

CONTENTS

Part I Prelude to Causality

1 PROBLEMS OF CAUSALITY IN THE SCIENCES	3
1.1 Why this book on causality?	3
1.2 Five scientific problems	4
1.3 The contents of this book	6
2 A SCIENTIFIC TOOLBOX FOR PHILOSOPHY	9
2.1 Methods for finding causes	9
2.2 Observational methods	10
2.3 Experimental methods	11
2.4 Between observation and experiment	14
2.5 Beyond observation and experiment	15
2.6 How to make a study work	15
3 A PHILOSOPHICAL TOOLBOX FOR SCIENCE	19
3.1 Arguments	19
3.2 Methods	21
3.3 Levels of abstraction	22

Part II Causality: Accounts, Concepts and Methods

4 NECESSARY AND SUFFICIENT COMPONENTS	27
4.1 Examples: electrical short-circuit and AIDS	27
4.2 Component causes	28
4.3 INUS causes and related concepts	30
4.4 Rothman's pie charts	32
5 LEVELS OF CAUSATION	35
5.1 Examples: personalized medicine and migration behaviours	35
5.2 Three parallel literatures	36
5.3 Bridging the levels—and the terminology!	41

6 CAUSALITY AND EVIDENCE	46
6.1 Examples: effects of radiation and smoking causing heart disease	46
6.2 What do we want to know?	47
6.3 Evidence for causal relations	51
6.4 Evidence-based approaches	56
7 CAUSAL METHODS: PROBING THE DATA	60
7.1 Examples: apoptosis and self-rated health	60
7.2 The need for causal methods	61
7.3 The most widespread causal methods	64
7.4 Key notions in causal methods	67
8 DIFFERENCE-MAKING: PROBABILISTIC CAUSALITY	75
8.1 Example: smoking and lung cancer	75
8.2 Is causality probability-altering?	76
8.3 Beyond probabilistic causes	82
9 DIFFERENCE-MAKING: COUNTERFACTUALS	86
9.1 Example: mesothelioma and safety at work	86
9.2 The unbearable imprecision of counterfactual reasoning	87
9.3 Philosophical views of counterfactuals	88
9.4 Counterfactuals in other fields	93
10 DIFFERENCE-MAKING: MANIPULATION AND INVARIANCE	99
10.1 Example: gene knock-out experiments	99
10.2 The manipulationists: wiggle the cause, and the effect wiggles too	100
10.3 What causes can't we wiggle?	103
11 PRODUCTION ACCOUNTS: PROCESSES	111
11.1 Examples: billiard balls colliding and aeroplanes crossing	111
11.2 Tracing processes	112
11.3 How widely does the approach apply?	114
12 PRODUCTION ACCOUNTS: MECHANISMS	120
12.1 Example: how can smoking cause heart disease?	120
12.2 What is a mechanism? The major mechanists	121
12.3 Important features of mechanisms and mechanistic explanation	127
12.4 What is not a mechanism?	132
13 PRODUCTION ACCOUNTS: INFORMATION	135
13.1 Examples: tracing transmission of waves and of disease	135
13.2 The path to informational accounts	136
13.3 Integrating the informational and mechanistic approaches	143
13.4 Future prospects for an informational account of causality	146

14 CAPACITIES, POWERS, DISPOSITIONS	150
14.1 Examples: systems in physics and biology	150
14.2 The core idea of capacities, powers and dispositions	151
14.3 Capacities in science: explanation and evidence	154
15 REGULARITY	161
15.1 Examples: natural and social regularities	161
15.2 Causality as regular patterns	162
15.3 Updating regularity for current science	164
16 VARIATION	167
16.1 Example: mother's education and child survival	167
16.2 The idea of variation	168
16.3 Variation in observational and experimental methods	172
17 CAUSALITY AND ACTION	178
17.1 Example: symmetry in physics; asymmetry in agency	178
17.2 Early agency theorists	179
17.3 Agency and the symmetry problem	181
17.4 Agency and action	183
17.5 Problems for agency theories	184
17.6 Merits of agency theories	186
18 CAUSALITY AND INFERENCE	188
18.1 Example: combatting the spread of AIDS	188
18.2 Different sorts of inferences	189
18.3 Does inferentialism lead to anti-realism?	194
18.4 The heart of inference	195

Part III Approaches to Examining Causality

19 HOW WE GOT TO THE CAUSALITY IN THE SCIENCES	
APPROACH (CITS)	201
19.1 A methodological struggle	201
19.2 Causality and language	202
19.3 Causality, intuitions and concepts	203
19.4 Causality in the sciences	206
20 EXAMPLES AND COUNTEREXAMPLES	211
20.1 Examples of examples!	211
20.2 Toy examples or scientific examples?	214
20.3 Counterexamples	220

21 TRUTH OR MODELS?	227
21.1 Two approaches to causal assessment	227
21.2 Causal assessment using models	228
21.3 Causal assessment identifying truthmakers	230
21.4 Truth or models?	233
22 EPISTEMOLOGY, METAPHYSICS, METHOD, SEMANTICS, USE	237
22.1 Fragmented theorizing about causality	237
22.2 Which question to answer when?	240
22.3 Which question interests me?	242
22.4 Should we integrate the fragments?	243
 Part IV Conclusion: Towards a Causal Mosaic	
23 PLURALISM	249
23.1 If pluralism is the solution, what is the problem?	249
23.2 Various types of causing	250
23.3 Various concepts of causation	251
23.4 Various types of inferences	252
23.5 Various sources of evidence for causal relations	253
23.6 Various methods for causal inference	253
23.7 The pluralist mosaic	255
24 THE CAUSAL MOSAIC UNDER CONSTRUCTION:	
THE EXAMPLE OF EXPOSOMICS	258
24.1 Making mosaics	258
24.2 Preparing materials for the exposomics mosaic	260
24.3 Building the exposomics mosaic	267
APPENDIX ACCOUNTS, CONCEPTS AND METHODS:	
SUMMARY TABLES	273
A.1 The scientific problems of causality	273
A.2 The philosophical questions about causality	273
A.3 The accounts: how they fare with scientific problems	274
A.4 The accounts: how they fare with philosophical questions	277
 <i>References</i>	 281
<i>Index</i>	303