15. WAS HUME A SUBJECTIVIST?

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ABSTRACT. In a crucial passage in the Treatise, Hume argues that all our sense impressions are dependent for their existence upon the state of our sense organs. Hume points out that this is not the same as an ontological dependence upon minds; and moreover the argument is clearly causal. Hume uses it to establish the system of the philosophers as opposed to the system of the vulgar. This paper argues that Hume's case parallels that which, in this century, the critical realists made against the new realists. Consequently, it is also argued, Hume is best construed, in this passage at least, as defending critical realism, rather than, as many critics contend, a version of subjectivistic scepticism.

Maurice Mandelbaum, in an important essay, has defended critical realism against what he takes to be Humean scepticism. This scepticism he infers from what he calls Hume's "subjectivism", which is the thesis that Humean impressions have the ontological status of mental entities. Similarly, part of the evidence that R.H. Popkin cites for his reading of Hume as a pyrrhonist is the same subjectivism. The main text for this attribution of subjectivism to Hume occurs in the Treatise, Book I, Part IV, Section ii, "Of Scepticism with regard to the Senses", where Hume offers an argument that the sense impressions, which the vulgar takes to be continuing and independent entities, are dependent for their existence upon the perceiving of them (210).

I want to argue, however, that the upshot of the passage in question is not so clearly a subjectivism as Mandelbaum and Popkin suggest. In fact, I shall argue that the best reading of the passage in question is as an argument for the very same critical realism that Mandelbaum himself aims to defend. That is, I shall argue that the passage in question aims to defend the claim that the true or correct view of the world in which we live is that of the critical realist; and also that Hume in this passage employs an argument much of a piece with that which the critical realists of the present century used to defend their claims.
Section I introduces the argument I shall make. Section II discusses briefly the philosophical position of the critical realists as it was stated early in this century by those who chose that title for themselves. The remaining sections III - V follow in detail Hume's discussion in "Of Scepticism with regard to the Senses". Section III analyzes Hume's causal argument for critical realism, and argues that Hume's inference that leads from the "new realism" of the vulgar to the "critical realism" of the philosophers is indeed sound, provided that we take as given Hume's account of causal reason in terms of his "rules by which to judge of causes and effects" (173-5), that is, the Baconian canons of induction that provide the logical structure of experimental science—rules which Hume had earlier in the Treatise defended as being the most reasonable norms to adopt for evaluating causal inferences. Section IV discusses the system of the vulgar, the fact that it is false, the fact that inevitably we accept it, and, finally, the fact that it is not simply irrational to accept it. Section V discusses Hume's account of the nature of the world of the philosophers, so far as we know it. Throughout Sections III - V comparisons will be made to the critical realists of the present century, with the aim of showing that Hume really was trying to do what they were doing. A conclusion briefly summarizes.

SECTION (I): INTRODUCTION

The interpretation which I wish to give to "Of scepticism with regard to the Senses" can best be seen by contrasting it to the sceptical reading of the same passage. Popkin's interpretation of Hume provides a useful point of comparison. At the same time it will enable me to bring out the limitations, and limited scope, of the present paper.

A pyrrhonist argues that every philosophical position can be shown to lead to contradiction and paradox. Once this is recognized, the mind will abandon philosophy, and content itself with custom and habit, and, in so contenting itself, it will be content. Popkin has argued that Hume is a radical pyrrhonist who holds that not merely philosophy but also commonsense leads to paradox and contradiction. More specifically, he argues that, for Hume, the mind in thinking about the world proceeds on the basis of two natural and inescapable principles of inference, to wit, that of the imagination and that of causal reasoning; and that the former generates beliefs in independently enduring bodies, while the latter generates beliefs to the contrary. According to Popkin, then, for Hume the mind naturally and inevitably falls into contradictions. Life, rather than reason, is the only escape from this radical scepticism.

The main text is, of course, the whole of Part IV of Book I of the Treatise. In the Conclusion (Sec. 7) of that part Hume mentions this "contradiction" (266) and in this context he refers us back to Sec. 2 where also he speaks (231) of a "direct and total opposition betwixt our reason and our senses". Such texts as these give strong support to Popkin's reading. Indeed, they show that Hume did reckon that there do exist conflicts between reason and our senses. Any reading of Hume must take account of this fact. Yet from texts such as those cited Popkin's interpretation does not follow. Popkin's reading holds only if Hume does not allow that the contradiction between reason and sense can be resolved in favor of one side or the other. What I shall pro-
pose is that Hume argues that causal reason is what ought to be accepted. If so, then Hume does hold that the contradiction is resolvable, and, contrary to Popkin, no radical scepticism can be attributed to him, at least not on the basis of texts just mentioned.

Now, to make the case I have proposed would require a very detailed commentary on the Humean texts, indeed on all of the Part IV of Book I and much of the rest of Book I of the Treatise. Obviously, the most that I can hope to do here is deal with but a portion of Popkin's case; the most that I can hope to do, is merely the modest task of throwing some doubt on Popkin's interpretation.

On the other hand, I have had my say elsewhere on some other supposed textual evidence for the pyrrhonist reading, arguing that these other texts also fail to support that interpretation.6

There are two major points at which contradictions between our imagination and causal reason arise. One is the conflict between the system of the vulgar and the system of the philosophers in Part IV, Sec.2. The other is the problem that arises with the modern philosophy as discussed in Part IV, Sec. 4. There is a further problem that arises with both the system of the vulgar and that of the philosophers. This is the problem of the continuing particular. That idea is certainly a notion that contradicts the fundamental principle of Hume's philosophy that impressions and other sensible particulars are momentary objects. However, it does not seem that Hume needs such a particular.7 The model of identity through change that he applies to personal identity would seem equally applicable to the case of body. It would seem that what is needed is an explanation of why Hume believes such a continuing particular must be hypothesized, rather than a defence of that hypothesis. In fact, I have argued elsewhere Hume's discussion of this issue does not support the pyrrhonist interpretation.8

In any case, however, this particular issue, which is rather different from the other two conflicts, is one about which I propose to say nothing more in the present paper. Furthermore, I shall also say nothing about the second of the two conflicts that I have mentioned, namely, the problem with what Hume calls the "modern philosophy". This, too, I have elsewhere argued does not support the pyrrhonist interpretation.9 I propose therefore to limit myself fairly strictly to the conflict between causal reason and the imagination—between the system of the philosophers and the system of the vulgar—that is the main theme of Treatise, I, IV, ii, "Of scepticism with regard to the Senses".

The thrust of my argument will be this: The faculty of causal reasoning and that of the imagination are different, and the former is, while the latter is not, capable of discipline. Nonetheless, in terms of their objective content, they have the same logic in the sense that they both involve inferences that go beyond immediate impressions. It follows that, relative to the cognitive interest of curiosity—relative to a concern for the truth—the criteria or norms for evaluating the inferences of causal reasoning are the same as those for evaluating the inferences of the imagination. From the viewpoint of the motive of curiosity, then, causal reason and the imagination are of a piece and are to be treated equally. The relevant standards are "the rules by which to judge of causes and effects" (173-4), which, as I have argued elsewhere,
Hume defends as the norms that ought to be followed by those moved by the motive of curiosity. These standards, I shall argue below, judge the inferences of causal reason to be justified, those of the imagination unjustified, or, rather, only qualifiedly justified. Thus, Popkin is wrong in finding a conflict between causal reason and the imagination in Hume; to the contrary, Hume judges the former to be, and the latter not to be, rationally justified. A central pillar of Popkin’s case for Hume being a pyrrhonist is thus eliminated.

This conclusion amounts to the conclusion that Hume opts for the system of the philosophers rather than that of the vulgar. The system of the philosophers is, or so I shall argue, of a piece with that which was called “critical realism” earlier in this century. According to this view, the real world is the world that science reveals to us, a world without secondary qualities; while the world of our ordinary perceptions does not exist. The former, for Hume, is the world to which we are led by pursuing causal inference; the latter, for Hume, is the world of imagination. The Critical Realists, such as Sellars père, held that sound scientific inference led to this world-view, that is, to what Hume called the “system of the philosophers”. The position has more recently been defended by such philosophers as Grover Maxwell and Sellars fils. Hume not only describes but defends the same position or, at least, so I shall argue. The point is that, in defending that position, Hume is in good company. It is, moreover, company that shows that the term ‘sceptic’ is perhaps not to be applied so lightly to Hume as it usually is. Critical realism is a world view that is, in a way, sceptical with respect to the world of ordinary perception. But it is not simply sceptical. For it holds, as Hume, I argue, holds, that belief in what Hume calls the “system of the philosophers” is rationally justified on the basis of sound causal inferences. And even with respect to the everyday world of ordinary perception the term ‘scepticism’ is not wholly appropriate. For, after all, critical realism does not argue that one must suspend judgment about the perceptual world; rather, it holds that one is rationally justified in concluding that such a world does not exist, that all our ordinary perceptions are false. In precisely this sense, then, we may say that Hume is not a sceptic with regard to the senses.

Mandelbaum has defended critical realism against what he takes to be a Humean scepticism. This scepticism he infers from his claim that Humean impressions have the ontological status of mental entities. In what follows I shall argue that in the section of the Treatise with which we are concerned, namely, “Of Scepticism with regard to the Senses”, Hume explicitly denies that they have this status. Moreover, the causal argument Hume employs to justify the “system of the philosophers” is, I shall argue, contrary to Mandelbaum, not meant to generate a claim that impressions are mind dependent in an ontological sense, but rather to generate the claim that sense impressions are not to be explained by the causal action of ordinary perceptual objects but by objects which lack secondary qualities. That is, the causal argument is not sceptical in intent, but aims to defend the sort of critical realism Mandelbaum himself adopts.

This interpretation makes Hume a non-sceptic only if he holds that the causal inferences that lead to the system of the philosophers are rationally justified. John Wright has recently argued that Hume is indeed a sort of critical realist in his
metaphysics, but that he is a sceptic in his epistemology. This is not the place to deal with Wright’s position in detail. Suffice it to say that I agree with others, and have so argued elsewhere, that there is a good sense in which Hume is not a sceptic with respect to induction and causation. Beliefs arrived at by inferences in accordance with the “rules by which to judge of causes and effects” are rationally justified, and therefore, contrary to Wright, critical realism is the world-view that reasonable men—the philosophers—are rationally justified in adopting.

Such is the thesis I aim to defend. But that defence will not be complete. I shall, in the first place, not undertake to defend here the Humean claim that inferences in accordance with "the rules by which to judge of causes and effects" are rationally justified. Moreover, in the second place, it is clear that later in the Treatise Hume offers sceptical arguments against what he calls "the modern philosophy". Since the latter is usually identified with what is earlier called "the system of the philosophers", this argues that my claim that Hume is not a sceptic cannot be justified. It is my view, however, that the customary identification is just mistaken; the scepticism with respect to the "modern philosophy" is not directed at the "system of the philosophers". But there is not room so to argue in this paper, so the case that I am trying to build against Popkin must, therefore, remain incomplete.

Nonetheless, if the major thrust of my argument is sound, then that alone, incomplete as it is, will go some considerable way towards establishing that the interpretations that such critics as Popkin and Mandelbaum have based on the relevant passages of the Treatise in the section "Of Scepticism with regard to the Senses" cannot be sustained by those texts. It will, in other words, go some way, if not the whole way, in showing that Hume is not a sceptic, or, at least, not a pyrrhonian.

SECTION (II): REALISMS NEW AND CRITICAL

In 1910, the New Realists threw down a challenge to the idealists who still remained the dominant tendency in American philosophy. For the latter, realism had long been refuted and existed only as an example of something rather vulgar, and in serious thought fit only as text-book example of an easily refuted position. An idealist was either subjective or objective but in either case whatever existed was either a consciousness or a content of consciousness, and if the latter, then ontologically dependent upon, and inseparable from, the consciousness of which it was the content. It was precisely this central claim of idealism that the New Realism denied. The objects we think about in mathematics or the natural sciences are not mental, nor are they dependent for their being upon the mental. Consciousness is a relation, but it is an "external" relation, so that contents of consciousness are not dependent in their being—not ontologically dependent—upon consciousness. As one of the New Realists put it, "The specific response which determines an entity to be a content of consciousness does not directly modify such entities otherwise than to endow them with content status. In other words, consciousness selects from a field of entities which it does not create". Or, as another put it, "The realist holds that things known are not products of the knowing relation nor essentially dependent for their existence or behavior upon the relation".
While not taking it to be a major argument in favour of realism, but using it at least as *prima facie* evidence, the New Realists claimed that their position "is the natural, instinctive belief of all men, and for this, if for no other reason, puts the burden of proof upon those who would discredit it". The Critical Realists undertook just such a discrediting of the New Realism, this "natural belief" of all men. The central thrust of the critique derived from the old problem of error: what is the existential status of the objects of perceptual illusions and of other erroneous experiences? If all contents of consciousness are real then so, too, are the contents that occur when we perceive erroneously. Thus, every object that appears to be in space is in space, and because different and mutually incompatible entities appear to occupy the same space (thought not to the same observer at the same time), it follows that a perceptual object like a table or a tree at each instant is not a single entity in its own right; it, or perhaps "it", has no single position or shape that is literally *it*, but many positions and shapes each one of which is relative to some observer. To this the Critical Realists objected that it was certainly not the natural belief of all men.

For the New Realists, perceptual objects are patterns of contents, or patterns of meanings (i.e., the entities *meant* or *intended* by conscious states), or, better yet, patterns of the neutral entities which, in certain contexts, become contents of consciousness; and error consists in consciousness having as its content some of these neutral entities which are not part of one of the patterned set which is a perceptual object. Now, the Critical Realists agreed that there are such meanings, or data as they were also called, and that they are not ontologically dependent on consciousness. But while agreeing on this against the idealists, the Critical Realists objected to the New Realists that nonetheless "There are ... certain most important distinctions which need to be made clear ... which the new realism has failed to see—the distinctions, namely, between these meanings and the sensational part of our mental states on the one hand and the existential physical objects to which the meanings are attributed on the other." The perceptual object itself is distinct from the neutral contents; it transcends all contents of experience, which, however, are referred or attributed to perceptual objects. Perception involves not just sensory, memory and kinaesthetic images, nor even just also meanings or non-imagistic contents, but also "outer reference" of the meaning or datum (but not the images) to an object at a point in space and time that may be far distant from us. "The datum is not accepted as alone and in itself an object awareness, but is, in a sense, projected outward, by which I mean it is unreflectively affirmed of some physical object existing in an external spatial world". This position "makes a strong appeal to common sense in the distinction which it draws between the psychic state and the physical object of perception". This appeal is counter to that of the New Realists. On the other hand, common sense is not unequivocal: it also comes down on the side of the New Realism in identifying the meant content or datum with the perceptual object. But common sense, taken uncritically, should not have the last word, and a critical evaluation of its claims in the light of the facts of error leads directly to the distinction on which the Critical Realists insist, that is, the distinction between the meaning and the perceptual object to which it is attributed.
Common sense may indeed give a snap judgment . . . and insist on identifying the datum with the object . . . but there is no reason why common sense, which is merely primitive philosophy, should have the final decision. Various important considerations . . . such as the differences between the data of different perceivers and between those of the same perceiver at different times, and the facts of error and illusion, force the serious thinker to modify considerably the snap judgment of common sense . . . the facts referred to make it impossible to identify either the datum or the images which introspective analysis discovers with the independent and common object which common sense, as well as all realistic philosophy, believes in.\(^{33}\)

Reflection upon the facts of error and upon the facts of perspectival views that vary from individual to individual and in one individual from time to time, thus lead to the conclusion that the external causes of perception are never given in experience.\(^{34}\) It is science, not either sensation or perception, that gives us knowledge of the physical world, which, in the end, is a world quite different from the world of the naive New Realist which identifies the datum or meaning with the perceptual object. Thus, for example, the Critical Realist holds, with physics, that the physical objects that cause our perceptions lack secondary qualities. The physical world to which the datum is attributed in perception is very different from the world of the data. But the fact that the physical world is not like the data of perception is no reason to doubt, or be sceptical of, its existence. As Sellars père once put it,

\[\ldots\text{is actual scientific knowledge an attempt to achieve images which faithfully copy the physical world? Does not this knowledge consist, instead, of propositions which claim to give tested knowledge about the physical world? I want the reader to get clearly in mind the difference of outlook which this suggestion involves. It involves a relinquishment of all attempts to picture the physical world. Science offers us measurements of things and statements of their properties, i.e., their effect upon us and other things, and of their structure; but it unconsciously swings ever more completely away from the assumption that physical things are open to our inspection or that substitute copies are open to our inspection.}\(^{35}\)

A series of eight propositions characterizes Critical Realism:\(^{36}\)

1. perceptual data and other contents of consciousness are not ontologically dependent on consciousness; but

2. consciousness of contents is caused by "physical" objects, and

3. in perception the contents of consciousness are referred to or attributed to the "physical" objects that cause perceptions;
"physical" things exist ontologically and causally independently of being known;

they may be the objects of our perceptions, but they are never our mental contents;

differ in some respects from the quality-groups of the contents of our perception, e.g., in not possessing the secondary qualities which we find in the contents of our perceptions;

they stand in such causal relations to our perceptions that it is possible for science to investigate some of these relations and some of the relations among physical things, and thus to gain trustworthy knowledge concerning laws of their action; but

as for any exhaustive knowledge of the inner and ultimate nature of these non-human entities, we remain ignorant, though the progress of science may replace some of this ignorance by knowledge.

The Critical Realists tended, like so many others, to view Hume as an opponent whom defended subjectivism and thus aligned himself on the side of the idealists who the Realists, New and Critical, aimed to refute. Thus, Sellars père tells us that, "Hume, and in our own day, F.H. Bradley, have . . . driven home to philosophy the psychical character of everything which is directly present in the field of experience." But to the contrary, what I now want to argue is that, given the qualifications we have noted, Hume is a Critical Realist in the sense of the eight propositions just presented.

SECTION (III): HUME'S CAUSAL ARGUMENT FOR CRITICAL REALISM

Let us begin by examining the system of the vulgar, the world of ordinary perceptual experience. It is, in effect, the world of the New Realists.

In the system of the vulgar, the world consists of objects like green trees, brown chairs, and so on, all of which are patterns of sensible particulars. Some of these sensible particulars are sensed—these are the impressions we have—but most are not given in sense experience. When we make a perceptual judgment, say that this is a green tree, the "this" is an impression, and (assuming that the judgment is true) the judgment is to the effect that this impression is part of a class of sensible particulars that exemplify the pattern of being a green tree. The system of the vulgar thus includes what Price once called a selective theory of perception; perception selects one sensible particular from a pattern as that to which it refers. For the perceived pattern to be a green tree, there must be a systematic sub-pattern of green particulars; and to say that it is a tree is to refer to particulars beyond the one that is given and the existence of which is entailed by the laws that define the tree pattern. Our perceptual judgments thus, like inductive judgements, go beyond immediate experi-
ence, and, moreover, introduce unsensed but sensible particulars that resemble sensed particulars or impressions in such respects as color.

The question is, what justifies the introduction of the unsensed particulars? This question presupposes that such a move can, contrary to idealists, be justified. As in the case of the New and Critical Realists both, it is necessary that the sensible particulars not be ontologically dependent upon consciousness or the sensing of them. As a consequence, Hume is careful to point out that the idea of an unsensed sensible particular is not self-contradictory, nor ontologically impossible (206), referring us ahead here to his discussion of the self, and the bundle account, which occurs later in Part IV, Sec. 6. But that of course gives us no positive reason for supposing unsensed particulars exist.

Now, unlike Descartes and Malebranche, Hume is not going to try to offer a metaphysical and a priori or a theological proof that body exists, i.e., that unsensed particulars exist; rather, he is going to concern himself only with the causes of this belief (187), that is, the natural causes. This should not be taken as support for a sceptical reading, however, since the causes of belief may well include good reasons. For, among the natural causes of belief may very well be reasoning in accord with the "rules by which to judge of causes and effects" (173; 132ff). The cause of belief in body may generally be characterized as the imagination (198), but imagination includes as a species causal inference (Def. 2, 172; 198), so that the causes of our belief in body can include more or less justified reasonings about cause and effect. Now, Hume has pointed out earlier that causal inference operating in an indirect and oblique manner in accord with the rules by which to judge of causes can lead to the reasonable belief in unobserved entities (132f). He points out that in a similar indirect and oblique way inferences from constancy and coherence can fill in the gaps in or perceptions, that is, lead in accordance with the rules by which to judge of causes to the reasonable belief that there are unsensed sensible particulars (197).

The model that he presents us with goes schematically something like this:

Objectively the series of sensible particulars is like this:

\[ Fa, aRb, bRc, Fc \]

Subjectively the series which we sense is like this:

\[ Fa \quad Fc \]

Reasoning from coherence via the rules by which to judge of causes we fill in the gaps thus:

\[ Fa, aRS_1, FS_1, S_1RS_2, FS_2 \]

where

\[ S_1 = \text{the R of a} \]
and
\[ S_2 = \text{the } R \text{ of the } R \text{ of } a = \text{the } R^2 \text{ of } a \]

and
\[ S_2 = \text{the } R^2 \text{ of } a = c \]

The ideas \( S_1 \) and \( S_2 \) are not simple ideas derived from impressions.\(^{41} \) They are complex abstract ideas that are constructed by us to refer to the unsensed particulars. In Russell's terms, they are definite descriptions. That is, as Hume says, we feign these ideas (208) and suppose them to exist, i.e., refer (199), which supposition is transformed into belief by the force of memory of past regularities in experience (208). [To "feign" is used here in the sense of "create" and not in the sense of "create fictions"; something feigned may well be true. Hobbes uses 'feign' in a similar sense when he remarks that

Fear of power invisible, feigned by the mind, or imagined from tales publickly allowed, RELIGION: not allowed, SUPERSTITION. And when the power imagined, is truly as we imagine, TRUE RELI-
GION.\(^{42} \)

Just as there is no sceptical implication in Hobbes' use of 'feign' so, I suggest, there is no sceptical implication in Hume's use of that word;\(^{43} \) there is nothing wrong in saying that the feigning is justifiably converted into belief.]

We must distinguish perception from causal inference, however. To be sure, objectively their content is the same, namely, patterns of inference which go beyond the data and infer the future and the unobserved from present and past sense experience. Since the two are objectively the same, the same rules may be used to evaluate both. On the other hand, subjectively perception and causal inference are very different. Both are movements of the imagination (198), but causal inferences are more a matter of reflective thought than are our ordinary perceptual judgments, which are more a matter of instinctive response. Our ordinary experience in which we fill in the gaps between our impressions is primarily a function of memory and the inertia of thought moving in a pattern, in this case, the pattern of the object the initial part of which we have observed (198; 204; 208). Thus, causal inference and perceptual judgment are two different modes of association. Nonetheless, that they are different does not imply that causal inferences cannot show that our perceptual judgments are justified; that is, it does not follow that one cannot use what Hume has argued to be the best norms for inductive inference, namely, the rules by which to judge of causes and effects, to judge that our perceptual judgments, which are also objectively inductive inferences, are justified.

On the other hand, causal inference might also show that various perceptual judgments are false. In such a case Hume speaks of a contrast between imagination and judgment (148; 267); though, as he also holds, in a broader sense the imagination includes both solid and weak inferences (225), with the understanding, or judgment,
being those inferences of the imagination that are more solidly established, that is, can be shown to be more rationally justified (267).

Now, in point of fact, causal inferences can often correct erroneous perceptual judgments. Suppose I see white paper under yellow light. Then what I perceive is that this paper is yellow. That, though, is mistaken, and I can use my knowledge of the laws of illumination to infer that, although the paper appears yellow in perception, it is in fact white. This causal knowledge enables me to assert of the yellow impression that it is a white piece of paper. This latter non-perceptual inference enables me to correct the erroneous perceptual judgment. Note, however, that while I reject the perceptual judgement as (partially) false, I do not cease to make it. As Hume would say, the inertia of the imagination carries on, determining that I continue to make the same perceptual judgment. When causal inference is used to correct causal inferences, the latter are in general modified or abandoned (147f); but sometimes other natural mental propensities determine us to continue to make judgments we are prepared to say are erroneous (148f), and cases of perceptual error are of this sort.

In the case of inferring that the apparently yellow paper is white, one has not strayed from the system of the vulgar. One can continue to hold a selective theory of perception, arguing only that one has, in such cases of error, selected as it were a wild sensible particular.

However, causal reasoning about perceptual objects in the system of the vulgar if pursued systematically leads to the system of the philosophers.

What does the case of seeing the tree look like in the system of the philosophers? There remain the entities with which we are directly acquainted. These are the green impression and the perceptual judgment that this impression is a tree is just the way a tree is described in the system of the vulgar. But in the system of the philosophers, as in the system of the Critical Realists, there is a distinction between impressions and objects. In this system, unlike that of the vulgar, the impression is not the tree. As in the system of the vulgar, for the philosophers the tree is a continuing entity, and (we are taking it) this continuity is the continuity of a series. But the impression is not part of this series. The series which is the continuing tree has none of the qualities of impressions. This is the second way in which the system of the Critical Realists differs from that of the New Realists. Impressions exhibit such secondary qualities as colors, tastes, etc., and none of these qualities given to us in our sense experience is every exemplified by the entities that are the various parts of the continuing entity which is the real tree. We perceptually judge of the impression that it is a tree, but it is not a tree nor even part of the real object and the judgment is false. As for the real tree, neither it nor any part of it is ever given to us, either directly in sensation or in our perceptual judgments. The relation between the real tree and the green impression is not part-whole as in the system of the vulgar but causal. In perception in the system of the philosophers, the "real" or physical tree interacts with the "real" or physical body. When the body is in such and such a state and comes to be situated appropriately to the tree, then an interaction occurs, bringing about a change in the state of the body. The sense impression is the next step in this sequence of events: it, and our awareness of it, are brought about by the change in bodily state.
... our perceptions have no more a continu'd than an independent existence; and indeed philosophers have so far run into this opinion, that they change their system, and distinguish, ... betwixt perceptions and objects, of which the former are supposed to be interrupted, and perishing, and different at every return; the latter to be uninterrupted, and to preserve a continued existence and identity.

This system of the philosophers involves what has been called a "generative theory of perception", which holds that the sense impression is actually brought into being by the physiological process which precedes the sensing of it, and would have no existence otherwise. In the system of the vulgar, the laws of perception are such that a physiological process causes and explains the awareness of the impression, but the impression itself is explained by its location in the lawful pattern of sensible particulars that is the continuing material object. In the system of the philosophers, the laws of perception are such that the physiological process not only causes the awareness of the impression but also the very existence of the impression itself. Clearly, the system of the philosophers contradicts the system of the vulgar.

Hume is clear that he believes he can argue to an acceptance of the generative theory of perception as it appears in the system of the philosophers (211). He performs certain experiments, and these are designed to show that "all our perceptions are dependent on our organs" (211). Note, first, that the dependence is a causal dependence on our organs, not an ontological dependence on our mind, i.e., substantial mind, as in Berkeley and the idealists. As we noted above, Hume makes clear that he agrees with both the New and the Critical Realistic positions that the idealistic account of the data given in perception is wrong: impressions, are not ontologically dependent on minds. It does not follow that there cannot be a causal dependence of impressions upon the perception of them. The point is that the latter sort of dependence does not imply idealism or subjectivism. Note, second, that Hume's argument is one which assumes the existence of sense organs, nerves, animal spirits, etc., that is, to put it briefly, it accepts realism. As Hume says, we arrive at the system of philosophers only by passing through the common hypothesis of unsensed objects, that is, the continuance of our interrupted perceptions (211). It follows directly that Hume cannot here be trying to establish some form of subjectivism. Hume's argument is from such phenomena as the appearance of double images when the eye is pressed in a certain way. But its concern is not to establish subjectivism or scepticism; rather, it is to establish something about the causal status of sensed impressions. Moreover, Hume clearly takes it to be a sound causal inference. Indeed, the sceptical reading of Hume must also take it to be a sound causal inference. For, if Popkin's interpretation of Hume is correct, then the human mind naturally falls into the contradiction between the system of the vulgar and that of the philosophers; and this can be a genuine contradiction only if the reasoning that leads to the system of the philosophers is sound.

What, then, is the structure of the causal argument that Hume uses? To begin, we must note that it begins within the system of the vulgar. The system of the
philosophers distinguishes perceptions, i.e., impressions, that exist only when perceived, and objects that have a continued existence. Now, Hume points out that, since the mind has no acquaintance with these objects, custom can have no direct force in leading us to a causal inference to those objects. The system therefore has no primary recommendation to causal reason (212). It does not follow that it has no appeal to reason: for, it could still have a secondary recommendation to reason. The relevant habits of causal inference must be acquired elsewhere, and this elsewhere can only be the system of the vulgar: thus, "the philosophical system acquires all its influence on the imagination from the vulgar one" (213). The point is that reasoning within the system of the vulgar will lead one outside that system to another, contrary, system. But the habits cannot proceed directly but in an indirect and oblique way, which, however, they already do in the system of the vulgar when the latter hypothesizes the existence of unsensed objects (197): it is such indirect and oblique reasoning based on the principle that every event has a cause and the same effects have the same causes (133) that yields a secondary recommendation to reason.

Causal reasoning, like the mental inertia that yields perceptual judgments, leads us to impose uniformity on nature. In fact, it yields greater uniformity than does perceptual experience. It is this search for uniformity that leads to the system of the philosophers that contradicts the system of the vulgar as it is given to us in our ordinary perceptual judgments.

Hume's argument is from such events as double vision, perspectival variation, and so on. In this he was to be followed by the Critical Realists. Price has argued that from cases of this sort one cannot infer, as Hume and the Critical Realists do, the causal dependence of sense impressions on our organs. All that the evidence cited shows is that the yellow impression is dependent upon the presence of yellow light. Similarly, the existence of perspectival distortions does not establish dependence upon the sense organs but shows only that they are dependent upon spatial position. "The flat and perspectively distorted shape which I see when I look at a distant mountain could still continue in existence—for all that has been shown—when I go away and shut my eyes. But it would only exist from a certain place, not from other places." One would have a realism of perspectives and appearances of the sort once proposed by the New Realists. In Hume's presentation of the experiments, the reference to perspectival variation only comes second, after the reference to double vision. Of the latter Hume says that "we do not attribute a continued existence to both these perceptions" (211). Thus, this first case at least is taken by Hume to establish that the existence of some sense impressions is dependent on our sense organs and bodily processes. But Price also questions whether the example establishes even this much. If I am looking at a chair and press my eye-ball, then I am presented with two impressions of the chair; but if I am looking at a tree and press my eye-ball, then I am presented with two impressions of the tree. Thus, double vision phenomena are causally dependent, it seems, not only sense organs but also on the external cause. Hence,

The phenomena of Double Vision has no tendency to prove that any of our sense impressions are totally dependent on 'our organs and the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits' [Treatise, 211], as Hume thinks they have, and still less that all are.
We may take this in Price's order, and attempt to see, first, whether double vision entails any conclusion about whether some sense impressions are totally dependent on our bodily state, and then, second, to see whether it entails that all are totally dependent.

As for the first, it is clear that what is crucial is the meaning of "totally dependent" (Price's phrase). Hume cannot have ignored that when double vision occurs then, in order to explain the impressions I have, reference must be made not only to the state of my organs but also the physical objects that confront me and with which I, or my body, causally interacts in the perceptual situation. After all, even Hume specifically says, "all of the objects ... become double", referring here to the objects of perception rather than the perceptions themselves. The point simply put is that the laws that causally explain the existence of the two impressions make reference to certain physical objects as initial conditions. Now, in the system of the vulgar, the case of veridical perception of the white paper, reference to the white impression occurs in the initial conditions. The white impression is part of the physical object and what the laws of perception do is show how this object, with this part, related thus and so to me who is in such and such a bodily state, has as its effect my awareness of the white impression. But the second image in the phenomena of double vision is not included in the initial conditions. Rather, it is one of the effects. Hume's point is not to deny the causal relevance of external objects in producing the doubled impressions I experience. In that sense, the second image is, of course, only partially dependent on my organs. What Hume is concerned with is locating the event which the second impression is in the total causal process of perceiving. And what he does establish is that this event is not among the events that appear in the initial conditions as constituting the physical object that provides the perceptual stimulus. As he puts this point, "... we do not attribute a continual existence to both these perceptions ..." (211). The existence of the second impression is not explained by its being part of the series of sensible particulars that constitute the physical object mentioned in the initial conditions. The event, which the second impression is, appears only elsewhere in the process, at the point where the awareness of the impression also occurs, as the immediate causal upshot of my bodily state. Its existence is explained not in terms of its being part of a physical object but in terms of its being the immediate effect, like the awareness of it, of my bodily state. This is all Hume means when he uses the example of double vision to establish that some perceptions are "dependent on our organs". Price takes Hume to be arguing for a stronger thesis than he actually argues for. Price sees that this stronger thesis is indeed not entailed by Hume's premisses, and therefore, rejects Hume's case. But he misses the point that Hume was actually trying to make, and which actually is valid. As for why Price attributes the stronger thesis to Hume, this is simply another aspect of the common tendency to misconstrue Hume in these passages as arguing for some form of subjectivism.

But even if the existence of some impressions is, in Hume's sense, dependent on our bodily state, can one conclude that all are so dependent? Clearly, not without additional premises. Hume explicitly introduces a second premiss: the two impressions in double vision are, he says, "both of the same nature" (211). How are we to interpret this? I think its context makes this clear enough. The context is that of a
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causal argument, that of an experiment. The premiss that all experimental reasoning relies upon comes immediately to mind: like events have like effects and like events have like causes, or, as Hume puts it in the "rules by which to judge of causes and effects", "the same cause always produces the same effect, and the same effect never arises but from the same cause" (173). The two impressions are of the same nature; they are like events. Sound causal reasoning, that is, as Hume has argued, reasoning in accord with the rules by which to judge of causes, including rule 4 that like effects (causes) have like causes (effects), should therefore assign like causes to the two impressions that occur in double vision, and locate them at like points in the causal process of perceiving. The vulgar, or the New Realists, may be able to offer an explanation in which one of the impressions in the double image is located as part of the object that causes the process. But it cannot do so for both. Since the two images are like, and must therefore have like causes, it follows that, if one cannot be located as part of the physical cause, then neither can. But the one is located not as part of the object perceived but as the immediate upshot of our bodily state. The other impression should be given the same location in the perceptual process. So both should be so located in the process as to have as the immediate cause of their existence the state of our sense organs—though of course the mediate or distal cause is the physical object. But further, these impressions are of the same nature as all other impressions. So all impressions should be located at the same point in the perceptual process. None should be treated as part of the physical objects perceived; all should be treated as the immediate upshot of our bodily state. Hume therefore concludes that "all our perceptions are dependent [in his, not Price's, sense] on our organs, and the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits".51

Causal reasoning has thus led Hume to develop a theory of the perceptual process in which all impressions are causally dependent on our bodily states. The facts of variation of size in perspective, the facts of apparent colors changing according to the conditions of illumination, the fact that objects appear differently when we have jaundice or when we are dizzy, and so on, can all be easily accounted for upon this theory. As Hume says, "This opinion [i.e., his theory of perception] is confirm'd" by all these other facts about perception. From all this "we learn, that our sensible perceptions are not possess of any distinct or independent existence". That is, we have justified the hypothesis of the system of the philosophers. And, contrary to what Price and Mandelbaum and others52 have argued, Hume's reasoning here is sound causal reasoning, at least if we presuppose that, as Hume argued, his "rules by which to judge of causes and effects" are the best rules for causal inference.

And in any case, the logic of Hume's inference is of a piece with that which was later employed by the Critical Realists in their polemic with the New Realists. Thus, for one, the facts of error, illusion, and perspectival variance were used to argue against the New Realist identification of the datum with the physical object perceived; each was used to argue that appearances are one thing, the physical object another, and that, since some are not, none of the appearances are to be construed as part of the object perceived. Thus, Sellars père writes:

When I approach a house, what I perceive changes continuously; the house grows larger and I can see details which were not at first ap-
parent... Now I know that it took at least a year to build this house and that it has a stability which contradicts these changes... Hence, instead of saying that things change, I assert that their appearance to me changes. But how can I reconcile this assertion with my other natural belief that, in perception, things reveal themselves as they are? When is the moment of my approach or departure that the thing supplants the appearance, and the appearance the thing. Since I am aware of no such mysterious moment, I may well be sceptical of its existence... The suspicion arises, as a consequence, that the individual perceives only the appearance of the thing and never the thing itself.53

What, then, is the status of the data, or, as Sellars calls them, percepts? Sellars goes on to point out how the percept depends not only on the physical object but also the position of the observer and, indeed, his past history, that is, his education, the associations that have built up, and the inferences that he has learned to make. All this "proves beyond doubt that the percept arises not in the object but at the brain"54; in other words, working within the system of the vulgar using causal inferences with respect to situations of error, etc., one arrives at the system of the philosophers in which all sense impressions depend causally for their existence upon the state of our organs.

... Natural [New] Realism... is forced to testify against its own possibility and to furnish the basis for an explanation of that which occurs. The result is... a compromise: things are where we judge them to be, but we do not perceive them. Instead, we perceive the percepts causally connected with them, and these percepts are spatially and temporally more directly related to the brain than to the things with which ordinarily identify them.55

It may be that these arguments offered by the Critical Realists are unsound. It may further be that in spite of their intentions, the Critical Realists end up in a sort of subjectivism and scepticism as it is claimed so often that Hume does. But that is not the issue. The point of presenting these arguments of the Critical Realists is not to defend them, but rather to defend Hume, by showing that his discussion of the systems of the vulgar and the philosophers is, in its intention and in the main thrust of its argument, of a piece with the intention and thrust of argument in the Critical Realists. No one reads the latter as subjectivists or as sceptics. Nor should one so read Hume.

SECTION (IV): THE SYSTEM OF THE VULGAR AS FALSE, INEVITABLE AND REASONABLE

Hume, at the point of his argument that we have reached, gives a brief characterization of how the mind arrives at the hypothesis of objects distinct from perceptions.
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The imagination tells us, that our resembling perceptions have a continu'd and uninterrupted existence, and are not annihilated by their absence. Reflection tells us, that even our resembling perceptions are interrupted in their existence, and different from each other. The contradiction between these opinions we elude by a new fiction, which is conformable to the hypotheses both of reflection and fancy, by ascribing these contrary qualities to different existences; the interruption to perceptions, and the continuance to objects (215).

Imagination leads us to impose order or uniformity on our perceptions. Reflection, i.e., causal reasoning, tells us our perceptions are dependent on our organs just as our awareness of them is dependent on our organs, and that our impressions are therefore annihilated by their absence. But this causal reasoning turns upon the principle of determinism ("like causes have like effects, and conversely") and this itself is a way of imposing uniformity. Reason thus takes up the project of the imagination to impose uniformity. A feature of the theory that reason proposes to explain our perceptual processes is the hypothesizing of objects distinct from our perceptions, which objects exhibit the same sort of continuance that the imagination imposes on our perceptions. The system of the philosophers thus defends a central idea of the imagination, that nature is uniform. On the other hand, it also contradicts the system of the vulgar, when it asserts our impressions do not have a continued existence. As Hume puts it a little later, the system of the philosophers "at once denies and establishes the vulgar supposition" (218). But meanwhile Hume elaborates the point that the hypothesis of the philosophers satisfies the demands of both reason and the imagination.

Nature is obstinate, and will not quit the field, however strongly attack'd by reason; and at the same time reason is so clear in the point, that there is no possibility of disguising her. Not being able to reconcile these two enemies, we endeavour to set ourselves at ease as much as possible, by successively granting to each what ever it demands, and by feigning a double existence, where each may find something, that has all the conditions it desires. Were we fully convinc'd that our resembling perceptions are continu'd, and identical, and independent, we should never run into the opinion of a double existence; since we shou'd find satisfaction in our first supposition, and wou'd not look beyond. Again, were we fully convinc'd, that our perceptions are dependent, and interrupted, and different we shou'd be as little inclin'd to embrace the opinion of a double existence; since in that case we shou'd clearly perceive the error of our first supposition of a continu'd existence, and wou'd never regard it farther. 'Tis therefore from the intermediate situation of the mind, that this opinion arises, and from such an adherence to these two contrary principles, as makes us seek some pretext to justify our receiving both; which happily at last is found in the system of double existence (215-6).
Nature leads us to make our perceptual judgments. In these we are presented with a world of continuing entities. Reasoning cannot destroy the tendency to impute an order and uniformity to experience. On the other hand, reasoning clearly asserts that the continuity given in perception is false; for, perceptual error is a fact. If our perceptions never deceived us about continuity, if there never was error in our perceptual judgments, then there would be no contrariety in experience. But error is present, and this provides the motive to go beyond the system of the vulgar. However, if all we had were perceptions, with no tendency to recognize a uniformity in nature, reasoning would never lead us to the hypothesis of double existence: we can arrive at the latter only through considerations rooted in reasoning that is oblique and indirect and which presupposes the uniformity of nature. There is, on the one hand, the recognized discontinuity in our perceptions, and there is, on the other hand, the tendency to impute uniformity to nature: the mind tries to have both. And, happily, it finds a way: the system of the philosophers. In a sense, this is a pretext for having our cake and eating it, too. But in fact, it is not a mere pretext: the only sort of pretext that will do, that will in the long run actually satisfy us, is one that satisfies our best causal reasoning. We must not let Hume's somewhat bantering tone mislead us. The use of 'pretext' suggests that *any* hypothesis will do to set the mind at rest as it endeavours to reconcile its apparently contrary aims; it suggests some pretence as a reason for adopting the hypothesis, rather than a real reason. But this is misleading: the pretext is to be one for adopting an hypothesis that is satisfying to the mind, and specifically, of course, to the mind as it conforms to the standards of the best causal reason. A bit earlier Hume made the same point that he is making here, but in a way less misleading in its suggestions: "In order to set ourselves at ease . . . we contrive a new hypothesis, which seems to comprehend both these principles of reason and imagination" (215). The only sort of pretext that will serve is one that satisfies reason, i.e., causal reason.

Here, as elsewhere, Hume's somewhat bantering tone has the tendency to mislead. Another example should be considered. Hume clearly regards as sound the reasoning that leads to the conclusion that sense impressions are dependent on our sense organs. But does he regard the conclusion to which it leads to be acceptable? I think the answer to this question is clearly affirmative. On the other hand, a negative answer is invited when Hume proceeds to describe the resulting system as follows: "This philosophical system", he tells, "... is the monstrous offspring of two principles, which are contrary to each other, and which are mutually unable to destroy each other" (215). The use of 'monstrous' here is suggestive. The term 'monster' may mean an imaginary animal or one of huge or extraordinary size. It may also mean a person of inhuman cruelty or wickedness. But none of these uses is appropriate. The term 'monstrous' might also express indignation or wondering contempt, or, on the other hand, it may express nothing more than is expressed by 'exceeding' or 'wonderful', as when Swift wrote to Stella about a day in which "We have a monstrous deal of snow" (Feb. 8, 1710-11). But its conjunction with 'offspring' indicates Hume is using it in a metaphor playing on the common usage in which it refers simply to an animal or plant deviating in one or more of its parts from the normal type, an animal that is malformed relative to the norm. The system of the philosophers is monstrous, then, in no other sense than that the two principles each have normal offspring, and the system of the philosophers, an offspring of both, diverges from the norm of each: the point is
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no different from the one Hume made earlier when he argued that "this philosophical hypothesis has no primary recommendation, either to reason or to the imagination" (212), or the point he makes later when he refers to reasoning "such as that of Sect. 2 [i.e., the section we are now discussing], from the coherence of our perceptions" as reasoning not "by any principle [i.e., a habit caused directly by an observed constant conjunction], but by an irregular kind of reasoning from experience . . . " (242). Passmore suggests that reasoning cannot be used to defend the "monstrous" hypothesis. But, it seems clear, reason can, after all, defend the hypothesis. Passmore is very likely misled into thinking that the hypothesis of the philosophical system is indefensible by nothing more than Hume's playful use of 'monstrous'.

The system of the philosophers, we thus see, does conform to the best canons of causal reason. We ought, therefore, by those canons reject the system which contradicts that of the philosophers; we ought, in other words, to reject the system of the vulgar. We must, as one Critical Realist put it, distinguish perception and knowledge. In perception we have thing-experiences but do not perceive physical things; we have only knowledge about, not experience of the latter, and epistemologically "perception . . . [is] subordinate to knowledge". In spite of this, however, we continue to perceive, and cannot help it, or, in Hume's terms, we cannot but affirm the system of the vulgar. The explanation for this is in terms of psychology: perceiving is an automatic process that occurs prior to, and independently of, reflective thought. In Hume's associationist psychology, what this amounts to is that the principle or mode of association that leads us to perceive as we do, i.e., to perceive the world as described in the system of the vulgar, is a principle irreducible to causal reasoning.

But now, Hume carefully proceeds to point out, the philosophical system is sufficiently similar to that of the vulgar, that we can revert to the latter without serious conflict.

Another advantage of this philosophical system is its similarity to the vulgar one; by which means we can humour our reason for a moment, when it becomes troublesome and solicitous; and yet upon its least negligence or inattention, can easily return to our vulgar and natural notions. Accordingly we find, that philosophers neglect not advantage; but immediately upon leaving their closet, mingle with the rest of mankind in those exploded opinions, that our perceptions are our only objects, and continue identically and uninterruptedly the same in all their interrupted appearances (216).

Nor is this reversion to the system of the vulgar irrational, in spite of the fact that we have every good reason to believe system to be false. How can we understand this?

Both systems generate predictions about what impressions we will and would perceive under such and such appropriate circumstances. Up to a point, these predictions agree. The radical disagreement concerns the nature of the un-perceived particulars. Both systems introduce unsensed impressions, but that of the vulgar asserts that they are colored, etc., qualified in just the way sensed impressions are qualified, whereas the system of the philosophers denies that the unsensed particulars are
thus qualified. What the system of the philosophers does better than that of the vulgar is introduce greater coherence among the sensed impressions. The two systems disagree in the predictions they make. They disagree of course about the unsensed particulars, but up to a point they agree in their predictions concerning sensed impressions. Nonetheless, this latter agreement is only up to a point: beyond that, they disagree, and it is the system of the philosophers that yields the better predictions, it is the system that introduces greater coherence. Even so, within the system of the vulgar causal reasoning can be used to correct perceptual errors, thereby introducing a greater degree of coherence than is contributed by perceptual judgments alone. The point at which disagreement appears can thus be postponed. But when the causal reasoning is generalized to all domains, and so carried through as to lead to a unified theory of science, including a science of perception, then conflict does ultimately appear and it is the system of the philosophers that must in the end be judged superior.

Thus, in terms of the logic of the situation, the system of the vulgar provides knowledge which, in its specific predictions, is imperfect relative to the knowledge of the system of the philosophers, and which, at the generic level, is less unified than the knowledge provided by the system of the philosophers. Still, it must also be recognized that within limits it is knowledge, and if one ignores what is of practical inconsequence, the specific nature of the unsensed particulars, then for everyday purposes, for most pragmatic interests, the knowledge provided by the system of the vulgar is quite adequate. That is why philosophers revert to, and even they can get by with, the system of the vulgar when they shift from contexts where their motivation is that of idle curiosity, the realm of "pure" reason, to contexts shaped by everyday pragmatic interests. To satisfy these pragmatic interests, we need knowledge of the world, knowledge of means. Often we do not need all the knowledge science can give us; less will suffice. (In order to cure diseases, the doctor does not need to know the details of the processes by which penicillin kills bacteria; the more imperfect piece of knowledge, that it does kill germs, suffices to enable the doctor to achieve his ends.) The system of the philosophers shows the extent to which the system of the vulgar is and is not a true account of unperceived reality and the extent to which it will and will not yield true predictions. In particular, among its consequences is the proposition that within the realm delimited by our practical concerns the system of the vulgar can be expected to yield correct predictions. The disinterested search after truth or curiosity which motivates the academic philosopher (270) leads us to apply the best rules of causal inference, to the rejection of the system of the vulgar, and to accept that of the philosophers, yet the latter then shows that, as a matter of fact, within the area of our practical interests we are justified in relying upon the system of the vulgar to provide us with knowledge of means. The system of the philosophers itself provides the argument that within the realm of everyday interests the system of the vulgar is rationally justified. Such, I am proposing, is the thrust of Hume's argument.

Price has suggested that Hume's discussion aims to show not that the system of the vulgar has a limited rationality, but that the system is wholly inadequate because it is inconsistent. But the system of the vulgar is not by itself inconsistent. Nor does Hume suggest that it is. Indeed, it is the system all of us normally use: even philosophers "... immediately upon leaving their closets, mingle with the rest of mankind in those exploded opinions, that our perceptions are our only objects, and
continue identically and uninterruptedly the same in all their interrupted appearances" (216). The system of the vulgar, that is, the world as given to us in our perceptual judgments, has its roots in our imagination, and these judgments of (the mere) imagination are not reducible to causal reasoning. So long as we stick with this system, and proceed somewhat indolently (269) in applying the general maxims of the world, that is, avoid applying in full strictness the causal reasoning of the philosopher, then we get into no fundamental incoherence. I say 'fundamental' because particular perceptual judgments might disagree, as indeed they often do, and we have techniques based on causal reasoning for setting them aright, but this does not mean that there is a defect in the framework as such. But there is nothing in the ordinary flow of the world that compels or motivates the ordinary man to use the best causal reasoning to resolve his quotidian misperceptions, nor anything that compels him to causally explain such phenomena as double vision which hardly distract from the customary flow of one's perceptual experience. Only an unusually motivated person, e.g., a philosopher (= empirical scientist) motivated by something like idle curiosity would pursue causal reasoning beyond the point required by ordinary pragmatic interests. Within these limits, then, the system of the vulgar is quite consistent, and, what is of present importance, Hume sees it as consistent. Price is therefore wrong to suppose that Hume aims to find an inconsistency in the system of the vulgar. The conflict that Hume discovers is in neither the system of the vulgar by itself nor the system of the philosophers by itself but, as Popkin says, and to repeat, between the two, one of which we must accept (that of the vulgar) and one of which one best causal reasoning tells us that we ought to accept (that of the philosophers).

SECTION (V): THE WORLD OF THE PHILOSOPHERS

Hume has now established that it is reasonable to suppose that there are external physical objects which cause our impressions, and that the latter are dependent for their existence upon the state of our organs. He has also established that the reasoning which justifies this conclusion is not direct cause-effect inference but the imagination inferring "from custom in an indirect and oblique manner" (197). At this point Hume turns briefly to make a couple of points about the detailed descriptions which the system of the philosophers gives of the physical objects which it asserts to be the cause of our perceptions. These, too, he tells us, are not dependent upon direct cause-effect inferences.

There are other particulars of this system [of the philosophers], wherein we may remark its dependence on the fancy in a very conspicuous manner (216).

Now, the use of 'fancy' here may suggest playfulness or whim, the very contrary of reason. It may thereby tend to support the sceptical reading of Hume. It is true that the fancy may indeed, for Hume, produce false beliefs. In speaking of the miser who receives delight from his money, Hume explains that what motivates him is the pleasure of its use, not its actual use but its imagined use. "Since he cannot form any such conclusion in a way of reasoning concerning the nearer approach of the pleasure, 'tis certain he imagines it to approach nearer, whenever all external obstacles are
remov'd, along with the more powerful motives of interest and danger, which oppose it" (314; his italics). Here reason and imagination are contrasted, with the latter producing a belief which the former cannot support. Hume moreover goes on to ascribe the belief or judgment to the fancy: "we judge from an illusion of the fancy, that the pleasure is still closer and more immediate" (314-5; his italics). Here fancy and imagination are equated and are taken to be the source of an illusion which reason cannot support. Yet, as we know, for Hume causal reason is also at times characterized as a species of imagination, when, for example, it is contrasted to the a priori reason of mathematics (97); so that to characterize an inference as a product of the imagination is not necessarily to condemn it as unsound or irrational from the point of view of satisfying our curiosity, that is, achieving, so far as we can, the discovery of matter-of-fact truth. Moreover, Hume has earlier, in discussing "the probability of causes" (I, III, xiii), attempted a psychological explanation, in terms of associationism, of how the mind comes to form the contrary hypotheses that constitute probability estimates of causes and which are the basis upon which the rules of eliminative induction go to work in order to discover which among the possible alternatives is the true cause (133-140). So Hume is here giving a psychological description of the mind's working when causes are inferred in conformity with Hume's "rules by which to judge of causes and effects"; and that is to say that Hume is here giving an explanation of what he argues is sound causal reasoning. On the other hand, Hume also ascribes the inference here to the fancy. In cases where causes are only probable, an A is followed sometimes by a B and sometimes by a C, and here

Our past experience presents no determinate object; and as our belief, however faint, fixes itself on a determinate object, 'tis evident that the belief arises not merely from the transference of past to future, but from some operation of the fancy conjoin'd with it (140; his italics).

Thus, for Hume inferences of the fancy need not be unsound; some in fact constitute the best causal reasoning there is! And when Hume ascribes certain features of the system of the philosophers to the fancy, we cannot conclude that those inferences are irrational.

We must read Hume's comments on the system of the philosophers with this caution in mind.

Hume has now argued for the system of the philosophers, and at this point proceeds to make two brief comments (216-7) that address the question: what, in detail, do we know about the nature of the objects which the system of the philosophers asserts to be there? The two comments Hume makes are relatively brief, but he has in fact commented upon the subject throughout earlier portions of the Treatise, and the texts that we are now considering from Book I, Part III, Sec. ii, must be looked at in the light of these earlier remarks, and also, one should add, in the light of later remarks.

Perhaps the most important point to be recalled is that any idea we form of such objects must conform to Hume's theory of ideas, or, to put it more accurately,
any concept of such unperceived objects must conform to the Principle of Acquaintance (PA), that we can have no idea without an antecedent impression. It does not follow, however, that for every idea we must be acquainted with the object to which it applies. Moreover, we might have a general idea of the object without having an idea of the object in all its specificity. The general idea would be inadequate to the object, of course, but not false of the object. Thus, knowing all men have fathers we can form the relative idea, "the father of Jones". This is a general idea. It is also a relative idea; it refers to an individual by means of the relation in which the individual stands to another. Moreover, it is an idea which applies to exactly one individual. On the other hand, it is not an idea of that individual as the specific person that he is: from this general idea of Jones' father we can infer only that he has the properties mentioned in the idea, and from it alone can learn nothing of the other properties Jones' father might have. To that extent, the general and relative idea we have formed of Jones' father is abstract when compared to the concrete ideas we form of those persons with whom we are acquainted; the latter, unlike the former, are ideas which are specifically adequate to the objects.

Hume has made clear earlier in the Treatise that we can form such general and relative ideas of unperceived objects, without our having any idea of what specifically those substances are like. Hume lays down the general rule that:

...since nothing is ever present to the mind but perceptions, and since all ideas are deriv'd from something antecedently present to the mind; it follows, that 'tis impossible for us so much to conceive or form an idea of any thing specifically different from ideas and impressions. Let us fix our attention out of ourselves as much as possible: Let us chase our imagination to the heavens, or to the utmost limits of the universe; we never really advance a step beyond ourselves, nor conceive any kind of existence, but those perceptions, which have appear'd in that narrow compass. This is the universe of the imagination, nor have we any idea but what is there produc'd (67-8).

But to this he hastens to add a qualification:

The farthest we can go towards a conception of external objects, when suppos'd specifically different from our perceptions, is to form a relative idea of them, without pretending to comprehend the related objects. Generally speaking we do not suppose them specifically different; but only attribute to them different relations, connexions and durations. But of this more fully hereafter (68; his italics).

And then Hume gives a reference to Part IV, Sec. 2, the section we are now examining in detail. This qualification to the general rule about our ideas therefore applies to the external objects of the system of the vulgar and of the philosophers. The external objects of the vulgar are, of course, not supposed to be specifically different from our perceptions. But the external objects of the philosophers are supposed to differ
specifically from our perceptions. What Hume is saying is that we can form ideas of the external objects of the philosophers, but that these ideas are relative, and, as such, do not enable us to comprehend the related objects, that is (I take it), comprehend them in their own full specificity.

Hume makes the same point again later on in the Treatise, explicitly referring in a footnote to the passage just quoted:

... remember, 'tis impossible our idea of a perception, and that of an object or external existence can ever represent what are specifically different from each other. Whatever difference we may suppose betwixt them, 'tis still incomprehensible to us; and we are oblig'd either to conceive an external object merely as a relation without a relative, or to make it the very same with a perception or impression (241).

Hume here speaks of 'relations' and 'relatives' rather than of 'relative ideas', though the latter clearly refers to what 'relations' refers to in this second passage. This is helpful, for Hume says little indeed about "relative ideas" and rather more about "relations". We must infer from his discussion of "relations" what he means by a "relative ideas". The "relations" and "relatives" terminology is in fact less idiosyncratic than is the term "relative idea", which seems restricted to Hume. But the distinction of "relations" and "relatives" fits directly into the terminology of such philosophers as Locke, and Hume's remarks fit in with the latter's discussion. The Port Royal Logic is of little help in illuminating Hume: it gives two brief references to relations, neither of which are relevant to Hume's discussion. Watts and Crousaz have rather more to say, though neither addresses himself in detail directly to "relative ideas". Both their accounts derive largely from Locke. Hume's own account is complicated by his peculiar doctrine of abstraction. It suffices to recognize that the standard account of relatives, or relative ideas, found in Watts and Crousaz, and deriving from Locke, finds its place in the Hurnean analysis of ideas.64

The relative idea of a father thus finds a perfectly natural place within the Humean framework which thereby recognizes the possibility of one's having knowledge by description even though knowledge by acquaintance is absent. Knowledge by description is possible by means of relative ideas. Moreover, these relative ideas conform to Hume's basic principle PA. Of course, if we have no acquaintance with the object, if it is not actually perceived, then we will have no adequate idea of it. Nonetheless, it does not follow we can have no idea of it: for we can form a relative idea. In particular, we have the relation of cause and effect. Using the relative idea of cause and given a certain perception, call it Jones, we can form the idea of the (external) cause of Jones, where 'Jones' names the impression, in just the way we can form the less generic idea of the father of Jones. Because the generic notion of cause is derived from experience, from perception, the external causes of perception will not be conceived as generically different from the objects perceived. But given this generic sameness it does not follow that the two must be, or be conceived as, specifically the same. Or, of course, there is the missing shade of color.65 It is a relative idea we form of this shade: it is the color between the shades with which we are acquainted.
The missing shade is generically the same as the shades we know—they are all colors—but it is specifically different. We therefore have no adequate idea of it. Yet, we do have a relative idea of it. And, just as Hume admitted this obvious point, while also recognizing the difficulties that confronted him as he attempted to analyze this idea within his nominalistic and associationistic framework, so also Hume admits the relative idea of the (external) cause of an impression, along with whatever further difficulties might confront him in the analysis of this idea.

It is in the light of these considerations that we must interpret Hume's two comments on particular features of the system of the philosophers. The first is this:

We suppose external objects to resemble internal perceptions. I have already shown, that the relation of cause and effect can never afford us any just conclusion from the existence or qualities of our perceptions to the existence of external continu'd objects: And I shall further add, that even tho' they cou'd afford such a conclusion, we shou'd never have any reason to infer, that our objects resemble our perceptions. That opinion, therefore, is deriv'd from nothing but the quality of the fancy above explain'd, that it borrows all its ideas from some precedent perception. We can never conceive anything but perceptions, and therefore must make everything resemble them (216).

We can, I propose, explain this as follows. The habits of cause-effect inference arise from our regularly experiencing one sort of perceived object to be followed by perceived objects of another sort. But ex hypothesi we do not experience the external objects. This much we have seen previously, though we also recall that this conclusion is qualified so as to admit that an inference to external objects can still be justified, as Hume put it earlier, by an "inference [which] arises from the understanding, and from custom in an indirect and oblique manner" (197), or, as Hume puts it later, "by an irregular kind of reasoning from experience", such as reasoning "from the coherence of our perceptions" (242). Imagination or the fancy must supplement the simple cause-effect inference habits if we are to arrive at the hypothesis of the external objects of the system of the philosophers. In the passage we are now considering Hume is adding the further point that, even if we do get to external objects, then the same qualities of simple causal inference that prevent it from justifying the existential hypothesis also prevent it from justifying any claim that the hypothesized external objects resemble our perceptions. It is therefore the imaginative processes involved in the inference from the coherence of our perceptions that give rise to the opinion that external objects resemble perceptions—even for resemblance of the most generic sort. Moreover, we cannot but think of external objects as somehow or in some respect (even if it be only the most generic) resembling our perceptions, for the imagination can form only such ideas as conform to PA: "the fancy . . . borrows all its ideas from some precedent perception". Note, however, that such suppositions of resemblance need not be unjustified simply because they are not justified by simple cause-effect inferences: the suppositions can be justified by reasoning from the coherence of our perceptions. Moreover, we may suppose these external objects that resemble our perceptions also cause those perceptions; it does not follow that the en-
Hume's second comment on the system of the philosophers is this:

As we suppose our objects in general to resemble our perceptions, so we take it for granted, that every particular object resembles that perception which it causes. The relation of cause and effect determines us to join the other of resemblance: and the ideas of these existences being already united together in the fancy by the former relation, we naturally add the latter to complete the union. We have a strong propensity to complete every union by joining new relations to those which we have before observed between any ideas, as we shall have occasion to observe presently (217).

And here Hume adds a reference to Book I, Part IV, Section 5 (237ff), which is, it is clear when we turn to the latter, a reference to his discussion of the taste of a fig. In the comment we are now examining, Hume attributes a certain tendency of the mind to conceive the external causes of our perceptions not merely as resembling in general those perceptions which they cause, but also in another way, namely, as specifically similar to the perceptions they cause. The mind does not rest content with a relative idea of those external causes but tends to form an absolute idea of them. Now, the "indirect and oblique" reasoning that leads us to ascribe existence and a resemblance in general to the external causes of perception is justified, but Hume does not say this further tendency to replace a relative by an absolute idea is justified. This may indeed be a characteristic of our thinking about the external objects which the system of the philosophers believes to exist, as Hume here suggests. But such a characteristic movement of thought may well be contrary to reason, and one reason ought to resist. Hume does not assert that this natural movement of thought is a rationally justified movement of thought. It might well be that rationally we ought to rest content with the relative idea of external objects and to resist the tendency to substitute for that an absolute idea, however natural is the tendency of thought to make that substitution. And, in fact, if we turn to his later discussion of the taste of the fig to which he refers us, we can see clearly that he judges such a movement of thought as not reasonable.

The taste of a fig can neither be said to be in only one part of the fig nor be said to be in every part (238). Not the former, since experience convinces us every part has that taste. But if the taste is in every part then it, like color, will have to be figured and extended, which is also contrary to experience. So the second alternative is also excluded. In order to reconcile these two options we rely upon the supposition, summarized in the scholastic dictum, totum in toto and totum in quaelibet parte (238), that the taste exists within the body, but whole and entire in every part. This, however, does not eliminate the difficulty, only obscures it, for it "is much the same, as if we shou'd say, that a thing is in a certain place, and yet is not there" (238). The problem arises because we attempt to locate the taste in a place, specifically in the place where the fig is: "... this absurdity proceeds from our endeavouring to bestow a place on what is utterly incapable of it ..." (238). Why do we thus endeavour to locate the taste in the fig? To answer this we might glance at a discussion Hume has elsewhere.
of the example of taste, only in this case the taste of wine, which he is comparing to the feelings that mark aesthetic taste. About these Hume tells us that:

Though it be certain that beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external, it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings.

Both feelings of beauty and such tastes as those of bitter and sweet are not qualities of the objects to which they are attributed, but rather are caused by qualities in those objects. The mind recognizes this causal connection but then adds to it a conjunction in place: "... 'tis a quality which I shall often have occasion to remark in human nature, ... that when objects are united by any relation, we have a strong propensity to add some new relation to them, in order to complete the union" (237). What Hume's discussion of taste makes clear is that this propensity is one that sometimes goes contrary to reason, and is therefore one that reason at times ought to resist. Now, reasoning from the coherence of our perceptions we infer the existence of unperceived external objects. These objects we suppose to be the cause of our perceptions. This much reasoning from coherence justifies. But to this relation of cause and effect human nature tends to add the relation of resemblance. We will thus tend to suppose that the external object that causes our perception resembles the perception. And the tendency will be not merely to suppose a generic resemblance but also a specific resemblance. And, as he has said earlier, when discussing "the effects of other relations and other habits [on belief]" (Bk. I, Pt. III, Sec. ix), "resemblance, when conjoin'd with causation, fortifies our reasonings" (113), and, unless the tendency for it to intrude is checked and disciplined, resemblance is the source of credulity and other unsound forms of causal inference (113). The fig causes the taste; we will then suppose it is by virtue of a quality resembling the taste that the fig causes that perception in us; and moreover, we will suppose this quality is not merely conjoined with the other qualities of the fig but that it is both everywhere within the fig and wholly in every part. To what extent is one justified in supposing an external object resembles the perception it causes? Not necessarily as far as the mind tends to think. And, in fact, only so far as is justified by reasoning from experience, that is, the "irregular reasoning from experience" based on considerations of causal coherence that we have already examined. The point is that this reasoning may well and indeed does run contrary to the human tendency to sometimes attribute a greater resemblance than reason can justify. The "irregular reasoning from experience", i.e., from coherence, concludes with the attribution of some, at least generic, resemblance between the external object and the perception it causes. At the same time, the same sort of reasoning leads us also to conclude that each of the specific kinds of entities we perceive (tastes, smells, colors, etc.) all exist dependently upon our sense organs. The latter means that no external object can have any specific resemblance to any perception it causes. Reason must therefore resist the tendency of the mind to attribute such specific qualities to the external objects. A natural tendency of the mind leads us to move from a relative idea of external objects to an absolute idea, but reason does not justify this move, and ought to resist it.
The system of the philosophers as Hume has now described and defended it, is, we recognize, of a piece with the world-view proposed later by the Critical Realists. The physical object causes our perceptions, but so far as we know, that is, so far as legitimate causal inference will take us, the physical object lacks the secondary qualities that we experience in perception. As with Critical Realism, so in Hume's system of the philosophers "the physical world cannot be like our ideas" and the position therefore "involves a relinquishment of all attempts to picture the physical world." Even so, says Hume, there is still a tendency to try so to picture the physical object, though no causal inference produces that conclusion, and though it is the opposite conclusion that legitimate causal inference justifies, the conclusion that entities exemplifying the secondary qualities are causally dependent upon the state of our sense organs. The Critical Realists made this point, too: "we usually take it [= the datum or percept, which exemplifies the secondary qualities] to be physical, since its qualities are what we usually mean by physical qualities, and we inevitably feel that they belong to our object." This is not, however, for them, as for Hume, the final judgment at which reason arrives. "Common sense may indeed give a snap judgment upon it and insist upon identifying the datum with the object; but there is no reason why common sense, which is merely primitive philosophy, should have the final decision." So reason should resist, or at least discount when it must, the tendency of common sense and the vulgar to identify the cause of our perceptions with objects that have the secondary qualities of those perceptions.

Nor do we have here one of those contradictions which Popkin and others who offer the sceptical reading love to find Hume believing we are committed to. The suggestion would be that the best causal reasoning leads to the conclusion that physical objects lack secondary qualities, but that there is also a natural tendency of the imagination to attribute such qualities to physical objects. There is thus a conflict between causal reason and the imagination the inevitability of which entails a scepticism from which nature alone and not reason permits an escape. This tale will not do, however. For it works only if the influence of the imagination is either sound or at least natural in the sense of inevitable. But it is not. Not only is the inference unsound according to what Hume has argued are the canons of the best causal reasoning, but there is no reason why the disciplined understanding cannot, when it pays attention, avoid the inference. It is only the inattentive and indolent mind that slips into the error of the imagination that physical objects resemble perceptions. The erroneous inference of the imagination is indeed natural but only in the sense in which a disease is natural (226). Once again the sceptical reading simply is not implied by the texts.

CONCLUSION

I have given a careful analysis of a Humean text that is often cited in support of a subjectivist or sceptical reading of Hume. I have argued that the text does not support such a reading. It supports, to the contrary, the thesis that the position Hume is developing in that passage is that which was later called "Critical Realism". We have found in fact that Hume defends each of the eight propositions that we earlier suggested could be taken as a characterization of Critical Realism:
1' perceptual data and other contents of consciousness are not ontologically dependent on consciousness—the bundle view of the mind which is part of the system of the philosophers guarantees this (207);

2' the consciousness of contents is caused by "physical" objects—for Hume impressions are "conveyed" to the senses from the object perceived, which may be, e.g., a hat, a shoe or a stone (202);

3' in perception the contents of consciousness are attributed to the "physical" objects that cause the perception—in the system of the vulgar impressions from the object perceived are identically the object and the perception of it (202);

4' "physical" things exist ontologically and causally independently of being known—for Hume this holds for objects as described in the system of the philosophers (211);

5' "physical" things are the objects of our perceptions, but they are never our mental contents—in the system of the philosophers, objects and perceptions are sharply distinguished, and only the latter are ever impressions (211);

6' "physical" things lack qualities which perceptions have—in the system of the philosophers, "physical" things lack secondary qualities (216);

7' "physical" things stand in such causal relations to our perceptions that it is possible for science to investigate some of these relations and some of the relations among physical things, and thus to gain trustworthy knowledge concerning laws of their action—the system of the philosophers is arrived at by a causal argument (210-11, 215), and Hume regularly tells us of the capacity of science to investigate the "springs and principles [of nature], which are hid, by reason of their minuteness or remoteness" (132);

8' we lack exhaustive knowledge and remain ignorant of the inner and ultimate nature of "physical" things—the complexity of nature makes it difficult for science to progress (175); progress is not impossible, however, and one can begin to explain, for example, at least tentatively, such things as the association of ideas through recourse to physiology and hypothetical entities.
like "animal spirits" (60-1); but in the end these external objects are supposed to be specifically different from our sensations and we can form no absolute idea of the specific nature, only a relative one (60).

Such, then, is Hume's Critical Realism, a far cry indeed from either subjectivism or pyrrhonism.

Had Hume ended his argument at this point then the conclusion to draw would simply be that Hume was a Critical Realist. But in point of fact, Hume does not end his discussion here. He goes on almost immediately to raise certain sceptical doubts, and then later in his discussion of what he calls the "modern philosophy" apparently draws sceptical conclusions about the system of the philosophers. I have argued elsewhere that the doubts are later resolved by Hume, and that the system of the modern philosophy is not to be identified with the system of the philosophers so that the sceptical implications of the former are not implied by the latter. The conclusion once again is that the system defended in Book I, Part IV, sec. ii, namely, Critical Realism, is the non-subjectivist and non-sceptical or at least non-pyrrhonist position that Hume aims to defend. On the other hand, these arguments cannot be repeated here, and so the conclusion of the present paper can only be the relatively modest one that the subjectivist and sceptical reading has been deprived of a central pillar. That case depends upon arguing that "Of Scepticism with regard to the Senses" aims to draw a subjectivist position when it argues to the system of the philosophers; it depends upon arguing that the imagination, which leads to the system of the vulgar is in conflict with the understanding which leads to the system of the philosophers; and it depends upon arguing that the inferences of the imagination and of the understanding are both justified. But if our reading is correct then the position at which Hume arrives is that of Critical Realism and that the inferences of the imagination are logically subordinate to, and corrected by, the inferences of the understanding. Perhaps after all it is not so implausible to claim that Hume is not a sceptic with regard to the senses.

ENDNOTES

1 M. Mandelbaum, Philosophy, Science and Sense Perception (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964), Ch. 3.

2 Ibid., 121.

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8 "Hume's Fictional Continuants".

9 "Was Hume a Sceptic with regard to the Senses?"


15 See Wilson, "Wright's Enquiry concerning Humean Understanding", *Dialogue* 25 (1986), 747-752. Wright has responded in his "Ignorance and Evidence in Hume Scholarship", *Dialogue* 26 (1987), 731-733. The assessment in "Wright's Enquiry" is of a piece with that of P. Ardal, "Critical Notice of Wright's The Sceptical Realism of David Hume", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 16 (1986), 157-162. In his response, Wright notes that he arrived at his interpretation of Hume by reading the latter to see if he really was a phenomenalist after the fashion of Price (*Hume's Theory of the External World*). The phenomenalist reading Wright found to be falsified by the texts, so he concludes that his own reading is correct and my criticisms are wrong. This argument presupposes that I interpret Hume as a phenomenalist; the present paper refutes that (though there is nothing in what I have said elsewhere that would lead one to suppose that I thought Hume to be a phenomenalist). Wright's argument also pre-
supposes that the only alternative to the phenomenalist interpretation is Wright's; the present paper refutes that also. So does the recent work of Livingston and Ardal.

Wright's position is that Hume is a sceptic with regard to causation and substances, since we have no ideas of these entities, but that Hume also holds that these entities exist; hence Hume's "sceptical realism". This interpretation has less than no intrinsic plausibility; no principle of "interpretative charity" would permit one to attribute this view to someone for whom you wished to claim the status of a philosopher. For, no philosopher with a modicum of sense, and therefore no philosopher, would hold that certain entities, concerning which he could form no ideas, nonetheless existed. In attributing this view to Hume and in seeing it as the only alternative to phenomenalism, Wright indicates that in spite of his capacity as an historian he is deficient in philosophic imagination. In his response ("Ignorance and Evidence") he fails to defend himself against the charge that his reading is intrinsically implausible, simply asserting that his view fits the texts where Price's does not. But neither in his book nor in his response does Wright point to any single text that unequivocally supports his position. Where Wright does introduce texts, they are all capable of alternative interpretations, e.g., in a way compatible with the thesis of the present paper.


18 See "Was Hume a Sceptic with regard to the Senses?"


20 Ibid., 36, 39.

21 Ibid., 38, 39.

22 Ibid., 41 (R.B. Perry).

23 Ibid., 42 (Walter B. Pitkin).

24 Ibid., 42.


Ibid., 98.

Ibid., 90.

Ibid., 91.

Ibid., 92.

Ibid., 96.

Ibid., 96.

There is a canvas of the full battery of these arguments in R.W. Sellars, *Critical Realism* (Chicago and New York: Rand McNally and Co., 1966), Ch. 1.


Pratt, "Critical Realism and the Possibility of Knowledge", 95, 109.

Sellars, *Critical Realism*, v.

This view of Hume's world of the vulgar has been developed and extended in Price, *Hume's Theory of the External World*.


As the New Realists put it, "consciousness selects from a field of emotion which it does not create" (Schneider, *op. cit.*, 41).

For greater detail, see Wilson, "Is there a Prussian Hume?" *Hume Studies* 8 (1982), 1-18.

For greater detail, see Wilson, "Hume's Fictional Continuants".


J. Passmore, *Hume's Intentions* (London: Duckworth, 1968), 70-1, makes just this invalid inference, and makes much of it as he develops his charge that Hume is not only a sceptic but thoroughly confused.

Livingston, *Hume's Philosophy of the Common Life*, 13, 14, misreads the causal argument as one that has phenomenalism and subjectivism as its conclusion.

Livingston, *Ibid.*, 19, on the basis of passages such as this, argues that for Hume causal reason must limit itself to the popular system or system of the vulgar on pain of not being able to understand experience itself. In fact, Livingston holds, 25, the structure of common life is the a priori structure of philosophy. If philosophy does not so restrict itself, it ends up in pyrrhonism, and such pyrrhonism is the mark of any attempt to reason to transcend its own a priori structure. This reading makes sense, however, only if one construes the causal argument Hume employs as leading to phenomenalism. But if we are correct, the causal argument has no such paradoxical consequences. If this is so, then there are no grounds for reason to limit itself to the world of ordinary experience; it can after all attempt to understand the latter by appealing, on the basis of sound inference, to the causal role of entities that lie outside the world of ordinary experience. Since no paradox results, common life need place no a priori constraints on reason, so the latter can transcend its origins and lead us to the world of science that lies outside our ordinary experiences.


Livingston, *Hume's Philosophy of Common Life*, 14, finds three systems in Hume, the popular system or that of the vulgar, a phenomenalistic system, and the system of double existence or that of the philosophers. He arrives at this by simply assuming that one stage of the causal argument has phenomenalism as its conclusion. But, as we have seen (cf. fn. 45), this assumption is erroneous. (He also confuses the system of the philosophers of Section 2, with the modern philosophy of Section 4, which Hume argues does, unlike the system of the philosophers, have Berkeleian phenomenalism as its inevitable upshot; cf. Livingston, 18).


Passmore, *Hume's Intentions*, 139.
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59 For the distinction between knowledge which is more, and knowledge which is less imperfect, cf. G. Bergmann, *Philosophy of Science* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), Ch. II; and F. Wilson, *Explanation, Causation and Deduction* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1985).

60 P. Ardal, in his insightful discussion of reasonableness in Hume's philosophy, ("Some Implications of the Virtue of Reasonableness in Hume's *Treatise*", in D. Livingston and J. King, eds., *Hume, a Re-Evaluation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1976), 91-106), proposes that Hume is not concerned about truth. Surely it is better to read Hume as we do, as concerned with the truth, as arguing to the truth of the system of the philosophers, and as also holding that the reason that leads to this system nonetheless justifies the reasonable man in accepting the system of the vulgar in all ordinary contexts. Cf. Wilson, "Hume's Defence of Science".

61 Livingston, *Hume's Philosophy of Common Life*, 25, holds that "true philosophy" can correct common life but at the same time cannot go beyond it in any radical way. We now see that this is not Hume's view: in attempting to correct common life, reason is led inevitably and justifiably to the system of the philosophers which, in an important way, does conflict with, and refute, the system of common life. Still, we are justified in continuing, as we must, to use the latter.


63 Some of the background physiological thinking of the Cartesians that Hume takes for granted can be found discussed in John Wright, *The Sceptical Realism of David Hume*.

64 Cf. D. Flage, "Locke's Relative Ideas", *Theoria*, 142-59 and "Hume's Relative Ideas", *Hume Studies*, 7 (1981), 55-73. John Wright, although he knows of Flage's work (cf. his "Ignorance and Evidence"), does not mention it in his *Hume's Sceptical Realism*. On Wright's reading of Hume, external objects are the metaphysical substances of which Hume holds that we have no ideas. Since there are no ideas of these substances, Hume is a sceptic, but since Hume also holds (Wright implausibly maintains) that they exist, he is a realist. For anyone who is sensitive philosophically, Wright's reading lacks intrinsic plausibility. What Wright fails to see is that Hume holds that there are external objects and that we do have ideas of these, namely, the relative ideas to which Flage has directed our attention. Wright's dismissal ("Ignorance and Evidence") of Flage's work as irrelevant to the issue of the plausibility of his interpretation is, perhaps, only a momentary display of insensitivity to philosophical issues and alternatives.

65 I have discussed this case in "Hume's Fictional Continuants".

Ibid., 11.

Sellars, *Critical Realism*, vi.

Pratt, "Critical Realism and the Possibility of Knowledge", 95.

Ibid., 96.

For the relevance of this point elsewhere in Hume, see "Hume's Defence of Science", and "Hume's Fictional Continuants".

"Was Hume a Sceptic with regard to the Senses?"

The basic point is that the system of modern philosophy contains a substantial mind and that this premiss leads to an idealism of the Berkeleian sort which denies the existence of physical objects beyond the data, and which is, therefore, not unreasonably reckoned sceptical. But Hume explicitly denies that the system of the philosophers contains a substantial mind, and so the sceptical consequences do not hold for this system. For details, see "Was Hume a Sceptic with regard to the Senses?"