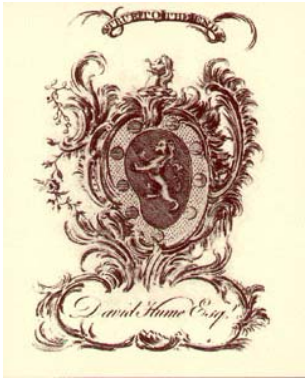

Hume's Antinomies
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Hume Studies Volume IX, Number 1 (April, 1983) 25-45.

HUME'S ANTINOMIES

I

There are many contradictions in Hume. So much is readily admitted by all Hume scholars. But there is little agreement on what these contradictions show about Hume's thought in general. Many interpretations are based upon the view that Hume's contradictions are signs of his carelessness or lack of thoroughness. He is seen either as having lost all interest in giving a comprehensive or consistent account of human nature or as not having pushed far enough his analysis of the philosophical problems facing him.[1] Other interpretations suggest that Hume, the "skeptic," has recklessly introduced these contradictions in order to confuse us. He is perhaps not altogether serious and is laughing at those who take too serious a view of the "science" of metaphysics and his own contribution to it.[2] Others again argue that the contradictions (or some fundamental class of them) are the consequence of Hume's philosophical presuppositions or his psychological method. Given his particular beliefs and his method, these contradictions had to arise with logical necessity.[3] However, the general opinion seems to be that, if Hume is not to be dismissed as a merely negative skeptic whose philosophy is of no great consequence, he needs to be excused or defended, i.e. his contradictions, which are seen as "inconsistencies," have to be explained away.[4] His discussions of the self, causality, substance, or the relationship of reason and the passions must be, and -- it is believed -- can be shown not to be contradictory, if all the relevant factors are considered.

However, reconstructions of Hume's analysis of the self or causality, for instance, which involve the explaining away of contradictions soon find themselves in a rather peculiar quandary, since they also have to show that Hume's own admissions of the contradictory nature of his analysis is mistaken.[5] Such "defenses" issue only in other

accusations, namely that Hume, in addition to not having expressed himself very clearly in his writings, failed to understand them himself when he referred back to them. If only for this reason, I think that interpretations which involve an explaining away or minimizing of the contradictions in Hume are suspect. It is my opinion that Hume needs no such defenses or excuses -- at least not in so far as the most important contradictions are concerned.[6] On the contrary, I believe that Hume can be understood properly, only if we take full account of them.

I want in this paper to argue that there is in Hume a fundamental class of contradictions which he believed were neither accidental nor created by his analysis, but were essential characteristics of the human mind. The contradictions uncovered by his analysis can be understood only if they are recognised as one aspect of a more complex problematic. They must have a "deeper" significance for Hume because they are the symptoms of the *infirmities ... which are common to human nature* (T265). These are Hume's "antinomies."[7]

In this analysis I have allowed myself to be guided by a more or less Kantian conception of "antinomy" and "antinomical." In fact, I believe that there is a definite similarity between Kant's doctrine of the "Antinomy of Pure Reason" and Hume's "operations" which are *equally natural and necessary in the human mind, yet in some circumstances ... directly contrary* (T266). But the present paper is not so much a sustained comparison of Hume and Kant in this regard as it is an attempt to elucidate the peculiar nature of several contradictions in Hume.[8] For I believe that, if we have a better understanding of the nature of these contradictions, we will also be able to say something more definite about Hume's theory of mental activity and certain aspects of the relationship of skepticism and naturalism (or: Pyrrhonism and Newtonianism, destructive and constructive side, negative and positive phase, etc.) in his thought. To this end, I shall first

explain what I mean by "antinomy" here. Secondly, I shall show in what sense Hume was aware of having discovered something very much like an antinomical dimension in human nature, and, finally, I shall offer some suggestions as to the relevance of this antinomical dimension for the understanding of his theory of mental activity and the relationship of naturalism and skepticism.

II

The term "antinomy" has been introduced into the philosophical vocabulary by Immanuel Kant. Before the appearance of his Critique of Pure Reason it appears to have been used mainly in theology and jurisprudence, referring to a conflict between different general laws or principles. Kant believed that he had discovered a fundamental conflict between the principles of pure reason, and he called it the "Antinomy of Pure Reason."

For Kant, this antinomy has three important aspects. First of all, it involves an "antithetic," i.e. a number of contradictions which are so persistent that we have to call them "inevitable." Secondly, these inevitable contradictions are understood as symptoms of a more fundamental conflict or contradiction between certain laws or principles of the mind. Thirdly, for Kant these principles or laws are purely rational. The human mind cannot but fall into error because even pure reason is subject to certain confusions.

The Kantian emphasis upon the purely rational character of an antinomy is extremely important for understanding Kant correctly. However, for the purposes of this paper it must be neglected. For, if it were argued that "antinomy" necessarily must refer to a contradiction among the principles of pure reason, no antinomy could possibly be found in a philosopher like Hume. In fact, such a narrow definition of "antinomy" would effectively

restrict the term to Kant. Moreover, it would not even allow us to talk of antinomies in Kant before the Critique of Pure Reason, for it can be shown that he himself did not restrict the term "antinomy" to conflicts of pure reason as late as 1775.[9] The emphasis upon pure reason alone is a rather late development, and the logical structure of an antinomy can be elucidated even without reference to it. I believe it makes perfect historical sense to speak of antinomies of the understanding, antinomies of the imagination, and antinomies of the human mind. These expressions can be very useful for understanding the continuity of Kant's own thought as well as the continuity of Kant's thought with that of his predecessors and contemporaries.[10] Accordingly, pure reason will not play any part in this discussion of Hume's antinomies.

But the other two aspects of Kant's conception of an antinomy will be retained in essentially the same fashion as they are found in his works. Thus an antinomy will be understood as presupposing, first of all, something of the sort that is called an antithetic by Kant. Such an antithetic consists of a number of contradictions that are not artificially created but arise necessarily, inevitably or naturally when we think about the world. When they are expressed by propositions they form thesis and antithesis. Each thesis and antithesis

> is not only free from contradiction, but finds conditions of its necessity in the very nature of reason -- only that, unfortunately, the assertion of the opposite has, on its side, grounds that are just as valid and necessary.[11]

The antithetic allows us to prove contradictory statements, and the contradiction expressed is not one that is created by us but one that is discovered.

For Kant, the contradictions express natural illusions to which the human mind (reason) is subject. They are comparable to perceptual illusions, on the one hand, and

to logical illusions which arise from formal fallacies, on the other. But, though they are illusions of reason, they are, according to Kant, closer to perceptual illusions than to those created by the formal fallacies. For, first of all, they do not depend on any violation of the rules of logic but arise even when we follow the latter meticulously, and, secondly, whereas an illusion created by a fallacy "completely disappears as soon as the logical rules are brought to our attention," the natural illusions of human reason do not disappear even after they have been shown to be fallacious. They are just as "necessary," "inevitable," and as little "artificially created" as are certain perceptual illusions.[12] They "can no more be prevented than we can prevent the sea from appearing higher at the horizon than at the shore."[13]

Because, according to Kant, a "dialectic" is a "logic of illusion," he discusses the natural illusions of reason in his "Dialectic of Pure Reason" and calls the illusions themselves

> a natural and unavoidable dialectic of pure reason -- not one in which a bungler might entangle himself through lack of knowledge, or one which some sophist has artificially invented to confuse thinking people, but ... one inseparable from human reason ... which even after its deceptiveness has been exposed, will not cease to play tricks with reason and continually entrap it into momentary aberrations ever and again calling for correction.[14]

The antithetic shows thus that there is something very wrong with the premises or principles that were employed in our proofs. The contradictions are mere symptoms of a more fundamental conflict, namely a conflict between the fundamental <u>laws</u> or <u>principles</u> according to which we <u>must</u> think. This is the second, much more important, but also much less clear aspect of antinomy. The contradictions are easily observed and discussed, but the sickness of which they are thought to be symptomatic is not

so easily identified. Nevertheless, the true significance of the contradictions can be recognized only if we see that they are symptoms of an unavoidable contradiction between principles of the human mind.

It is just because the contradictions are thought to be symptoms of an inconsistency among the laws or principles in accordance with which our mind must operate that they deserve the greatest attention. If they were based upon peculiarities of a certain subject matter, they would be of no great consequence and deserve little attention. But if they are indeed signs of the incompatibility of the principles of the mind, they put into question all of human knowledge.

The contradictions in Hume have thus far been considered, at best, as consequences of peculiarities of Hume's approach or subject matter.[15] If we want to show that they are more significant and want to speak of "antinomies" or of an "antinomical dimension" in Hume's thought, we must be able to find some evidence that he was aware of the symptomatic character of his contradictions, i.e. that he himself believed they were (i) unavoidable and (ii) pointed towards a conflict among the basic principles of the mind. This is what I undertake to show in the next part of the paper.

III

It has been argued for some time now that Hume's analysis of human nature presupposes something like a theory of mental activity, or system of principles comparable to Kant's system of the categories; and,

> put briefly, the theory runs like this: The human mind has a small number of innate propensities, or 'dispositions to form dispositions.' When the mind is presented with perceptions conjoined in certain ways, its propensities are activated and it develops dispositions. These

> dispositions determine the mind to reproduce in imagination certain impressions when it experiences certain others. The mind, in another of Hume's phrases, forms a 'habit of association.' The factors in cognition which Hume labeled impressions of reflection -- such as the impression of necessary connection -- are really dispositions, and the ideas of necessary connection, substance, and so forth, are not copies of impressions but ideas of mental dispositions. The innate propensities constitute the basic 'machinery' of the mind. They are the necessary and universal conditions of all our ideas of causes and objects.[16]

If we assume that this account of Hume's theory of mental activity is roughly correct -- as I believe it is -- then we must show that this small number of innate propensities or dispositions to form dispositions gives rise to inevitable contradictions for Hume. This alone would show that Hume considered the set consisting of these innate propensities as inconsistent.[17]

I believe that this is quite possible. There are two important and strategically placed passages in Hume's works that show very clearly that he was indeed aware of something like an antinomy of the human mind. In fact, they are so clear that it is really somewhat surprising that so little attention has been paid to the antinomical dimension of Hume's thought so far. These passages are (i) the last section of the first Enquiry, entitled *Of Academical or Sceptical Philosophy* (E149-165), and (ii) the *Conclusion* of Book I of the Treatise (T263-274).[18]

Putting aside the arguments put forward by Hume on the skeptics behalf *to destroy reason by argument and ratiocination* (E155) as less significant, I shall first concentrate on Hume's arguments concerning the reliability of the senses in the first Enquiry.[19] These are characterized as a topic *in which the profounder and more philosophical sceptics will always triumph, when they endeavour to introduce an universal doubt into all subjects of human knowledge and enquiry* (E153, emphasis supplied). It is

concerned specifically with the reliability of our belief in the existence of material objects.

Hume notes a blatant contradiction between the senses and reason. *When men follow this blind and powerful instinct of nature, they always suppose the very images, presented by the senses, to be the external objects* (E151). But, on the other hand,

> *no man, who reflects, ever doubted, that the existences, which we consider, when we say this house and that tree, are nothing but perceptions in the mind, and fleeting copies or representations of other existences, which remain uniform and independent* (E152).

It may appear that the senses are thoroughly discredited. We cannot rely upon the *blind and powerful instinct of nature* that makes us accept as reality what is only imaginary. But matters are not quite so simple, for Hume goes on to show that we cannot really trust reason and its "new system" either. If we accept the view that we can only consider copies of things, we can never be sure whether what we consider as copies actually are copies. In order to be able to determine this we would have to be able to take an independent point of view and compare the real things with their copies. Since we cannot do this, we cannot prove *that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects, entirely different from them* (E152-3). They may just as well have been created by the mind. Thus, in order to get into the "new system" we need external objects, independent existences, or things in themselves, but we cannot stay within this new system and still hold on to these things. It appears that we have to abandon the point of view prescribed by our senses without getting anything in return, since we cannot consistently hold on to the rational point of view (and rationality presupposes consistency). As Hume puts it, our belief in the existence of material objects,

> *if rested on natural instinct, is contrary to reason, and if referred to reason, is contrary to natural instinct, and at the same time carries no rational evidence with it, to convince an impartial enquirer* (E155).[20]

The propositions "We see external objects" and "We can see only representations of external objects," i.e. "We cannot see external objects" cannot be true together. Either we accept the one or the other. Yet each finds, to speak with Kant, "conditions of its necessity in the very nature of" the mind. One is based upon the senses and its evidence, the other on reason. But they not only contradict each other; neither of them *carries... rational evidence with it* that would be sufficient to allow us to decide for or against any of them. We cannot decide which proposition is correct. The contradiction between "We see external objects" and "We cannot see external objects" is irresolvable. Since it is symptomatic of a contradiction between the senses and reason, we may speak of a necessary contradiction between two principles of the mind, i.e. an antinomy of sensibility and reason.

Accordingly, it is not surprising that Hume makes no attempt to resolve the conflict and simply lets the *profounder and more philosophical sceptic*, his mouth piece, ask:

> *Do you follow the instincts and propensities of nature,...in assenting to the veracity of sense? But these lead you to believe that the very perception or sensible image is the external object. Do you disclaim this principle, in order to embrace a more rational opinion, that the perceptions are only representations of something external? You here depart from your natural propensities and more obvious sentiments; and yet are not able to satisfy your reason ...* (E153-4)

In his *Conclusion* of Book I of the Treatise Hume can be seen to trace back this antinomy of sensibility and reason even further, confirming its ultimately irreducible character even more. Since he believes that *the memory,*

senses, and understanding are ... all of them founded on the imagination (T265), this contradiction between the senses and reason should allow of being explained in terms of a contradiction of the principles of the imagination. The antinomy of sensibility and reason should be founded upon an antinomy of the imagination. That this is so for Hume can be seen very clearly, when he notes with regard to the imagination:

> *No wonder a principle so inconstant and fallacious shou'd lead us into errors, when implicitely follow'd (as it must be) in all its variations. 'Tis this principle, which makes us reason from causes and effects; and 'tis the same principle, which convinces us of the continu'd existence of external objects, when absent from the senses. But tho' these two operations be equally natural and necessary in the human mind,... they are directly contrary, nor is it possible for us to reason justly and regularly from causes and effects, and at the same time believe the continu'd existence of matter* (T265-266, emphasis mine).[21]

We must follow the imagination, since it is the most basic principle of the human mind. Yet it leads us to contradictions by means of *operations* that are *equally natural and necessary.*

Moreover, these contradictions are not based upon *principles which are changeable, weak and irregular* (such as *faculty, occult quality, sympathies, antipathies,* or *horror of a vacuum*) (T224), but upon those principles *in the imagination ... which are permanent, irresistable, and universal ... and are the foundation of all our thoughts and actions, so that upon their removal human nature must immediately perish and go to ruin* (T225, emphasis mine). For the contradictory operations are characterized as *natural and necessary* and the customary transition from causes to effects and from effects to causes is specifically mentioned in both passages (i.e. in T225 and T266). Though we may notice the contradiction among our basic principles

of thought and action, we cannot do without them.

Again, Hume makes not the slightest attempt to explain away the contradictions, but simply asks:

> *How then shall we adjust those principles together? Which of them shall we prefer? Or in case we prefer neither of them, but successively assent to both, as is usual among philosophers, with what confidence can we afterwards usurp that glorious title, when we thus knowingly embrace a manifest contradiction?* (T266)

As there are "illusions of human reason" for Kant, so there are "illusions of the imagination" for Hume (T267), and Hume's question is *how far we ought to yield to these illusions, a question* [which] *is very difficult, and reduces us to a very dangerous dilemma, whichever way we answer it* (T267, emphasis mine). Neither reason nor the senses can be trusted because they are both founded on the imagination and it is not to be trusted either.

> *We have, therefore, no choice left but betwixt a false reason and none at all. For my part, I know not what ought to be done in the present case. I can only observe what is commonly done ...* (T268)

That this observation of what is commonly done is no philosophical solution for Hume should be obvious.[22]

But however that may be, I believe that the preceding shows with sufficient clarity that Hume's contradictions among the natural, necessary, permanent, irresistible, and universal principles of the imagination are inevitable and ineradicable. The human mind inevitably leads us into conceptual muddles, inconsistencies and contradictions. Our senses fight reason, the principles of reason are inconsistent, and reason raises *invincible arguments against itself, the understanding, when it acts alone, and according to its most general principles, entirely subverts itself, and leaves not the lowest degree of evidence in any proposition* (T267), yet we are *necessitated by reasoning to contradict or depart from the primary instincts of nature* and *can no longer plead the infallible and irresistible*

instinct of nature, and the imagination gives rise to operations which are *equally natural and necessary in the human mind, yet in some circumstances ... directly contrary.*[23] Hume specifically notes that there are *principles, which are contrary to each other, which are both at once embrac'd by the mind, and which are unable mutually to destroy each other* (T215). These contradictory and contrary principles are all signs of the many *infirmities... which are common to human nature* (T265). If there is a set of innate propensities which constitutes the basic machinery of the mind and the necessary and universal conditions of all our ideas of causes and objects, then this set is inconsistent. There exist, for Hume, dialectical tensions in human nature (and, accordingly, in Hume's analysis of it) that cannot be resolved. Hume was quite aware of having discovered something very much like an "antinomy" in the Kantian sense.

It may be objected to this interpretation of Hume's contradiction that, though Hume may have believed that he had discovered such natural contradictions and their foundation in the principles of the human mind, he actually created them, i.e. the contradictions may be the result of his method or his presuppositions. This is fair enough; I agree that this may actually be the case. Hume may have succeeded only in reducing to absurdity a philosophical programme he inherited from his predecessors.[24] However, this objection would not be to the point, since it would not contradict anything I have said here. The same objections could be -- and have been -- made against Kant's doctrine of the "Antinomy of Pure Reason."[25] The point at issue here is what Hume's beliefs about his analysis were and not whether these beliefs are actually justified. And here we must say that Hume believed that he had, by means of what he called the "experimental method of reasoning," manifest contradictions that are symptomatic of conflicting principles of the mind.

The contradictions should, therefore, not be excused or explained away, but they should be fully acknowledged. Hume needs no defense here. For he might actually have considered this discovery of the antinomical character of the human mind one of his most important achievements. In any case, I believe that Hume's metaphysics can be understood correctly only if we take into account very carefully all the consequences of the antinomical dimension of his thought.

IV

> For Kant the antinomy and its
>
> entirely natural antithetic ... certainly guards reason from the slumber of fictitious conviction such as is generated by a purely one-sided illusion, but at the same subjects it to the temptation either of abandoning itself to a skeptical despair, or of assuming an obstinate attitude, dogmatically committing itself to certain assertions, and refusing to grant a fair hearing to the arguments for the counter-position.[26]

The antinomy constitutes a "most remarkable phenomenon" that may serve as a "very powerful agent to rouse philosophy from its dogmatic slumber" and stimulate a critical examination of reason.[27] Kant calls the method of watching or rather provoking, a conflict of assertions, not for the purpose of deciding in favour of one or the other side, but of investigating whether the controversy is not perhaps a deceptive appearance ... the skeptical method. He insists that it is entirely different from skepticism, for it aims at certainty, whereas skepticism aims at undermining the foundation of all certainty;[28] and Hume is, for Kant, mainly a philosopher who has applied the skeptical method but is not a skeptic.[29]

Whether or not Kant is right about Hume cannot be decided here. However, Hume certainly advanced skeptical arguments; and it cannot very well be denied that there are

skeptical elements in his thought. There is, in Hume, a rather "curious pairing of sceptical claims with a positive program."[30] J. Bricke is certainly correct when he observes that "unless one understands how to take Hume's scepticism one will find oneself at a loss to determine how, or how seriously, to take the many positive contributions that Hume apparently intends to make to our understanding of certain phenomena."[31] Hume's positive theory of the workings of the human mind cannot be understood properly if his skepticism is not understood; and, one may add, his skepticism cannot be understood if his positive theory or naturalism is not understood.

It appears to me that the doctrine of the antinomical character of the human mind can be very useful for the understanding of the relationship of the naturalistic and the skeptical elements of Hume's thought. For we may now understand Hume's skepticism as being founded upon the antinomies. His skepticism is the reflection or consequence of his positive theory of the human mind. His theory of the human mind may be considered as positive in the sense that Hume believes he has uncovered the actual structure of its machinery. But the consequences to be drawn from the scientific description of human nature are far from being all positive.

Hume himself suggests as much. His mitigated skepticism is clearly in a fundamental sense a <u>*consequent* scepticism</u>. It is consequent to *science and enquiry* and is justified by *science and enquiry*. The antinomies or infirmities of the human mind which Hume believes he has discovered show, if not *the absolute fallaciousness* of our mental faculties, so at least *their unfitness to reach any fixed determination in all those curious subjects of speculation, about which they are commonly employed* (E150). *Such a discovery not only cuts off all hope of ever attaining satisfaction, but even prevents our very wishes* (T266-7).

This shows that Hume's so-called naturalism is

antecedent to his skepticism (though it is not entirely superseded by skepticism because it remains founded upon it). Because Hume's naturalistic theory of the workings of the human mind has brought to light inevitable contradictions Hume can feel justified in adopting skeptical conclusions. But because our mind has been shown to give rise to inevitable contradictions this skepticism must also be reflected back upon the naturalistic account and upon the skepticism founded upon it. The discovery of the antinomies puts into question the very principles that were applied in the discovery as well as the discovery itself. If only for this reason, Hume's consequent skepticism had to be a mitigated skepticism, i.e. a skepticism that is also skeptical of itself.[32]

Accordingly, I have great difficulties with many of the more recent suggestions concerning Hume's skepticism. I cannot agree with Terence Penelhum, when he claims that "Hume's primary aims are psychological rather than philosophical: that his complex and exciting arguments about the rationality of our beliefs are propaedeutic to a psychological examination of the sources of the cognitive and affective commitments our nature causes us to make."[33] There is nothing propaedeutic about these arguments, if they are founded upon the analysis of human nature. In fact, Hume's psychological examination can then be seen to reveal that the skeptical paradoxes are nothing but the reflection of contradictions between the very principles of our mind. The Pyrrhonist "simply" provokes a conflict of assertions that was always present in the human mind.[34]

For this reason any attempt to show that Hume's "propensities actually play a role quite similar to that of the categories in the Critique of Pure Reason" cannot succeed.[35] Though there may be certain similarities, there are also great dissimilarities because Hume seems to believe that the propensities contradict each other. This spells great trouble for any ultimate foundation of our

knowledge. In any case, Hume's so-called theory of mental activity must be compared not only to Kant's "Transcendental Analytic" but also with his "Transcendental Dialectic."

For the same reason it is not enough either to suggest at the beginning of a study of Hume's Philosophy of Mind that Hume's "scepticism presents no bar, and is intended to present no bar, to his holding a theory of mind that keeps suitably in touch with the plain man's views."[36] If the principles of the human mind give rise to a natural and inevitable antinomy, then this must have a profound effect on one's entire theory of mind. Such an antinomy is not a phenomenon that can easily be isolated from other aspects of the mind. It has the most drastic consequences for all the rest of any theory of mind, of body or of their interrelation. In fact, if there are antinomies, the very project of a (consistent) theory of mind becomes questionable.[37]

When Wolff claims, therefore, that Hume's discoveries about mental activity "carry him beyond the limits of his own system ... that he is forced to express his best ideas in language totally unsuited to them," he is perhaps right in a much more fundamental sense than he himself realizes.[38] For Hume's discovery of an antinomical dimension of the human mind implies that whatever system or language we choose for our ideas about ourselves, it will necessarily be unsuited. Perhaps it is no accident that one of Hume's last works on metaphysics is written in the form of a dialogue, and no accident that it is extremely difficult to determine Hume's position in it.

But be that as it may, I hope that this discussion of Hume's *manifest contradictions* has shown that nothing could be less fair to Hume than to say he wanted but "could not succeed in the impossible -- a science founded on scepticism no degree of ingenuity can successfully construct."[39] Hume wanted no such thing, and perhaps he succeeded in something quite possible, if rather ingenuous -- a skepticism founded upon science. This would certainly give an

entirely new dimension to Hume's supposed irony.

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1. Norman Kemp Smith finds, for instance, that Hume has not paid enough critical attention to his basic principle of "thorough subordination of reason to feeling and instinct" in his analysis of the self. This seems, to Kemp Smith, "a failure in thoroughness of analysis." See Norman Kemp Smith, The Philosophy of David Hume, (London, 1941; 556, 559 and 547ff). James Noxon, Hume's Philosophical Development, A Study of his Methods (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1973) suggests that Hume's "constructive aims underwent" considerable change (188), and that he more or less abandoned the project of grounding his moral, political and aesthetic philosophy "in a comprehensive theory of human nature."

2. Most interpretations that rely on the fiction of an "ironic Hume" seem to involve such claims. See, for instance, John Vladimir Price, The Ironic Hume, (Austin, Texas, 1965). But see also D.G.C. McNabb, David Hume: His Theory of Knowledge and Morality, 2nd. ed. (Hamden, Connecticut: Anchor Books, 1966), 7, who finds that Hume's arguments to prove "inherent contradictions in our understanding ... are sophistries, and the problem they pose is to spot the fallacy."

3. This is most forcefully argued by Hume's Scottish critics Reid, Oswald and Beattie, and it is part and parcel of the so called "Oxford view" of Hume (see R.W. Connon, "The Naturalism of Hume Revisited," in McGill Hume Studies, ed. D.F. Norton, N. Capaldi, W. L. Robison (San Diego: Austin Hill Press, Inc., 1979), 121-145, 123f.). But see also J.A. Passmore, Hume's Intentions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 83. Passmore thinks that the problem of identity is the point "where Hume's psychological positivism breaks down."

4. See, for instance, Jane L. McIntyre, "Is Hume's Self Consistent?" in McGill Hume Studies, 79-88, 79.

5. Ibid.: "For, I will argue, critics have been perhaps too quick to join Hume in the condemnation of his original view." See also Kemp Smith, The Philosophy of David Hume, 558, who finds "Hume cannot mean what he certainly appears to be saying" in the Appendix to the Treatise.

6. I do not want to deny that there are certain contradictions that fall into one or the other of the categories mentioned above. Nor do I even want to deny that, ultimately, the contradictions are perhaps dependent upon Hume's principles and methods. See notes 24 and 25 below.

7. I have argued in my "Scottish Common Sense in Germany, 1768-1800; A Contribution to the History of Critical Philosophy" (Dissertation, McGill 1980) that the conflict between Hume and Reid, Oswald and Beattie reveals the antinomical dimension of "Hume's problem" for Kant. In my "Kant's Conception of Hume's Problem," read at the Dublin Hume Conference in 1981 and now forthcoming in the Journal of the History of Philosophy, I suggested that this antinomical dimension is already present in the "Conclusion" of Book I of Hume's Treatise and that there is an "antinomy of the imagination" in that passage. Later I learned that J. Bricke had already noted in his Hume's Philosophy of Mind (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) that there is such an antinomy in Hume (see pp. 9,10, 13,21,24,96,152 of his work). However, his discussion of this antinomy is rather brief. See also notes 31, 36, 37 below.

   Apart from Bricke's I know of no account that makes the explicit claim that there are antinomies in Hume, though a number of accounts that attempt to show the inevitable character of the senses and reason can be seen to be close to the account given here. See, for instance, Jan Wilbanks, Hume's Theory of the Imagination (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), 72. Some of the things that Noxon says around page 163 of his Hume's Philosophical Development about the "actual logical independence of Hume's psychological theory" are perhaps close to what I have to say here (though some of the claims about the role of skepticism seem rather different). The conclusions I shall draw come closest to the results of Wade L. Robison's in "Hume's Scepticism Dialogue 12 (1973), 87-99 and "David Hume: Naturalist and Meta-sceptic," in Hume: A Re-evaluation, ed. D. Livingston and J. King (New York: Fordham University Press, 1976) 23-49. But see note 32 below.

8. I must emphasize, however, that, though I use Kant's doctrine of the "Antinomy of Pure Reason" as a model, the following constitutes in no sense an adequate discussion of Kant's doctrine. I offer here a minimal account of antinomy.

9. See Norbert Hinske, "Kants Begriff der Antinomie und die Etappen seiner Ausarbeitung," Kant-Studien 55 (1966), 485-496. See also my "Dating Kant's Vorlesungen

Über Philosophische Enzyklopädie, Kant-Studien (forthcoming).

10. Kant clearly did not create the "Antinomy of Pure Reason" ex nihilo. However original his own conception is, it has historical precedents. Hume's "manifest contradictions" are clearly among these.

11. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), A421/B449. All references preceded by an "A" and/or "B" will be to this edition.

12. A296/B353-A298/B354.

13. A297/B354.

14. A298/B355.

15. See notes 3 and 6 above and 24, 25 below.

16. Robert Paul Wolff, "Hume's Theory of Mental Activity," in Hume: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. V.C. Chappell (Garden City/New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1966), 99-128, 107. See also R.A. Mall,"Hume's Prinzipien- und Kants Kategoriensystem," Kant-Studien 62 (1971), 319-334, and Lewis White Beck, "A Prussian Hume and a Scottish Kant" in McGill Hume Studies, 63-78. For a criticism of this account of Hume's theory of mental activity see Fred Wilson, "Hume's Theory of Mental Activity," McGill Hume Studies, 101-120.

17. For suggestions as to the consequences of this for Hume's so called "theory of mental activity" see below (last section).

18. There are other passages as well. Most important is perhaps the discussion of the self in the "Appendix" to the Treatise. There Hume finds two principles which he *cannot render consistent ... nor renounce either of them* (T636). Though he does not want *to pronounce it absolutely* that the difficulty is *insuperable*, it is fairly clear that he himself thinks it very difficult, if not impossible (ibid.).

19. Hume drops the hint that he believes the difficulties can be resolved, *if it be admitted, that there is no such thing as abstract or general ideas, properly speaking* (E158n). I count the immediately preceding objection which is based upon the notion of secondary qualities (E154-5), also among the arguments against reason. In any case, it is also based on the notion of abstract ideas.

20. A similar point is made by Hume in T187-218. He concludes there that the *skeptical doubt, both with respect to reason and the senses, is a malady, which can never be radically cur'd* (T218, emphasis mine). For an excellent discussion of the differences of Hume and Reid on this see David Fate Norton, David Hume: Common Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 192-238.

21. Hume refers back to his analysis in the section *Of the Modern Philosophy* (T225-31, especially 231). Though the point made in the *Conclusion* of Book I of the Treatise is not exactly the same as the one he makes in the Enquiry, they are clearly intimately related. In this context, where I am only concerned with establishing that there are antinomies in Hume, I cannot deal extensively with questions of detail. For this reason, I shall not discuss here the contradictions that arise when *we trace up the human understanding to its first principles* (T266), though this would be pertinent and interesting.

22. Nevertheless, this is what many interpretations of Hume's philosophy as "naturalism" suggest. The question is, therefore, who confuses philosophy and psychology -- Hume or certain of his interpreters?

23. E151-155, T266, et passim. See also David Hume, Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, 2nd. ed., Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Social Science Publishers, 1948), 135.

24. Thus I would be willing to go along with many of Reid's criticisms. However, interpretations of Hume should not take these criticisms as short cuts. For by means of them they would leave out some of the most interesting aspects of Hume. Moreover, I would suggest that, if Hume reduced the philosophical principles of his predecessors to absurdity, then not only those of Locke and Berkeley but also those of Descartes (and perhaps those of Plato and Aristotle) would become absurd.

25. See, for instance, Jonathan Bennett, Kant's Dialectic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 114ff, and W.H. Walsh, Kant's Criticism of Metaphysics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 195ff.

26. A407/B434.

27. Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics, ed. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis/New York: The Bobbs Merrill Co., Inc., 1950), 86.

28. A423/B451-A424/B452.

29. See Immanuel Kant, Gesammelte Schriften (Akademie Ausgabe: Berlin, 1902-), vol. 24, 211, for instance.

30. Robison, "David Hume: Naturalist and Meta-sceptic," 23.

31. Bricke, Hume's Philosophy of Mind, 4.

32. That is what I take Robison to mean by "meta-scepticism," though I am not actually sure whether he means this. Perhaps Hume should also be called a "meta-naturalist."

33. Terence Penelhum, "Skepticism and the Dialogues," McGill Hume Studies, 253-278, 255.

34. If Hume actually is a picture of the perfect Pyrrhonist, as Richard H. Popkin has persuasively argued, then his "split personality" is also nothing but a mirror image of the splits of the human mind. It is perhaps for this reason that Hume must have believed that "any 'honest' philosopher would be this sort of schizophrenic Pyrrhonist." See Richard H. Popkin, "David Hume: His Pyrrhonism and his Critique of Pyrrhonism" in Hume, ed. Chappell, 53-98, 98.

35. Wolff, "Hume's Theory of Mental Activity," 127, emphasis mine.

36. Bricke, Hume's Philosophy of Mind, 24.

37. Bricke, who acknowledges the existence of at least one antinomy in Hume, does not appear to realize that he must answer the question "How is a philosophy of mind at all possible for Hume?"

38. Wolff, "Hume's Theory of Mental Activity," 99.

39. Passmore, Hume's Intentions, 151.