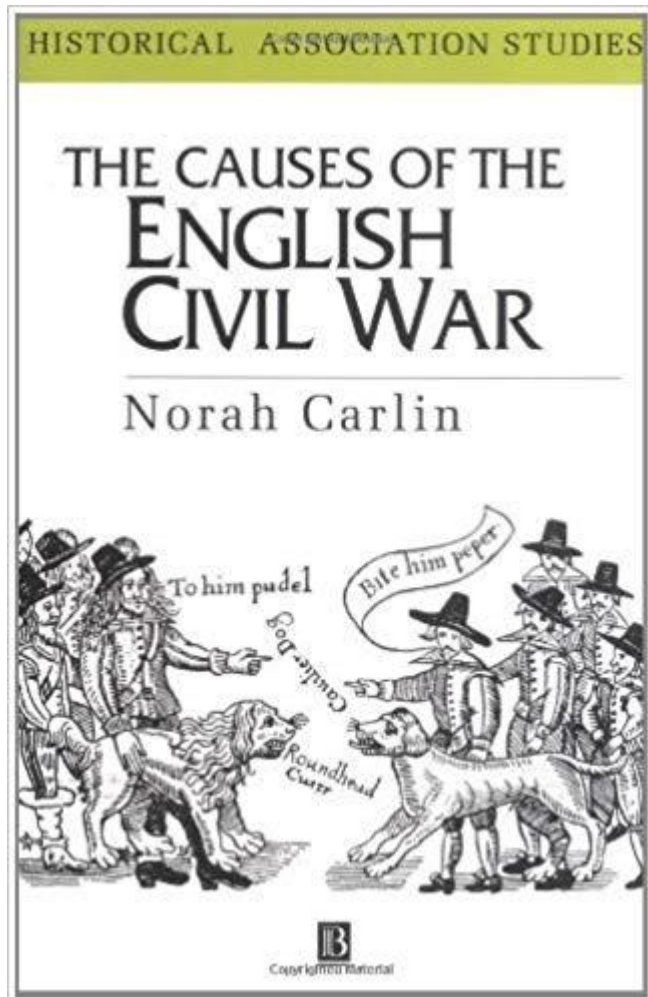
whenever X, often Y.





Causes of the English Civil War

(Document Questions for Common Entrance) by R. J. **Acheson**



II Explanation (*huzza!*)

“Explanation. That which produces understanding how or why something is as it is.”

(Oxford Companion to Philosophy)

“That which produces *understanding*
how or why something is as it is”

“**Explanation**, an act of
making something
understandable.”

(*Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* 3rd Ed)

Why?

Why?

Because . . .

Why?

Because . . .

I see!

Why?



Because ...



I see!



There was an old woman who swallowed
a cow,

[How?]

I don't know how she swallowed a cow!

[Why?]

She swallowed the cow to catch the goat,
Why?

She swallowed the goat to catch the dog,
Why?

She swallowed the dog to catch the cat,
Why?

She swallowed the cat to catch the bird,
Why?

She swallowed the bird to catch the spider,
That wriggled and jiggled and tickled inside
her,
Why?

She swallowed the spider to catch the fly,
Why?

I don't know why she swallowed the fly,
Perhaps she'll die.

There was an old woman who
swallowed a horse . . .

She's dead—of course!

Since Aristotle obviously conceives of a causal investigation as the search for an answer to the question “why?”, and a why-question is a request for an explanation, it can be useful to think of a cause as a certain type of explanation.

(Stanford Encyclopaedia)



Why are those dominoes lying like that?



Why are those dominoes lying like that?



Because it's a stable position. All forces equal and opposite.

How did they get to be like that?



How did they get to be like that?



Because they
knocked each other
over.

Why did they knock each other over?



Why did they knock each other over?



Because Alenka
flipped them

Why did Alenka flip them?



Why did
Alenka
flip
them?



Because
she
wanted to
try a
forking
domino
effect.

Because
she
wanted to
try a
forking
domino
effect.



I see!



“A singular event ***e*** (the *explicandum*) is explained if and only if a description of ***e*** is the conclusion of a valid deductive argument, whose premises, the *explanans*, involve essentially a lawlike statement ***L*** and a set ***C*** of initial or antecedent conditions.”

(Psillos summarising Hempel)

The event ***e***

Or $e^1 + e^2 + \dots + e^n$

Exact time space coordinates
which include all e (and no non- e)?

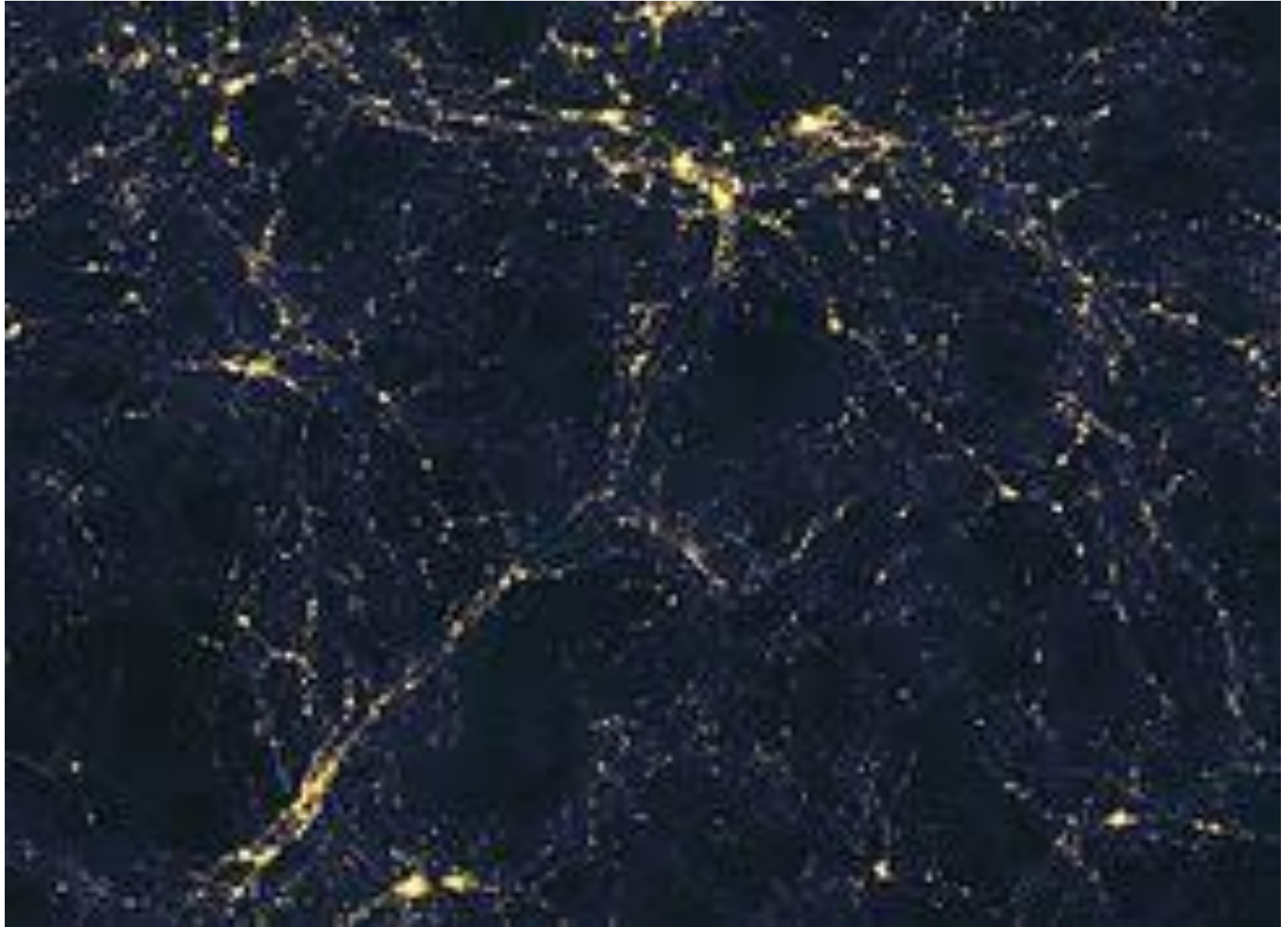
Full verbal description of every
observable aspect of e within those
co-ordinates?

the lawlike statement L

~~Light travels in straight lines~~

LIGHT CAUGHT BENDING

the set C of initial or antecedent conditions



‘epistemology’

About ~~knowledge~~

Επ + ἰστημι = I stand on or by



“I have found you an
argument; but I am not
obliged to find you an
understanding.”

Dr Johnson

We understand

Negative explanations –

Because not . . .

We understand

Negative explanations – Because not . . .

Multiple but not exhaustive
explanations – Because this
. . . and that . . . and the
other

We understand

Negative explanations – Because not . . .

Multiple but not exhaustive explanations –
Because this . . . and that . . . and the other

Statistical explanations –
Because often . . .

We understand

Negative explanations – Because not . . .

Multiple but not exhaustive explanations –
Because this . . . and that . . . and the other

Statistical explanations – Because often . . .

Non consecutive explanations –
Because once . . .

We understand

Negative explanations – Because not . . .

Multiple but not exhaustive explanations –
Because this . . . and that . . . and the other

Statistical explanations – Because often . . .

Non-consecutive explanations – Because
once . . .

Intentional explanations –

Because they wanted to . . .

Why?
Because . . .

I see!