13. A BERKELEIAN READING OF HUME’S TREATISE, BOOK I

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ABSTRACT: In this essay I try, first, to show that Lockean passages in Book I can be given a Berkeleian interpretation. I take two passages that have, in particular, been cited as allowing only a Lockean interpretation and show how they can be more coherently construed as Berkeleian in their intended meaning. In the process of this demonstration I show that only a Berkeleian interpretation is tenable for Book I. Second, I defend the Berkeleian interpretation against several charges; for instance, a charge of textual inconsistency. I do, however, acknowledge in the process that in the Enquiry and subsequently Hume abandons Berkeley for Locke. I then offer an explanation of why he did and lastly I try to show that though Hume is thereby committed to an inconsistency he provides a way for justifying his (and our) conversational commitment to that inconsistency.

1. A BERKELEIAN INTERPRETATION OF BOOK I

In a Pickwickian sense of "Berkeleian"—meaning by it subjective idealistic or neutral monistic—and in a less Pickwickian sense of "Lockean", the question is debated whether Hume’s system is Berkeleian or Lockean.1 Of the recent participants in this debate within public view, a majority have come down on the side of Locke, as witness among others, Passmore, Anderson, Capaldi, and—with a Malebranckian difference that for our purposes makes no difference and so shall be subsumed under "Lockean"—Wright.2 It should be added that without exception these authors, with respect to the present question, treat the Treatise and the Enquiry as interchangeable.

I do not intend in this part to argue that the Berkeleian side is the correct one, though I shall later do so: at least with respect to the Treatise (not the Enquiry, which, I grant, is more Lockean in its allegiance than Berkeleian). What I want to do in this part is to prepare the ground for the Berkeleian interpretation of the Treatise by disposing of what may appear, and has appeared to many, e.g., Anderson, an immovable bulk of evidence against it; namely, the prima facie Lockean or materialist-representational passages that interlard Book I, as well as Books II and III. I should say that before a Berkeleian interpretation can be comfortably embraced these passages have to be explained away. One could say, of course, that before a Lockean interpretation can be embraced the many Berkeleian passages in the Treatise will have to be explained away. As I indicated previously, however, I do
not intend here to wage that particular battle. I simply want to show that the Lockean ones can be interpreted so as to cohere with Berkeleyan intentions.

As a first step in this undertaking it might be observed that if Hume had Berkeleyan intentions he would not be impeaching them—not really—by seeming to expound Lockean ones. The point is, as noted by Reid and tacitly, though conditionally, acquiesced in by Hume, the Lockean theory inexorably gives way to Berkeleyanism, either in the form (to use contemporary nomenclature) of subjective idealism or neutral monism.4 Thus, as a Fabian maneuver, one could forward Berkeleyan aims by introducing Lockean passages.

This abstract and general resolution of our question can, however, hardly constitute a full, or even a very satisfactory, one. The particular Lockean passages that we have mentioned resist being dissolved in a general solution. Like Dostoevsky's tortured little children who cry out, in the *Brothers Karamazov*, against the "best of all possible worlds" of the theodicy, they seem to stand as concrete, living refutations of our pious speculation on Hume's over-all strategy, which is, after all, only that. But they are not speculations. They are actual assertions of the Lockean position—or seem to be. Until they can be disposed of in all their concreteness our prefatory speculation can have little or no force at all. The rest of this part of our undertaking will be devoted to just the Berkeleyanization (so to speak) of these embarrassing passages.

But here a major difficulty confronts us. It would obviously be stultifying in its tedium to attempt this resolution of every Lockean passage in Book I. Therefore, what I propose to do instead is to consider in some depth two such passages. These are passages that seem to provide almost unanswerable support for the Lockean thesis. They have been cited by proponents of the latter—for example, Anderson and more recently Wright—to that effect (allowing, in the case of Wright, "Lockean" to innocently stand proxy for his "Malebranchean"). Our assumption shall be that if these passages can be brought to a Berkeleyan heel, then the rest, being generally weaker advocates, can also.

1. LOCKEAN SECRET CAUSES

As arguing that in the final analysis Hume's system in the *Treatise* is Lockean and not Berkeleyan Anderson several times cites the following passage from Book I:

But philosophers observing, that almost in every part of nature there is contain'd a vast variety of springs and principles, which are hid, by reason of their minuteness or remoteness, find that 'tis at least possible that contrariety of events may not proceed from any contingency in the cause but from the secret operations of contrary causes.

According to Locke, a true or perfect science of natural bodies would enable us to deduce effects from causes; but no such science is possible. The reason it is not is that either causes are too remote and consequently hidden from us or too minute and consequently hidden from us. Prima facie, Hume's hidden causes of the contrariety of events could be, as, e.g., Anderson wants to maintain, Locke's hidden causes. It
might even seem that they must be. Nonetheless, it is clear that they are not.

Locke's system, where Locke is being more careful and proponents of a Lockean interpretation of Hume most faithful to Locke,9 unites in it, in something like a marriage of opposites, scientific realism and perceptual idealism or the theory that all that we are directly aware of in perception are private contents of our minds—ideas, perceptions, etc. From the first partner of the marriage Locke derives the notion that physical causes reside in the minute parts or atoms composing bodies.10 These account not only for the effects one physical body has on another but for the perceptions that we, as perceivers, have.11 It follows, however, from the second partner of this marriage that we cannot know or apprehend these internal constitutions of bodies in that between them and us hangs always a curtain of inadequate perceptions.12 True, Locke sometimes talks as if, were our eyes microscopical, we should be able to make out these "real essences" of bodies.13 We could then have adequate ideas of them and so knowledge of them.

But be this as it may, these secret springs of Locke's, by the very nature of perception, lie irremediably outside all direct experience. Even given microscopical eyes, we should never be directly acquainted with them. Thus, according to the system of Hume's Treatise they should have to lie outside the scope of not only certainty but even probability; for in that system, it will be remembered, causal and analogical reasoning, which can alone provide even probable knowledge of existences that lie beyond actually occurring perception and memory, are limited in their reach to what can in theory be directly experienced.

The crucial question, then, is: Do Hume's secret causes or springs lie intrinsically and irremediably outside all direct experience? For only if they do are they truly Lockean and can we suppose Hume thought they were.

Having termed the "secret operation of contrary causes" a "possibility", Hume goes on to describe how this possibility is converted into a certainty and how is that? Says Hume, "by further observation" (italics ours), and then citing various cases in which the trained eye will see or notice what the untrained eye does not, he proceeds to argue that the philosopher's view that contrary effects have contrary causes arises from the same sorts of mixed observations and principles of the imagination from which probable reasoning in general emerges, along with the probability of chances.15

Thus, the upshot of Hume's further examination is that the "springs hid by reason of their minuteness" and the "secret operations" are not, in the last analysis, Lockean springs and operations at all. They are only contingently hidden springs and operations, in the same way that a needle in a haystack which escapes my glance is not an irremediably hidden needle, as would be a Lockean hidden cause, but merely a contingently hidden one, which, on looking closer or with keener eyes, I may detect.
2. THE LOCKEAN BRAIN MODEL

There occurs in Section V of Part II of the *Treatise* the following very peculiar passage, which is quoted by Anderson in support of the Lockean thesis. Hume has been explaining how it is that we are led to have the imaginary or fictitious idea of a vacuum—that is, the illusion of having such an idea when in fact we do not. His explanation has been in terms of impressions, ideas, and the sliding propensities of the imagination—in short, in terms of objects belonging to a subjective idealist or neutral monist interpretation of his system. But he then says:

When I receiv'd the relations of resemblance, contiguity, and causation, as principles of union among ideas, without examining into their causes, 'twas more in prosecution of my first maxim, that we must in the end rest contented with experience than for want of something specious and plausible, which I might have display'd on that subject. 'Twou'd have been easy to have made an imaginary dissection of the brain, and have shewn, why upon our conception of any idea, the animal spirits run into all the contiguous traces, androuze up the other ideas, that are related to it. But 'tho I have neglected any advantage, which I might have drawn from this topic in explaining the relations of ideas, I am afraid I must here have recourse to it, in order to account for the mistakes that arise from these relations. I shall therefore observe, that as the mind is endow'd with a power of exciting any idea it pleases; whenever it dispatches the spirits into that region of the brain, in which the idea is plac'd; these spirits always excite the idea, when they run precisely into the proper traces, and rummage that cell, which belongs to the idea. But as their motion is seldom direct, and naturally turns a little to the one side or the other; for this reason the animal spirits, falling into the contiguous traces, present other related ideas in lieu of that, which the mind desir'd at first to survey. This change we are not always sensible of; but continuing still the same train of thought, make use of the related idea, which is presented to us, and employ it in our reasoning, as if it were the same with what we demanded.¹⁶

Anderson accepts the above account of how we have imaginary ideas as Hume's "physical explanation" of the phenomenon; moreover, as an explanation that Hume found himself forced to give.¹⁷ But surely there is something very awry in all this.

For one thing, not only has Hume previously explained the formation of imaginary ideas, e.g., the "idea" of a vacuum, essentially in terms of psychological and not physical principles, e.g., the propensity of the imagination to slide over and confound resembling ideas, but, having introduced the Lockean brain, he at once reverts to the psychological account, making the resemblance of ideas the chief source of the confusions referred to in the "physical account".¹⁸ Thus, his "physical explanation" is no sooner yanked on stage than it is yanked off. Moreover, whatever explanatory work it has done has been at the level of pure fancy. But Hume, obviously following Newton in the matter, frowned on fanciful explanations in science. Thus, in his letter of March 6, 1734,
to Dr. George Cheyne (if Greig is correct in his attribution), Hume writes:

Having now Time & Leizure to cool my inflam'd Imaginations, I began to consider seriously how I should proceed in my Philosophical Enquiries. I found that the moral Philosophy transmitted to us by Antiquity, labor'd under the same Inconvenience that has been found in their Natural Philosophy of being entirely Hypothetical, & depending more upon Invention than Experience.19

As Hume makes clear on the very title page of the Treatise, that work is to be "AN ATTEMPT to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into MORAL SUBJECTS". "By the "experimental method"--again following Newton--he meant a method requiring the experiential disposition of questions and hence an experiential reference contained in the sense of those questions. The Lockean representation of the brain, insofar as it intended to refer to a "real" material brain, made reference to nothing in experience as experience is construed in Hume's system of impressions and ideas. Was, then, the physical explanation--the Lockean brain--an explanation that Hume was necessitated to give? Was it one that by some principle that he entertained he thought he was necessitated to give? Plainly not.

For another thing, Hume refers to the physical explanation as something which is specious and plausible. But "plausible" can have negative connotations, as when Edward Eyde, in Clarendon [(Trevor-Roper introduction edition, Clarendon Press, 1978), 69] refers to a meeting of parliament's being "upon very unpopular and plausible reasons, immediately dissolved". As for "specious", the term, when applied to reasoning and argument, was used in the 18th century as it is today to mean "apparently sound but in reality sophistical or fallacious". It was also used to mean "showy", with connotations of superficiality.20 As a product of mere fancy and not experience, the Lockean brain explanation would certainly have to be, in Hume's estimation, both showy and sophistical or fallacious. Could Hume advance as his own explanation, and one that he deemed himself "forced" to advance, an explanation that he thought to be sophistical or fallacious? That does not seem credible.

Above all, as presented by Hume, the "physical explanation" seems to deliberately flaunt an intrinsic silliness and incoherence. The mind wants a particular idea and sends off animal spirits to a certain region of the brain where the idea is placed. But in order to dispatch the animal spirits on this errand the mind presumably knows what it wants and so has the very idea that is being rummaged for--in a brain cell, no less! After this incredible rummaging, the animal spirits return with an idea that is recognized as being slightly different from the one originally wanted but nonetheless we accept it! Thus, we already had the idea we wanted and having it we accept one that we do not want in its place! At the slightest pressure of examination this entire account, as formulated by Hume, crumbles into inconsistent and absurd fragments. Can Hume have possibly been taken in by it? It is impossible to suppose so. On the very face of it, while making some kind of bow in the direction of the Lockean or physical explanation of psychological occurrences he is pointedly parading the internal absurdity of that explanation.
But why should Hume be doing any of this at this particular junction in his arguments? And, in particular, how are we to make sense of his statement that he "must have recourse" to a Lockean brain model?\textsuperscript{21}

My answer is that Hume has deliberately laid out his discussion in Part II of Book I on the basis of Hobbes' deductive ordering of the natural sciences and that precisely where the introduction of the Lockean brain model occurs is where Hobbes' scheme dictates that it must occur and that, hence, if Hume is to keep to his adopted format he must have recourse to the Lockean brain model just where he does have recourse to it and can truthfully say that he must.

In substantiation of this thesis one should, of course, like to have Hume's own imprimatur. This one does not have. Hobbes is referred to only once in the Treatise and then only in an offhand manner in connection with a very subsidiary argument.\textsuperscript{22} But in the Treatise (and generally elsewhere), Hume's references by name to non-classical thinkers or philosophers are typically few and offhand and inconsequential, or, even where he can be shown to owe his thought or argument to one or another of them, lacking entirely. In the Treatise Bayle, for instance, is not mentioned by name at all; nor is Descartes; nor is Newton. Berkeley is mentioned by name only once; Malebranche two times, and Locke four.\textsuperscript{23}

It may still, nonetheless, seem to be far-fetched to suppose that Hume should lay out his discussion in Part II of Book I on the basis of Hobbes' conception of the deductive ordering of the sciences. Explaining away the omission of any reference to Hobbes by name in the present connection does nothing to explain away the prima facie anomaly. Hume's radically empiricistic conception of scientific method is not at all similar to Hobbes' mathematically oriented one. It is not supposable, therefore, that Hume might be following in Hobbes' footsteps, as he follows in Berkeley's with respect to abstract ideas,\textsuperscript{24} because he agrees here with Hobbes. But what then could possibly be a reason for his doing so?

The view that I propose is that he is using Hobbes' conception of the sciences as a way of, science by science, clandestinely attacking the very Newtonian-Lockean materialistic conception of the ultimate subject-matter of the natural sciences—namely, that the subject-matter consists in "external", material or physical objects, forces, and so on—which, today, is commonly ascribed to Hume in the Treatise (as noted in our opening remarks). To explicitly avow that he was engaged in any such enterprise would have been bound to arouse immediate and needless opposition and blanket ridicule. The Lockean-Newtonian conception of the subject-matter of the sciences was not only the commonly accepted one among educated Englishmen by 1739 but so unquestionably accepted as to seem mere common sense. He could, though, attack a materialist conception of the subject matter of the sciences through the medium of Hobbes' familiar deductive ordering of the sciences without fear of such consequences. By about the same degree that Newton and Locke were admired and embraced by 18th century Englishmen Hobbes was detested and rejected. Unlike Newton and Locke, Hobbes was also held to be the very font and chief proponent of materialism. It would then be perfectly in keeping with Hume's wry sense of philosophic humor to use a Hobbesian spring-board in order to attack the sacrosanct scientific materialism of Locke and Newton.
This remains, of course, pure speculation. We have done nothing to turn it from an abstract possibility into a concrete probability. But now let me proceed to do so. In the way that circumstantial evidence can be confirmatory, our present thesis, it seems to me, possesses very strong confirmation.

First of all and most important of all is the fact that the ordering of topics in Part II of Book I of the Treatise follows, step by step, the deductive ordering of the natural sciences as laid out in Hobbes. Secondly, this correspondence cannot plausibly be accounted for except as a deliberate invention on Hume's part. As we have already noted, Hume's and Hobbes' conceptions of scientific method are nothing alike. Thus, it could not have taken place by unwitting coincidence, as Leibnitz and Newton, following similar but independent paths, coincidentally arrived at the discovery of the calculus. It had to be the product of ulteriorly motivated design on Hume's part. And finally, there is this to be said for our thesis. It is only, so far as I can see, by using this detectable but contrived correspondence as an interpretative sounding board that we can make coherent sense of the contents of Part II and, in particular, of Hume's otherwise incomprehensible statement that he must have recourse to the Lockean brain-model. My point here is that when dealing with a philosopher of Hume's acknowledged acumen and penetration but who notoriously delights in irony and camouflage, we must not only presuppose coherence in his utterances but above all we must presuppose it where even to the most cursory glance there appears to be outright incoherence or inconsistency in them; and hence, if under some rubric we can make out coherence, we are entitled absolutely to make use of that rubric, on the assumption that Hume meant us to.

To turn, then, to our immediate task, what we first want to do is to show in specific detail that there does exist the correspondence we have been talking about; and that means, first of all, setting down in specific detail Hobbes' conception of the natural sciences and their deductive ordering and then, in like detail, putting in a one-to-one correspondence with it Hume's ordering of topics in Part II. To the particular specialist in Hume who is concerned with the seeming lack of coherency in Part II, Book I of the Treatise or the question whether the proper interpretation of Hume in the Treatise should be Berkeleian or Lockean (Malebranchean), the proposed demonstration ought to be of consuming interest and importance. I am afraid, however, that the general reader may find it of little interest or importance—indeed, of an exasperating tediousness. Yet, if he accepts our claim of a one-to-one correspondence on our mere say-so, nothing much will be lost to him as far as the rest of our contentions in this paper are concerned should he simply skip over the demonstration in question or skim over it with a summary eye. How, then, are the just demands of both the specialists referred to above and the general reader to be equally satisfied? Taking a leaf from Hume himself (the end of Part I sect V of The Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding), I propose that, if he likes, the general reader skip the demonstration in question and leave its critical assessment to the specialist referred to above. For the convenience of both the text comprising this demonstration will be single-spaced, thus making it immediately and easily identifiable. We begin with what Hobbes calls "natural science indefinite".
The topics of natural science indefinite are determined by a preliminary, analytic part and three dependent, deductively connected synthetic parts. I shall arbitrarily call these four Hobbesian parts of natural science indefinite, Part A, Part B, Part C, and Part D. I intend to show that both in order of sequence and subject-matter Hobbes' Parts, A, B, C, and D have their contrived counterpart in Part II, Book I of the Treatise. To be sure, the passages from A to B, from B to C, and from C to D are each accompanied in Hobbes by an effort on his part to display a deductive connection. Thus, Hobbes is concerned to show how B follows from A by certain, mathematical-like additions, C from B, and so on. Hume entertains no such rationalistic methodological concern. His counterparts to Hobbes' A, B, C, and D occur in the same sequence but only in a pro forma manner. But this might be expected if, as we have maintained, the correspondence referred to was in fact deliberately contrived by Hume for the ulterior purpose of clandestinely attacking and disposing of the scientific materialism of Newton and Locke. He would then be concerned only with the letter of Hobbes' system, so to speak, not the spirit.

In Hobbes' Part A we search for the "causes of all things, as far forth as it may be attained", this search being carried out by analyzing compound things via their concepts or names into their component properties, until arriving at "such accidents as are common to all bodies, that is, to all matter". The bottom-line of this analysis by resolution is motion and place. These are the most universal accidents involved in the causes of all change. Preliminary science or Part A presents us with an explication or definition of each of these most universal accidents that are inculpated in causality: place being "that space which is possessed or filled adequately by some body" and motion being "the privation of one place, and the acquisition of another".

Having proceeded by analysis as far as we can, we turn around and proceed by synthesis or addition of place and motion. As confined to these most general "accidents", our additions generate the elements of geometry in sorts of definitions and then the theorems of geometry. Thus, we find Hobbes saying: "A line is made by the motion of a point, superficies by the motion of a line". We find him next dealing with questions concerning "what motion makes a straight line, and what a circular"; and subsequently, "We are to observe", he tells us, "what proceeds from the addition, multiplication, subtraction, and division of these motions . . . what figures, and what properties, they produce". Hobbes not unsurprisingly calls this first synthetic part of natural science indefinite "geometry".

Hobbes puts no name on the 2nd synthetic part of natural science, but what he seems to have in mind is a demonstrative or "rational" mechanics with a geometrical cast, such as one finds in Galileo. Applying the conclusions of geometry to the names of various more particular accidents of bodies, one presumably derives a knowledge of the "effects one body moved worketh upon another", first with respect to bodies taken as wholes "invading" other bodies and then with respect to the parts of bodies and their motions and effects. The study of causes and effects of parts of bodies and their motions in turn encompasses the causes of perception or sensation: first with respect to the "things without us", the "medium" of transmission and its disposition, and the "disposition of the eyes, the brain, the nerves, and heart" and then with respect to the "ways of internal and invisible motions" immediately
producing sensation.31 Part C of Hobbes' natural science indefinite encompasses, as we are employing the term "Part C", all these topics of rational mechanics: the motions of whole bodies and their effects, the motions of their parts, both visible and invisible, and their effects.

The study of the immediate cause of sensation, along with the fourth part of natural science, which deals with "sensible qualities, such as light, colour, transparency, opacity, sound, odour, savour, heat, cold, and the like" is called by Hobbes "physics".32 The segment of physics dealing with "sensible qualities", that is, the secondary qualities of 17th century theory, comprises our Part D of Hobbes' natural science indefinite. The deductive causal dependence of D on C rests, according to Hobbes, on light, colour, and the other sensible qualities' being the effects of sensation and the causes of sensation residing, as proposed in the mechanical segment of physics, in the "ways of internal and invisible motions". It might be noted in passing that these internal, invisible motions of sensation are conceived by Hobbes as having their primary seat in the heart,33 not, as by Locke and the received opinion of Hume's time (and our own), in the brain.

A further peculiarity of Hobbes' system concerns the sort of space which he conceives sensible objects or the objects of Part D as dwelling in. Body is defined by Hobbes as "that, which having no dependence upon our thought, is coincident or coextended with some part of space",34 and magnitude is said by him to be, not the effect of our imagination or a phantasm but the "accident of a body existing out of the mind".35 The implication of these explications is that those parts of natural science which refer in their propositions to pure magnitudes or extensions, namely geometry and rational mechanics, refer to things in real space, even though, according to Hobbes, "we compute nothing but our own phantasms".36 In contradistinction he is explicit in maintaining that the objects of the fourth part of natural science or the second segment of physics, namely, the sensible objects of perception, exist only in what he calls "imaginary space".37 Imaginary space is "the phantasm of a thing existing without the mind simply; that is to say, that phantasm, in which we consider no other accident, but only that it appears without us".38 It is, it would also seem, the last effect or consequence studied by natural science indefinite. As the colored, sounding, light-reflecting sensible objects of perception are the effects of the internal, invisible motions of sensation, the appearance of external existence or "outness" which they have, comprising imaginary space, is their effect upon the mind.39

Turning to Part II, Book I of the Treatise, we find the exact same ordering of topics. Sections I, II, III, and IV up to the "third objection", [pages 26-42 in the Selby-Bigge edition of the Treatise (henceforth, SBT)], have as their subject matter, corresponding to the Hobbesian analysis of matter into its most general accidents of motion and place, and the analysis of place into "that space which is possessed or filled adequately by some body", Hume's analytic critique of matter and space. In this analytic critique Hume purportedly demonstrates that bodies conceived in terms of matter commit us, vide the notion of material infinitesimals, to utterly untenable paradoxes and contradictions; and that, on the other hand, a strict analysis of our given ideas and impressions of space reveals that space is merely the appearance of mathematical points filled with color, a secondary quality, according to Hume's contemporaries, and hence a mere affectation of the mind. Hume's
conclusions are very contrary, in these regards, to Hobbes', but on the face of it he is conforming what he is doing to what Hobbes is doing in Part A of natural science indefinite: he is, by analysis, setting forth the first elements of natural science indefinite, and he is doing so by directing analysis upon the same subject matters, bodies and space.

In still another respect Hume in these sections conforms his analysis to the Hobbesian model: as illustrated in his resolution of bodies and space into their atomistic but now experiential rather than material parts, the identification of analysis with subtraction, as in Hobbes, cannot easily be missed. Moreover, where there exists significant difference, as in Hobbes' theoretic engrossment with motion in his Part A and Hume's general theoretic indifference to motion in the present sections, the ostensible reason is locatable in the very intentions that we have ascribed to Hume in adopting a Hobbesian format for his discussion of the subject-matter of natural science: in a material universe, motion has to be of the essence in accounting for efficient causes and their effects; in an idealistic or neutral monist universe, motion has to be a mere appearance and not anything real—like the motions that take place on a movie picture screen.

Beginning with the "third objection" of section IV and continuing to the end of the section (SBT, 42-45), the topics dealt with are, as in Hobbes' Part B or first synthetic part of natural science indefinite, the elements of geometry proper and their explications or definitions, followed by the demonstrations of geometry.

In the first half of section V (SBT, 53-60), we pass topic-wise from geometry to what we called in Hobbes "rational mechanics", or Part C of natural science indefinite. First, using as a springboard his own contention that "we can form no idea of a vacuum" (SBT, 53), Hume cites as a seeming confutation of his contention that "we can have no idea of a vacuum" the well-known argument in classic mechanics against a plenum that without a vacuum "into which one body must move in order to make way for another" (SBT, 55), motion would be impossible. The topics of these demonstrations are, prima facie, the motions and "invasions" of whole bodies; that is to say, the topics of the first segment of Hobbesian mechanics.

Next, (SBT, 55-60) Hume attempts to explain how, nonetheless, we falsely imagine that we have an idea of a vacuum when we really do not and to demonstrate that we do not through, and on the basis of, a series of considerations and thought-experiments which have as their subject-matter how the dispositions of things without us, media of transmission—for example, rays of light striking the eye (SBT, 59)—and dispositions of our sense organs affect our perceptions. We are dealing here with the visible and invisible parts of bodies and their effects—thus, with the second segment of Hobbesian rational mechanics, but that area of it which comprises the first segment of Hobbesian physics; that is, Part C of natural science indefinite as it studies the immediate causes of sensation. As carried out to its conclusion in Hobbes, this study would enjoin our describing the motions of the heart as they immediately produce perception, memory, and other mental or conscious phenomena. In Hume, following the dictates of theorizing which replaced the heart with the brain as the seat of sensation, this study would enjoin one's describing the motions of the brain as they immediately produce perception, memory, and their mental or conscious phenomena.
Thus, were Hume in fact using Hobbes' deductive ordering of natural science indefinite as the model for his own discussion of the subject-matter of natural science, at this precise point he would have to introduce a Lockean representation of the brain and its invisible, internal motions. Hence, he could truthfully say that he "must" have recourse to that representation, without really signifying anything more than that by his "must". And indeed, except as it allows him to obliquely attack the claims of materialism, so much and no more, we maintain, is what he means by that "must" (SBT, 60).

It would, of course, seriously prejudice our thesis if the remainder of Hume's examination of the subject-matter of natural science parted company with Hobbes' deductive ordering of natural science indefinite. But it does not.

The second segment of physics, according to Hobbes, and the fourth part of natural science indefinite or Part D in our terminology, deals with the sensible effects of the internal, invisible motions of our bodies' parts, and that is to say, with the sensible objects and qualities of immediate perception. Now immediately after inserting the Lockean brain model into his discussion Hume turns to a consideration of sensible objects in his continuing effort to show that the idea of a vacuum is an imaginary idea (SBT, 62-63). Specifically, he seems to be referring to the very same sorts of objects that he referred to before introducing the Lockean brain model; namely, the objects of mechanics--bodies at rest and in motion, the invasion of bodies by other bodies, and so on. He now, however, insists that he is to be understood as dealing solely with "the manner in which objects affect the sense" and not "their real nature and operations" (SBT, 63-64). Thus, at his own insistence, this portion of Hume's discussion conforms to the second segment of Hobbes' "physics" or the fourth part of his natural science indefinite.

The third and final segment of Hobbesian physics, and the concluding segment of natural science indefinite, concerns itself with imaginary space or the appearance of external existence engendered by sensible objects. This is the topic, it hardly needs pointing out, of section VI or the concluding section of Part II, "Of the idea of existence, and of external existence".

In tedious, I am afraid, but necessary detail I have shown how Hume's discussion in Part II of Book I follows step by step Hobbes' deductive ordering of natural science indefinite. As I have already noted, if both philosophers entertained the same conceptions of science and scientific method it would be perhaps conceivable that Hume had duplicated Hobbes' ordering of topics by coincidence, and in that case we could not be sure that his statement that he "must" have recourse to the Lockean brain model was merely a left-handed way of saying that, if he is to continue examining the subject-matter of the various sciences according to their Hobbesian ordering, he "must" have this recourse. But, as we also noted, neither philosopher entertains anything really resembling the other's conception of science, either in its method or subject-matter, except that both seem to think that the sensible objects of perception are in fact not material, external objects but phantasms or ideas and impressions.

Even though we have presumably explained away Hume's "must have recourse" to a Lockean brain model we are, nonetheless, still left
with the model itself. Ostensibly, Hume is using it to obliquely attack the materialistic interpretation of the subject-matter of natural science. But the model seems to directly refer us to material objects and motions. That would imply that the Lockean-Newtonian interpretation of science's subject-matter was at least a possible one; and to concede that could hardly be a step in establishing a Berkeleian viewpoint, the latter being one that would have to deny that possibility. Clearly, therefore, we still have some way to travel in our Berkeleianization of the present passage.

Now it might be profitable here to consider the role that the classical argument for a vacuum plays in the proceedings of Part II. Seemingly, this argument says that a vacuum must be postulated. In Part II, however, its role is patently limited to establishing only the following qualified thesis: that if we are to suppose there are material bodies in motion in a physical space then we must reject the postulation of a plenum, i.e., Cartesian mechanics, and commit ourselves to the postulation of a vacuum, i.e., Newtonian mechanics. In short, if we are to be scientific materialists, then our only recourse is the Newtonian-Lockean "void space". Immediately afterwards, though, Hume argues and tries to demonstrate (as we have seen) that the idea of a vacuum is an imaginary one. We have no such idea at all, though we think we do. Thus, as the logical positivists argued a couple of centuries later that the sentences of theology were not true or false but meaningless, Hume would appear to be arguing in Part II that the sentences of the only viable materialistic mechanics are meaningless and thus neither true nor false.

Something like this would also appear to be the subtle thrust of his introduction of the Lockean brain model. He has been arguing that the idea of a vacuum is an imaginary idea; thus, the materialistic interpretation of the subject-matter of mechanics is in effect demolished in a more powerful way than being merely shown to be false. It seems to me that the introduction of the Lockean brain model is meant to carry out the very same sort of demolition on the materialist under-pinnings given to perception by Hobbes, Locke, and the received opinion of Hume's own time; in other words, the materialist interpretation of the subject-matter of what Hobbes peculiarly calls "physics".

In support of this interpretation of Hume's introduction of the Lockean brain model we could recur to our previous demonstrations that he seems to deliberately flaunt various absurdities contained in that model and to use the term "specious" in describing it to mean not merely "showy" but "sophistical" or "fallacious". There is at hand, though, even more direct and compelling support.

It may surely be supposed that at the time he composed the Treatise Hume was familiar with Berkeley's Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous, that work having been published in 1713 and having already attained a wide circulation—three editions by 1734. Now in the second dialogue of the Three Dialogues Berkeley has Hylas propose, as an explanatory basis for our perceptions and cognitions, the idea of a Lockean brain (a Cartesian brain, a Hobbesian brain, a Malebranchean brain, would all serve as well). He then has Philonous demonstrate that Hylas can really have no such idea at all. What he supposes is the idea of a material brain with networks of nerves leading to it which "communicate certain vibrative motions . . . and these being filled with spiritus, propagate them to the brain" is at the most the absurd conception that "one idea or thing existing in the mind occasions all other
ideas". His argument is as follows. Hylas means by "brain" a sensible thing or object; sensible things are all immediately perceivable; those things which are immediately perceivable are ideas and these exist only in the mind; hence, to say that the brain is the source of our perceptions or ideas amounts to saying that one idea, the brain, is the source of all other ideas.40

Berkeley's demonstration that we can only falsely imagine that we have the conception of a Lockean brain is prima facie conclusive, given the two Berkeleian premises that what we directly perceive are only objects in the mind and that we can conceive of only like objects. In the Treatise Hume straightforwardly agrees with these two premises, his stated view being that what are present to the mind are only perceptions and that these in fact, as experiment shows, "are not possest of any independent existence"41 and that "'tis impossible for us so much as to conceive or form an idea of any thing specifically different from ideas and impressions".42

It is almost unimaginable, therefore, that he should not have agreed with Berkeley's argument and contention that we can have only an imaginary idea of a Lockean brain; and with the intent of making just that point introduces the Lockean brain model to "explain" the existence of imaginary ideas. What a delightful philosophical joke! And what could be more in keeping with Hume's sly humor, which most delighted in pulling philosophical and theological legs by seeming to say what, taken by itself, was strict orthodoxy but, taken in its surrounding context, had to be heresy!

It is, in fact, in some similar way that we would explain the appearance of Lockean passages outside of Part II and its Hobbesian dictates: at the commencement of section I Part I, for instance; here and there in Parts III and IV—for example, in section IV of Part IV (SBT, 230–231); at the commencement of section I, Part I, Book II, and elsewhere. Hume, we should want to say, is being, as Green puts its, "partly ironical",43—using the language and thought of the received philosophers and educated opinion of his time while sub rosa subverting them—; partly prudential—lest the Treatise be laughed out of court without a serious hearing, the fate of Berkeley's Principles, prudence would suggest that one seemed, at least taken literally, to be adhering to the established Lockean-Newtonian conceptions of things; and partly, one might imagine, self-skeptical. Although all the principles one was working with showed that the Lockean-Newtonian references to material bodies and brains had to be essentially meaningless, words without ideas or very different ones from those a one-to-one correspondence would dictate, still one could be wrong. Some "carelessness" would not be philosophically misplaced.44 For suppose one were wrong, and those Lockean-Newtonian passages were, as they seemed, literally intelligible, one should still be demonstrating that one's principles of human nature—the Treatise's system of the imagination and the association of ideas—explained what they had to explain! Thus, both "the moderate scepticism" of "true philosophers"45 and an indifference of results would sanction their appearance.

This is as far as one can go, it seems to me, in justifying the appearance of the various Lockean passages in the Treatise. To take the opposite tack, like Wright in his The Sceptical Realism of David Hume,46 and maintain that Hume in Book I is in effect presenting an elaborate
*reductio ad absurdum argument* in support of a Lockean, or more accurately, a Malebranchean, materialism, is simply to ride rough-shod over Hume's most explicit and unequivocal utterances in the *Treatise* (I would again remind the reader that what I say with regard to the *Treatise* is not intended to apply to the *Enquiry*). Wright argues, for instance, that what Hume is intending to show in Book I is that ideas are "inadequate" as representations of reality and as building blocks of science and that in their place and the place of analysis operating over them what we must found science and our thinking about reality on are judgments vouchsafed us by a preservation-adapted Malebranchean brain. These instinctive, physiologically based judgments express or project the "inconceivable", e.g., the material world of 18th century physics. Since, in Hume, to conceive is to form an idea or have an idea, this means that they are, like Berkeley's "notions", idea-less; at least insofar as they convey their crucial projection of the inconceivable; for example, the "vacuum" of Newtonian space.

So many exceptions can be taken to this thesis it is hard to know where to begin. For example, contrary to it, Hume does maintain that ideas can be adequate representations: the minimum ideas in an idea of extension are. Wright attempts to parry the thrust of this plain statement of Hume's by saying that it is only in respect to their representing real simplicity that they are adequate representations. But according to other plain statements of Hume these minum ideas are able to adequately represent real simplicity only because the reality they represent, i.e., their correspondent impressions, are indivisible minums. But impressions can only be that because they are not material but ideal atoms. According to Hume, material atoms, unlike ideal ones, have no conceivable real simplicity. Hence, were Wright correct, these minum ideas could not be adequate ideas, though Hume says they are.

Again, Wright's idea-less judgments, being judgments that ascribe properties to reality, albeit inconceivable ones, are judgments about matters of fact. As such they express beliefs about matters of fact. But Hume explicitly maintains that "'tis certain that we must have an idea of every matter of fact, which we believe". Indeed, he defines a belief as just a lively idea. And one might go on in the same vein were a refutation of the Lockean or Malebranchean interpretation of our intention in this part rather than merely the Berkeleianization (as we call it) of the Lockean passages in Book I of the *Treatise*.

We have, it is true, in that Berkeleianization had occasion to argue that in Hume's *Treatise*-view not only the vacuum of Newtonian mechanics is an imaginary idea but the Lockean (or Hobbesian or Malebranchean) brain is also. If we have been correct in these contentions then, in Hume's *Treatise*-view, the subject-matter of natural science, as conceived in the Newtonian-Lockean mold—and insofar as the Cartesian-Malebranchean system invokes a material brain, that too—is one immense imaginary idea. Here, of course, we have passed beyond the stated aims of the present part of our essay, which were simply to show that in spite of various Lockean passages contained in it, Book I is receptive to a Berkeleian interpretation. If the present conclusion is correct, the Lockean interpretation of Book I (as well as a Malebranchean one) is necessarily untenable.
2. A BERKELEIAN INTERPRETATION DEFENDED

In going so far, however, have we not saddled Hume with a contradiction? According to our contentions, Hume accepts the Berkeleyan principles that the only objects present in our consciousness are perceptions and that hence the only objects of our thought can be perceptions. On the basis of these principles we have had Hume maintaining that the Lockean-Newtonian postulation of natural science's subject-matter is meaningless (an "imaginary idea"). In particular, there can be no actual idea standing for that system's key term "vacuum". And it is easy to see why there cannot be. In the system of the Treatise the idea of a vacuum would have to be the copy of an impression of vacuum and the latter would have to be just that, a vacuum, since what an impression or idea is of is not anything additional to the idea or impression. Plainly, though, a vacuum cannot be either an impression or an idea. But on the same Berkeleyan principles must not the very term "matter" or "material thing" have to stand for no actual idea and so be meaningless, since no idea or its correspondent impression is a material thing? That would seem to follow. Yet, in various places in Book I Hume refers to the idea of a material thing. For instance, in Section II of Part IV he says that both mankind in general and philosophers "for the greatest part of their lives", while taking their perceptions to be their only objects, nonetheless "suppose, that the very being, which is intimately present to the mind, is the real body or material existence". Now even if mankind in general and philosophers for the most part of their lives are in error when taking their perceptions to be material existences, in so taking them they obviously entertain the notion of material things. But if persons possess the notion of material things then, surely, the term "material thing" cannot be meaningless nor can Hume have supposed that it was. We have seen, however, that he seems to be committed by his adherence to Berkeleyan principles to supposing that it is. Apparently, therefore, if we are to keep Hume consistent we shall have to suppose either that the Berkeleyan principles do not in fact entail the meaninglessness of material-thing words and sentences or that Hume, contrary to our arguments and what seem to be plain statements on Hume's part, did not subscribe in Book I to those principles. In either case our interpretation seems to be in trouble insofar as it is intended, as it is, to render Hume consistent in Book I of the Treatise.

Now I think we can preserve both our Berkeleyan interpretation of Book I and show that Hume does not propose the bald contradiction that material-thing words and sentences are at one and the same time meaningful and meaningless. Moreover, the Humean resolution of the present question provides a seemingly plausible answer to two other associated questions. The first of these is: How is it one can meaningfully refer to material existences but not vacuums? The second is the following. Hume on our interpretation has rejected the Lockean-Newtonian view on the grounds that its key term "vacuum" stands for no idea. On the other hand, he has rejected the Cartesian-Malebranchean plenist view on the ground of the classical physical argument that material motion is impossible in a plenum. The question then is: what possible alternative is there? What is the subject-matter of natural science if it is neither a Newtonian nor a Cartesian world and yet is "material existence"?

In Section II of Part IV Hume maintains that there is no contradiction or impossibility in supposing perceptions to exist unperceived. He also maintains in Section II that the independent existence of material
things is to be conceived in terms of an object of perception remaining unchanged through a perceiver's changing perceptions. Since there is no contradiction in supposing perceptions to exist unperceived and thus as objects remaining unchanged through the changing perceptions of a perceiver and since a perceiver is merely a certain set of perceptions it is possible to imagine and we do imagine that what we directly perceive, i.e., this or that perception, remains unchanged through our changing perceptions—that is, is not a member of the set comprising ourself—and thus exists independent of our perception. To believe this is, to be sure, to be taken in by an illusion of the imagination, namely, an illusion of constancy. Nonetheless, "materiality" now being defined simply in terms of perceptual constancy, this deceptive belief is the belief that what we perceive are material objects. A fortiori, therefore, we possess the idea of material things and hence material-thing words and sentences can be meaningful and are meaningful. At the same time, the Berkeleyian principle that the only objects we perceive are perceptions is preserved intact.

This answer of Hume's to the charge of inconsistency would apparently explain how, in Book I of the Treatise, it is conceived that people can have the idea of material existence while not being able to have the idea of a literal vacuum. Materiality, as now conceived, demands only the seeming constancy of a perception where none exists. Simplifying egregiously, this impression—a green something—needs only to be imagined as continuing unchanged through my subsequent perceptions of a yellowish green something, an orangish green something. But we possess no such greenish something that, imagined to remain unchanged, is vacuum.

Hume's phenomenalistic-like definition of materiality would also appear to provide an alternative to the Lockean-Newtonian and Cartesian-Malebrançhean interpretations of the subject-matter of the natural sciences. According to the latter that subject-matter consists of a material world which lies behind and is separate from one's perceptions. According to the Treatise-view it consists in the very objects of our perception, that is, perceptions themselves, but those perceptions construed as objects that remain unchanged through our changing perceptions and therefore construed as existing independent of our perceiving and hence as material existences. In short, where the subject-matter of science consists, according to the systems of Locke and Descartes, in inferred material entities it consists according to the Treatise-view in the very objects—these mountains, trees, skies and so on—which are by most of mankind and philosophers for most of their lives taken to be both the direct objects of perception and material existences. That this is all the result of illusion-forming powers of the imagination does not matter. Science needs for its purposes steadfast objects rather than the Heraclitean flux of our actual perceptions. Illusions serve these purposes perfectly well.

Except that the framework is psychological rather than linguistic, one sees here Hume adumbrating the logical fictions of the logical positivists, Russell, and other recent and contemporary philosophers. One sees him also looking backward to Berkeley, though the differences are considerable: the objects of science in Berkeley being perceptions that actually exist independent of human perceiving and the aim of Berkeleyan science being to read God's intentions from—as it were—the book of nature; the aim of Humean science being to quantify mathematically nat-
ural phenomena and efficient causes and effects. In a manner of speaking these historical relations, involving as they do some of the keenest thought of their respective times, might be considered testimonials to the philosophical attractiveness of the Treatise's interpretation of the subject-matter of natural science. Nor should common sense go unmentioned. For certainly the latter would say that the very objects of our perceptions, these very mountains, trees, and skies that I see and not some inferred duplicates or partial duplicates, are the subject-matter of geology, botany, astronomy, and the other natural sciences. Nonetheless, as I have several times hinted, it would seem that in his subsequent writings Hume abandons this phenomenalistic-like view of the Treatise and embraces, not as something that can be scientifically proved but as the rationally most satisfying resolution of the various puzzles posed by perception, the representationalist-materialist, Lockean-Newtonian view. In no other way, for instance, can be understood the following plain statement in An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding:

"But this universal and primary opinion of all men ['This very table, which we see white, and which we feel hard, is believed to exist, independent of our perception, and to be something external to our mind, which perceives it'] is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy, which teaches us, that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception, and that the senses are only the inlets, through which these images are conveyed . . . . These are the obvious dictates of reason; and no man, who reflects, ever doubted, that the existences, which we consider, when we say, this house and that tree, are nothing but perceptions in the mind, and fleeting copies or representations of other existences, which remain uniform and independent."59

One modification, however, Hume does make in the Lockean-Newtonian scheme. This, somewhat surprisingly, does not have to do with the Lockean-Newtonian vacuum. So far as I am aware, Hume simply wraps that particular problem in silence. He does attack, however, the common view of "modern enquiries" that "all the sensible qualities of objects, such as hard, soft, hot, cold, white, black, etc., are merely secondary, and exist not in the objects themselves but are perceptions of the mind, without any external archetype or model, which they represent."60 This opinion, he says, "if it be a principle of reason" [thus, subjunctively, expressing some doubt that it is] must "Bereave matter of all its intelligible qualities, both primary and secondary" and in doing so "you in a manner annihilate it, and leave only a certain unknown, inexplicable something, as the cause of our perceptions; a notion so imperfect, that no sceptic will think it worth while to contend against it."61 Presumably, therefore, Hume's own considered view in the Enquiry and, inferentially in his subsequent writings, agrees with the representational-causal view of Locke and Newton but differs from the latter in supposing the material existences to possess such sensible qualities as soft and hard, white and black, and not merely the so-called primary qualities of extension, figure, and so on.
Our Berkeleian interpretation of Book I of the Treatise and our interpretation of the Enquiry has, then, Hume exchanging a phenomenalistic-like position on the subject-matter of natural science for, loosely speaking, a Lockean representational one. Two questions now press for an answer. First, what grounds can Hume have had for this basic change in his philosophy? Second, how can he reconcile this quasi-Lockean view of material-thing references which he seems to have adopted with those arguments, deriving from his Berkeleian theory of the direct objects of perception and consciousness, which seem to show that, unlike their phenomenalistic counterparts, such material-thing references can have no meaning?

These two remaining questions can be answered here only in a partial and summary manner. Their full consideration would obviously require a separate paper. But with that caveat my truncated answer to them would be, respectively, as follows.

For one thing, a bit of inspection will show that the Treatise's equation of the concept of a material thing with independent existence and that with constancy through changing perceptions is much too broad as a definition. If, according to the principles of the Treatise, there is no contradiction in supposing the perception of a tree to exist unperceived, neither is there in supposing the perception of a pain, a passion, a thought. It would follow from the above equation that pains, passions, and thoughts were possible material things. Hume could certainly not have wished to swallow such a camel while straining gnats.

For another thing, and perhaps of more consequence, it would seem that the Treatise's stated confinement of philosophy to the study of human nature as comprising both the proper object of philosophy and the foundation of all science was not strictly adhered to by Hume and that, at least subsequent to the publication of that work, he interested himself in cosmogonical speculations. This might be inferred from the cosmogonical speculations that crowd the pages of the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. These have their precursors as far back as Section XI, "Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State", in the Enquiry. Among these cosmogonies is that purely mechanical, materialist cosmogony which, rejecting the presence or design of any deity, accounts for the present system of order simply in terms of the motions of parts of matter, each imbued with force, and their repeated, chance interactions over eons of time. It is not impossible that Hume himself opted for this account in foro interno. But whether or not he did he clearly supposed that in presenting it as a possible account of things he was presenting a meaningful account. But if that account is to make any sense at all it has to be according to a realist and not a phenomenalistic meaning of matter. There is simply no intelligible phenomenalistic translation of the conception of atoms, imbued with force, clashing against each other through eons of time, forming thereby transient systems of order, these in turn being demolished, and so on. Realizing this and being convinced that however fanciful such speculations might be they still made sense, Hume, I hypothesize, found it necessary to advert to a realist interpretation of material-thing words and sentences. But since, visibly, he still adhered to the educated view that all that was directly present to the mind were perceptions he had to enclose that
realist interpretation in a representationalist shell. Thus, loosely speak­ing, his enforced passage from Berkeley to Locke.

But having said this we land squarely in the problem that we had Hume resolving by phenomenalist means: how, in terms of the Berkeleian principles to which he subscribes, to allow material-thing words and sentences to possess any meaning. The recourse to a realist interpreta­tion of such words and sentences would seem to not only resurrect the problem but to render it insolvable.

Does Hume abandon the Berkeleian principles in question? There is no evidence that he does. On the contrary, to go by what he says in Section XII, Part II of the Enquiry, he remains a partisan of those prin­ciples. But if the objects present to perception or consciousness are only perceptions and if, consequently, one's thoughts can only be about perceptions, how can one consistently present, as a meaningful specula­tion, the mechanical, materialist cosmogony that Hume presents? One cannot. But what kind of justification can then be given for doing so?

What, of course, most thinkers who subscribe both to Berkeleian principles of perception and the materialist models of natural science in fact do is to avow carelessly the one in one breath and the other in the next breath. Consider, for example, the following statement of Nobel lau­reate physicist, Eugene P. Wigner, in Quantum Theory and Measurement (1983): "When the province of physical theory was extended to encom­pass microscopic phenomena, through the creation of quantum mechanics, the concept of consciousness came to the fore again: it was not possible to formulate the laws of quantum mechanics in a fully consistent way without reference to the consciousness. All that quantum mechanics pur­ports to provide are probability connections between subsequent impres­sions (also called "apperceptions") of consciousness". Quite as if he were uttering an unquestionable truth, Wigner refers to the immediate subject-matter of quantum physics as having to do, not with material objects, but "impressions". This is immediately after he has talked of quantum physics as being extended to "encompass microscopic phenom­ena"—surely a direct reference to material or physical phenomena; for on the fact of it, impressions cannot be "microscopic". But patently, mere carelessness cannot constitute a justification for inconsistent talk.

Whereas Wigner, however, is able to avow inconsistently both Ber­keleian and materialist principles through mere unstudied carelessness Hume does so, I propose, on the basis of a studied carelessness, and this makes all the difference when it comes to justification. Hume says of himself that he is a "careless sceptic". Presumably, a main reason for his rejection of the Treatise was that in it he had tried to be too rigorous and nice and so had fallen into paradox and absurdity, like the geometer who tries to be too fine in his demonstrations. Skepticism is therefore in order, but a skepticism that argues on behalf of careless­ness, when it comes to the profounder issues which, like the present one concerning the true objects of perception, lie beyond the quantita­tive determinations of science. Here, I envisage Hume saying, "We cannot be dogmatic or rigorous. Instead, in a deliberately careless manner, let us espouse Berkeleian conclusions where it seems incumbent upon us to do so, however inconsistently, a materialist world where that seems called for. Our ultimate ignorance in these matters is our justification for doing so".

One might reasonably hold, I think, that this Humean "way out" of the present predicament is a more viable and sensible resolution than his earlier one in the Treatise, which like the resolution of the more dogmatic logical positivists of this century was simply to treat material-thing references, realistically construed, as meaningless. Just self-evidently, such references are not meaningless. I should want to argue, however, that this solution is only a second best solution. The best solution is to say, I would contend, that since our references to a materialist universe, realistically construed, do possess meaning, we must in our perceptions be directly acquainted with material objects. It has to be admitted, however, that a seemingly insurmountable bar stands in the way of our adopting this "best way". While science in its commitment to intersubjective confirmation and disconfirmation implicitly accepts as fact our direct acquaintance in perception with material things, its models of the communicative media involved in any theory of perception lead ineluctably, as I have shown elsewhere, to Berkeley. In view of the fact of light and sound's finite velocities and the finite velocities of nerve transmissions it seems almost impossible that those models might be so altered as to allow for a direct acquaintance in perception with material things. But in any case, until such an alteration has been arrived at, Hume's "second best" way would appear, practically speaking, the best way, and indeed, the only way, out of a predicament that confronted not only Hume and the thinkers of his time but that continues to confront every serious thinker of our own time. To accept the findings and principles of natural science—and how can one fail to do that?—seems to force us to embrace, on the one hand, Berkeleian conclusions concerning the objects of perception and thought and on the other, inconsistently, the meaningfulness of a realist-materialist conception of the subject-matter of the natural sciences. By confessing our ultimate ignorance concerning the true nature and status of the objects of perception we can, as careless skeptics, now embrace one side of this inconsistency and now the other. But here might it not be objected that Hume would never countenance one's entertaining a contradiction and are we not supposing him to be doing just that in his countenancing one's now, "inconsistently", accepting the Berkeleian theses concerning the objects of perception and now the meaningfulness of a realist-materialist conception of the subject-matter of the natural sciences? In reply, it might be pointed out that our (or Hume's) careless skeptic alternately, as particular circumstances impel him, now avows the one position and now the other, not both at one and the same time, and that this precisely reflects the very manner in which Hume in section VII of Part IV of Book I of the Treatise now subscribes to the uselessness of philosophy and now to the utility of philosophy. My momentary point is that we can at different times advance inconsistent propositions without being aware that we are. Being as a matter of principle given to skeptical carelessness we might be envisaged as living comfortably with ourselves, like Hume's philosophically indifferent country squires in section VII, in this condition of logical awareness. Since this blissful ignorance could have no conceivable pernicious practical consequences there could exist, for Hume, no good, philosophical reason for our trying to break out of it.

It must be granted, however, that some spectator to our careless inconsistencies or some reflection of our own might call it to our attention that we were in effect entertaining contradictory propositions. But even in this case Hume would not advocate an abandonment of our careless attitude. Paraphrasing his own statement on the seeming dilemma of
having to choose either between a false Reason or none at all, we might have him saying, "We have, therefore, no choice left but sometimes to avow P and sometimes not-P. For our own part we cannot say what is to be done; we can only observe what is commonly done; which is, that this difficulty is seldom or never thought of; and even where it has once been present to the mind, is quickly forgot, and leaves but a small impression behind it".\(^7\) Or, going a step further, we might have him saying, "The fact that we seem committed to a contradiction only shows, in this case, that we are dealing with subject-matter that, in its nicety, lies beyond our grasp and realizing that only our ignorance is what is at the bottom of the matter, we may with equanimity grant that we are contradicting ourselves". In short, our contradiction simply confirms our ignorance here; it does not constitute a bar to our continuing in the same careless way.

The geometer, Hume contends, is in the same position when he is too nice in his thoughts: "he can prove an idea, viz. that of concurrence, to be incompatible with two other ideas, viz. those of a circle and right line; tho' at the same time he acknowledges these ideas to be inseparable".\(^7\) Hume does not advocate that the geometer therefore cease engaging in nice demonstrations. In fact, he asks the geometer to "form, as accurately as possible, the ideas of a circle and a right line".\(^7\) The moral to be drawn is not that the geometer ought not to engage in nice demonstrations but that he should be led by the contradictions he thereby finds himself confronted with to recognize the existence of the boundaries of his competence and those of science.

ENDNOTES

1. See Passmore, *Hume's Intentions* (Cambridge University Press, 1952), 13, for our use of these terms.


3. It will be seen, however, that in the end something will have to be said of attempts to explain away the Berkeleian passages on the part of realist interpreters of the Treatise; for example, Wright.

4. In his *An Inquiry into the Human Mind* Reid (as is well enough know) argues that the common theory of ideas, which forms that part of the Lockean theory which says that we directly perceive or apprehend only ideas, contains within it the outrageous conclusions of (in contemporary nomenclature) subjective idealism and neutral monism. In his letter to Reid, dated 25 February 1763, Hume avers--conditionally, it is true—that if Reid is able to clear up certain difficulties he (Hume) "shall think that my errors, by having at least some coherence, had led you to make a more strict review of my principles, which were the common ones and to perceive their futility" (Greig, *Letters of David Hume*,
I, 375-6). Hume, it should be remarked, already comments on the futility of the common (Lockean) principles in Book I, Part IV, section II of the Treatise.


Locke, loc. cit.

See Passmore, op. cit., 13.


See ibid., Book IV, chap. VIII, secs. 7 & 8.

Ibid., Book IV, chap. IV, sec. 3.

Ibid., Book IV, chap. III, sec. 25.

Ibid., Book IV, chap. 1, sec. 1.


Ibid., 60-1.

See Anderson, op. cit., 122-3.


Greig, Letters of David Hume, I, 16.

OED, "specious".

The term "Lockean", as used by those engaged in the present controversy, has more to do with the implications of Locke's views than their actual historical character. In dealing with memory, for instance, Locke explicitly denies that memory can be understood in terms of brain traces. Taking the case of birds imitating sounds they have previously heard he argues: "Since there is no reason why the sound of a pipe should leave traces in their brains, which, not at first, but by their after-endeavours, should produce the like sounds; and why the sounds they make themselves, should not make traces which they should follow, as well as those of the pipe, is impossible to conceive" (Locke, op. cit., vol. I, 201). At the same time, however, Locke conceives of the mind as being intimately connected with a material or physical brain, which functions by way of the motions of "animal spirits". Thus, in one place in the Essay he says: "Custom settles habits of thinking in the understanding, as well as of determining in the will, and of motions in the body: all of which seem to be but trains of motions in the animal spirits, which once set a going, continue in the same steps they have been used to; which, by often treading, are worn into a smooth path" (ibid., 529). In referring to a "Lockean interpretation" of Hume's Treatise and meaning by that phrase a view that connects impressions and ideas causally
with a physical or material brain and world we are not taking liberties with Locke but we (and others) are giving his sometimes muddled statements a more determinate cast than they actually possess.

22 Hume, op. cit., 80.
23 See Selby-Bigge's appendix to his edition of the Treatise.
24 Hume, op. cit., 17.
25 I use the term "natural science" as Hobbes uses it: to encompass all sciences lying outside the purely humanistic (as that word is currently employed) sciences; thus, encompassing geometry and mathematics. As will be seen, Hume's treatment of the subject-matter of the sciences in Part II of Book I lends itself to this division.
27 Ibid., 71.
28 Hobbes' own use of the term "mechanics" is narrower, in that as he uses it mechanics does not include the study of cosmological causes and effects (see, Hobbes, op. cit., vol. 3, 72-3).
30 Ibid., 78.
31 Ibid., 72.
32 Ibid., 72.
33 Ibid., 79.
34 Ibid., 102.
35 Ibid., 105.
36 Ibid., 92.
37 Ibid., 105.
38 Ibid., 94.
39 For the sake of simplicity and brevity I have omitted reference to Hobbes' treatment of arithmetic or the science of number and of time, and in my account of Part II's ordering of topics I shall omit reference to Hume's treatment of these same topics. Suffice it for our present purposes to observe that both philosophers give priority in their discussions to geometry and space; their discussions of arithmetic and time reflect, and are subsequent to, their discussions of the former topics and play approximately the same elaborative but subordinate role in both their systems.

Ibid., 67.


SBT, 218: "Carelessness and inattention alone can afford us any remedy".

SBT, 224.

Although I shall attack Wright, I should also want to commend his ingenuity. His brief for a realist interpretation of the Treatise is, it seems to, the most thoroughly worked-out that has yet been presented.

Wright, op. cit., see, for instance, 4-5, 221 ff. As for conceivability, see, for instance, 90: "Hume's objective scepticism gives one the option of accepting the modern notion of matter, though he denies that it is conceivable".

SBT, 29.

Wright, op. cit., 96.

See, Treatise, Book I, Part II, secs I-II.

SBT, 101.

This would follow from ideas and impressions being intrinsically alike and from the Humean principle that "to form the idea of an object, and to form an idea simply is the same thing; the reference of the idea to an object being an extraneous denomination, of which in itself it bears no mark or character" (SBT, 20).

SBT, 206.

SBT, 55.

SBT, 207.

SBT, 200ff.

SBT, 208ff.

HE, 135ff.


See HE, 158, footnote 1.


Thus, Hume has Pamphilus referring to the "careless scepticism of Philo" (DN, 5). If, like Norman Kemp Smith, we suppose that Philo is the spokesman for Hume, we then have Hume in effect referring to himself as a "careless sceptic". This view of the nature of his skepticism is confirmed in the Treatise where he says, "Carelessness and in-attention alone can afford us any remedy. For this reason I rely entirely upon them . . . ." (SBT, 218). For Hume's justification of careless skepticism see Section XII, Part III, Enquiry (HE, 160-61).

See SBT, 44-45.

See, this author, "Does Physics lead to Berkeley?" Philosophy, 57, no. 219, January 1982, 91-103.