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# Hume on Natural Belief and Original Principles

*Miriam McCormick*

David Hume discusses a number of important beliefs that, although he himself never uses the term, commentators have come to call "natural beliefs." These beliefs cannot be justified rationally but are impossible to give up. They differ from irrational beliefs because no amount of reasoning can eliminate them. There is general agreement that such a class of beliefs exists for Hume. There is differing opinion, however, concerning which beliefs count as "natural." In particular, there has been much debate as to whether belief in God is "natural" for Hume.

Much of this disagreement concerning natural beliefs arises because not enough attention is paid to the different uses of "natural" in Hume. On his analysis, certain characteristics may be called "natural" insofar as their causes are found in human nature. These characteristics can be explained by reference to what Hume calls the original principles of human nature. But they need not be necessary or unavoidable. It is only the original principles themselves, for Hume, that are universal and necessary for all human beings. And it is only those beliefs which *necessarily* result from original principles that are "natural" in a second sense: these beliefs are, according to Hume, "inseparable from the species." Only beliefs which are natural in this second sense are indispensable despite their lack of rational grounds. Certain other beliefs, such as belief in God, are "natural" in some weaker sense, but are often taken to be "natural" in this second sense. My aim is to distinguish the different senses of "natural" for Hume and so determine which beliefs are "natural" in which senses.

## Natural belief

Norman Kemp Smith was the first to discuss the existence of a special class of beliefs in Hume.<sup>1</sup> Kemp Smith first uses the term "natural belief" in reference to the belief in the existence of body. This belief, he says, is a natural belief "due to the ultimate instincts or propensities that constitute our human nature" (Kemp Smith, 151). Furthermore, this particular belief is not founded on reason or sense experience, yet no amount of reasoning will cause us to give it up.<sup>2</sup> "Certain beliefs or judgments," says Kemp Smith, "can be shown to be 'natural', 'inevitable', 'indispensable' and are thus removed beyond the reach of sceptical doubt" (p. 152). Two other beliefs which Kemp Smith says

Hume considers natural are belief in causal action and belief in the identity or unity of the self.

The primary purpose of Kemp Smith's article is to demonstrate "that the establishment of a purely naturalistic conception of human nature by the thorough subordination of reason to feeling and instinct is a determining factor in Hume's philosophy" (p. 150). He developed this thesis in reaction to T. H. Green and other commentators who had claimed that Hume "merely develops to a sceptical conclusion the principles which he inherits from Locke and Berkeley" (Kemp Smith, 149). The discussion of "natural belief" is meant to show that Green is mistaken when he claims that Hume denies the existence of the external world and of the self. It is true that Hume says reason will not show us that such things exist. But because reason is not supreme for Hume, says Kemp Smith, we need not worry that such beliefs are not justified. Because Hume does not encourage us to give up such fundamental beliefs or even think that such an enterprise is possible, Kemp Smith maintains that, rather than being sceptical about such beliefs, Hume defends them from sceptical attack. There are certain beliefs that it makes no sense to question.

The doctrine of natural belief serves as an illustration of Kemp Smith's claim that Hume subordinates reason to feeling and instinct. Because his discussion of "natural belief" is used mainly to illustrate a particular point, Kemp Smith does little more than offer a description of such beliefs. He tells us that these beliefs are inevitable and indispensable, but he does not indicate how one determines which beliefs are natural. Criteria are given for what Hume counts as a natural belief, but the means for determining if a belief satisfies these criteria are not offered.

With the publication of R. J. Butler's article, "Natural Belief and the Enigma of Hume," it became clear that Kemp Smith's discussion had left unanswered many questions concerning natural belief. Butler says that natural beliefs are those which Hume thinks it mistaken to attempt to justify. Butler, like Kemp Smith, thinks that by distinguishing this class of beliefs, Hume was attempting to counter extreme scepticism. But Butler points out that Hume fails to explain why certain beliefs are privileged and others are not; nor does Hume provide the criteria, says Butler, that enable us to distinguish natural beliefs.<sup>3</sup> By looking at what Hume does say, Butler wishes to sharpen the concept of natural belief by supplying these criteria. The characteristics that distinguish natural beliefs from others, says Butler, is that they are unavoidable: all natural beliefs "are to be regarded as beliefs in the existence of something, without specifying its nature ... and *all* of them turn out, upon examination, to be in Hume's opinion indispensable ways of looking at experience" (Butler, 99).

Butler then argues that, for Hume, belief in God satisfies the criteria of a natural belief. He maintains that, for Hume, belief in God necessarily arises from belief in "an ultimate principle of order." Belief in order, "like our belief in causation, is unavoidable: Nobody behaves as if the universe were ultimately in chaos!" (p. 98). Butler considers belief in an ultimate principle of order to be on a par with such beliefs as those we have in causation and personal identity. And it is *almost* unavoidable, says Butler, that we should think of this principle of order as a somehow personal and intelligent designer.

In defending his view, Butler points out that Hume seems to attribute characteristics to belief in God which he ordinarily reserves for natural beliefs. This belief, like those that are clearly natural, is not dependent on reason. Hume deplors the kind of theology that attempts to base religion on reason, rather than faith.<sup>4</sup> He also calls the belief in God a "universal propensity."<sup>5</sup> If this belief is universal and non-rational, one may conclude that it is "natural."

Commentators who disagreed with Butler on this point, that is, commentators who deny that Hume viewed belief in the deity to be "natural," needed to make clearer what it means for a belief to be "natural." J. C. A. Gaskin attempted this clarification and also sought to reveal the flaws in Butler's argument.<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that Gaskin's account of Humean "natural beliefs" differs little from Kemp Smith or Butler. According to Gaskin, natural beliefs fulfil four criteria. They are: 1) beliefs of naïve common sense, 2) non-rational, 3) necessary as a pre-condition of action, and 4) universally held (p. 286). They are unlike other merely irrational beliefs, says Gaskin, because "there is no evidence which makes it more reasonable to adopt any alternative set of beliefs. ... Things 'work out well' if I have the belief and *cannot work out* if I do not have the belief" (p. 287).

Given these criteria, belief in God, says Gaskin, is not a natural belief. It is not clear that it satisfies *any* of the four criteria: it is questionable whether belief in God is a common sense belief, and it may not lack rational grounds. But belief in God is clearly not, according to Gaskin, unavoidable or universally held. That this belief is not entirely universal may not rule it out as a natural belief. For in highly philosophical moments one may suspend one's belief in the external world.<sup>7</sup> More crucial is that the belief in God is not unavoidable in the manner of the clearly natural beliefs. As soon as one ceases one's philosophical musings and begins to act, an external world must be taken for granted. Such does not seem to be the case with belief in God. Says Gaskin, "only too clearly men can and do live in a coherent and successful manner without belief in God" (p. 288).

Kemp Smith called natural beliefs inevitable. Butler called them unavoidable. But neither made it clear why they have such qualities. Gaskin clarified what it means for a belief to be "unavoidable." A belief is unavoidable, he says, if it is a "necessary pre-condition of action." This elucidation helps to clarify the concept of natural belief. But Gaskin has not put an end to the confusion concerning this concept. Gaskin has told us how we recognize that a belief is unavoidable. But how are we to decide if a belief is a necessary pre-condition for action? It is not obvious that we cannot act without a belief in an external world. The belief is necessary for almost everything we do. But in our "profound and intense reflections" when we might doubt such beliefs, do we necessarily cease all action? Despite Gaskin's discussion, we are still in need of a more precise understanding of what it means to say that a belief is "natural."

### What is "natural"?

Gaskin, Butler and others<sup>8</sup> are concerned foremost with establishing criteria which enable us to distinguish natural beliefs from other beliefs. But there is another important question: Why do certain beliefs display the qualities which put them into this special class of "natural" beliefs? What makes certain beliefs universal, inevitable, unavoidable or necessary pre-conditions for action? A consideration of the different ways Hume uses "natural" will explain why some non-rational beliefs cannot be given up, while other beliefs, including some which seem to be natural in some sense, are not unavoidable.

Hume himself notes that the word "natural" has many different meanings. Concerning the word "Nature," Hume says, "there is none more ambiguous and equivocal."<sup>9</sup> There are at least three ways Hume uses the word "natural": to mean "ordinary," to mean "part of nature," and to mean "inseparable from the species."

The first sense of "natural" for Hume is "ordinary" or "normal." He considers this meaning in his discussion in the *Treatise*, book 3. There he says, "*nature* may also be opposed to rare and unusual" (T 474). It is clear that a belief being "natural" in this sense does not make it unavoidable. Belief in God is a common, usual belief and so may be called "natural." But only if it is also natural in some other sense will it be unshakable even if not rationally grounded.

The second sense of "natural" for Hume is "part of nature." When Hume investigates a moral phenomenon, he attempts to establish if it can be explained by appealing to human nature, or if it was invented out of interest and education. This is not, however, an exclusive disjunction. For if certain inventions came about because of some feature of human nature, it makes sense to call them "natural." Hume makes this clear in his discussion of justice: "Mankind is an inventive

species; and where an invention is obvious and absolutely necessary, it may as properly be said to be natural as any thing that proceeds immediately from original principles, without the intervention of thought or reflexion" (T 484).

The *original principles* to which Hume here refers are the ultimate principles of human nature—the principles beyond which our explanations cannot go. No reason can be given for such principles "beside our experience of their reality" (T xviii). A principle can be taken to be original, Hume says, when we "despair of explaining its causes" (T 624), or when they "cannot be accounted for" (T 590). Any phenomenon which can be traced to original principles can be called "natural." Given that Hume's study is human nature, it is not surprising that almost everything he is interested in can finally be explained by appeal to these original principles. Indeed, this is the aim of the project outlined in the introduction to the *Treatise*: Hume hopes that through observation and experiments he will be able to trace all human phenomena to "the simplest and fewest causes" (T xvii). Again, in the *Abstract* Hume sums up his practice:

If, in examining several phaenomena, we find that they resolve themselves into one common principle, and can trace this principle into another, we shall at last arrive at those few simple principles, on which all the rest depend. (T 646)

Belief in God is also natural in this second sense. One can explain this belief by appealing to certain fundamental principles of human nature.<sup>10</sup> Given that belief in God can be traced to one or more principles, it makes sense to call it a "natural belief." But this is not the sense in which Kemp Smith, Butler or Gaskin use the term. Not all phenomena Hume seeks explanations for are universal, unavoidable elements of human nature, yet they are almost all explicable by appealing to original principles. The only belief which will satisfy the criteria of being "natural" in the sense of being inevitable and indispensable are those which *necessarily* arise given the kind of creatures we are. These beliefs are natural in a third sense; they are what Hume calls "inseparable from the species."

If a characteristic is "inseparable from the species" it follows that every member of the species must possess this characteristic. It also follows that one could not rid oneself of such a characteristic without ceasing to be a member of the species. Such characteristics would have the universality and the necessity required of a fundamental natural belief.<sup>11</sup> If something is a *necessary* outgrowth of certain original principles, then it is natural in this sense. It is therefore important that

we are able to recognize which aspects of human nature are indeed original.

### Original principles

I have already cited some of Hume's descriptions of original principles. It is clear what makes a principle original: it must be ultimate, it must explain central aspects of human life and it must be universal. But it is nonetheless difficult to say which aspects of human nature satisfy these criteria. Hume seldom uses the word "original." On the few occasions where he does use it, he is usually making general statements about such principles. He sometimes tells us something is not original but rarely states specifically that something is original. There have been few attempts to catalogue which features of human nature Hume thinks are original. The little sustained discussion of these principles which exists is found in Christopher Berry's *Hume, Hegel and Human Nature*. Berry emphasizes the importance of clarifying what Hume considers constant in human nature. There are some critics who found Hume lacking historical sense in his alleged view that people do not change over time.<sup>12</sup> Such critics take Hume to be saying that human nature never changes, rather than saying changes over time can be explained by appeal to certain principles which remain the same.

Berry holds that rather than depriving history of its role, uniform principles make its study possible. "No matter what variety of 'circumstances and situations' history reveals," Berry says, "there still exists in human institutions and behaviour, by virtue of their being human, certain constitutive constancies, which render them explicable."<sup>13</sup> Berry provides a list of what according to Hume are "constant constituents of human nature." He enumerates some thirty items, and says the list is not exhaustive.<sup>14</sup> All these, says Berry, are constant, universal, and count as the regular springs from which diverse behaviour follows. There are differences, however, which Berry does not note between the items on his list. Not everything on the list is an original principle, for example. Each of the items Berry lists is "natural" in the sense of being explicable by appeal to original principles. But some are merely common or prominent aspects of human nature. Such is the case with credulity and curiosity. Hume actually only calls these qualities "conspicuous." They are interesting common qualities which one can explain by referring to more fundamental aspects of human nature.

Of the thirty-five universal characteristics Berry lists (twenty of which are found in the *Treatise*), Hume explains many by appealing to others in the same list. A "seeking for society," for example, is explained by appeal to both our "selfishness" and to the "natural appetite between the sexes." In the same way, a "sense of morals" is probably dependent

on the principle of sympathy, for as Hume says, "sympathy is the chief source of moral distinctions" (T 618). In addition, "love of truth," is explicitly explained through sympathy, while "curiosity" is explained by saying that "too sudden and violent a change is unpleasant to us" (T 453), a fact which is in turn dependent on our aversion to pain.

Of the twenty universal characteristics Berry finds in the *Treatise*, three are clearly original principles. These are selfishness, sympathy, and the propensity to form habits. Selfishness is inexplicable in itself but explains much of human life. It helps to explain society and justice. It also figures in many of the explanations of the passions. Hume says that it is "inseparable from human nature, and inherent in our frame and constitution" (T 583). Sympathy also helps explain many of our moral views and passions. Because its causes are inexplicable, we know it to be "ultimate."<sup>15</sup> The propensity to form habits is also universal and necessary to explain much of human action and belief, yet its causes are also not discovered. Other original principles, not mentioned by Berry, are our aversion to pain, our tendency to associate ideas and our determination to make causal inferences.

Having determined how to recognize which features of human nature are original for Hume (any feature that is ultimate or primitive is original), we are in a better position to establish what he supposes are the necessary effects of such original principles. An example of such a "necessary effect" is the invention of the rules of justice. The rules of justice and injustice, Hume tells us, are necessarily invented given the kinds of creatures we are and the circumstances in which we find ourselves.<sup>16</sup> A brief outline of Hume's explanation of justice will clarify why he believes this is so.

Human beings are not well equipped for survival, says Hume. Their needs are greater than any other animals, yet, as individuals, they lack the means to acquire what they need. It is only through society that human beings can improve their condition. It is by society that mankind "is able to supply his defects. ... By society all his infirmities are compensated" (T 485). As people associate to gain additional force and ability, says Hume, possessions are acquired. But as there is not a sufficient abundance to supply all of us with all the possessions we desire and need, the very same association which allows for an increase in humanity's productivity places such produce at risk. Speaking of the material goods we desire, Hume says that the "*instability* of their possession, along with their *scarcity*, is the chief impediment [of society]" (T 488). We thus realize we must find a way to remedy this situation.

This remedy, according to Hume, comes in the form of the rules of justice. Because we recognize the immense benefits of society, we enter into a convention "to bestow stability on the possession of those external

goods, and leave every one in the peaceable enjoyment of what he may acquire by his fortune and industry" (T 489). Realizing that the "common interest" increases our own and our family's well being, we develop conventions to stabilize possessions. As these conventions begin to be effective in society, the idea of justice and injustice arises.

From this account, it is clear that a seeking for society is inseparable from the species. Such a seeking is a necessary effect of certain fundamental principles. Because individuals wish to satisfy their own needs and desires, they develop society. It is thus selfishness joined with the circumstances in which humans find themselves which causes them to seek society. Selfishness is one of the original principles with which we must end our explanations. We know only that it is a constant and uniform element of human nature.

Given that justice must be invented to preserve society and that society is a necessary result of certain original principles, Hume calls the rules of justice "natural." As long as an aspect of human nature, be it a reasoned invention or an unreflective belief, necessarily develops, it is proper to call it inseparable from the species and thus "natural" in the relevant sense.

### **Which beliefs are "inseparable from the species"?**

It is not obvious that the rules of justice are, in fact, inseparable from the species. Given that Hume finds justice to be natural in this sense, it is possible that many other features of human nature, including certain beliefs, may turn out to be inseparable from the species. To discover which beliefs, if any, Hume supposes to be inseparable, we must simply examine his explanations of them. I will look first at what Hume says about belief in the external world and then at his treatment of belief in God.

Belief in an external world, says Hume, is not the result of our senses or reasoning. Reason tells us that we are aware only of a series of interrupted perceptions that are dependent on the mind, and hence fails to "give us an assurance of the continu'd and distinct existence of body" (T 193). Hume thus concludes that it is the imagination which is responsible for this essential belief. When we are faced with objects possessing certain qualities, the imagination causes us to attribute an external existence to these objects. When we observe a constancy and coherence in objects, we attribute a continued existence to them. We suppose this continued existence to occur independently of our perceptions. We have a propensity, says Hume, to unite broken appearances together by a continued existence. It is the resemblance of certain interrupted impressions which excites this propensity of the mind. Without such a propensity we would have no way to ascribe identity to any object.

## HUME ON NATURAL BELIEF AND ORIGINAL PRINCIPLES

It is, thus, this "natural propensity of the imagination" which causes us to believe in a continued existence of objects. After accounting for this belief, Hume again reminds us that even a small amount of philosophical reasoning can undermine the idea of a continued existence. But despite whatever "calm and profound reflection" a philosopher may undertake, he cannot entirely give up belief in an external world: "That opinion has taken such deep root in the imagination, that 'tis impossible ever to eradicate it, nor will any strain'd metaphysical conviction of the dependence of our perceptions be sufficient for that purpose" (T 214).

It is clear that the *propensity* to believe in the external world is inseparable from the species. The mind is so constructed that when faced with certain external circumstances, it is inclined to assign an external existence to resembling perceptions. This propensity is a direct and necessary result of certain inexplicable and ultimate principles of human nature. But whether we must necessarily give into this propensity and actually *believe* in the external world is not immediately clear.

At the beginning of "Of scepticism with regard to the senses" Hume makes it seem as if we *must* hold a belief in the external world. Here he says " 'tis in vain to ask, *Whether there be body or not?* That is a point, which we must take for granted in all our reasonings" (T 187). But, that we must act and reason as if there is an external world, does not entail that we cannot doubt whether there is, in fact, such a thing. Hume says later in the same section that it *is* possible to doubt in the existence of the external world. When one is engaged in "profound and intense reflection" one can assent to reason and achieve such doubt. But, says Hume, it is impossible for this doubt to last and that is why no amount of philosophy can wholly eradicate the belief. So, although we are able, for a time, to resist the propensity to believe in the external world, we cannot entirely eliminate this belief. It is thus correct to call the belief "natural" in the sense of being "inseparable from the species." For it is a belief that no human being can entirely avoid. It will *necessarily* arise given the kind of creatures we are.

Hume calls the *propensity* to believe in God universal. But it seems that it is a propensity which is easier to resist than is the propensity to believe in the external world. Concerning the belief itself, Hume says it is very common "but it has neither perhaps been so universal as to admit of no exception" (NHR 4:309). Nor does Hume ever ascribe a necessity to this belief. Given that it is not needed in all our reasoning or actions, it is a belief that can be eradicated.<sup>17</sup>

It is Butler's contention that belief in God necessarily arises from belief in order. Belief that there is some order does seem to be a natural belief, in the sense of being inseparable from the species. The belief that

the future will resemble the past, like the belief in the external world, cannot be eradicated. Both, according to Hume, necessarily arise from certain inexplicable determinations of the mind. These two beliefs cause us to view some order in the world. The world does not appear wholly chaotic to any human being.

It is not clear, however, that belief in God will necessarily result from this belief in order. Because human beings naturally believe in order, they are *inclined* to believe that there is a being responsible. It appears as if the world has been ordered by some being.<sup>18</sup> But given that we can resist the propensity to believe in God, we must be able to believe there is order without believing in a being responsible for this order. It seems there are people who can doubt the existence of God and this doubt, unlike the doubt in external existence, can continue indefinitely and without creating insurmountable problems. Because belief in God does not necessarily result from original principles, it is not inseparable from the human species. Thus, it is not "natural" in the sense of being "unavoidable," "inevitable" or "indispensable."

Kemp Smith was concerned mainly with defending Hume against allegations that he was an extreme sceptic. He regarded Hume's doctrine of natural belief as his defence against scepticism. But what really saves Hume from scepticism is his belief that there are a few basic, constant, and universal principles which bind human beings together over time and place. If asked by a sceptic why morality is not arbitrary, Hume can answer: "Because it is a product of human nature." Whether this answer is satisfactory still needs to be seen. But just as the recognition of the role and nature of these principles helped to clarify the concept of natural belief, I believe Hume's view of morality and his response to scepticism can also benefit from an investigation of these principles.

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1. Norman Kemp Smith, "The Naturalism in Hume," *Mind* 14 (April 1905): 149-73.
2. Kemp Smith uses "reason" as shorthand for "reason and sense experience." I will be using reason the same way unless specified otherwise.
3. Ronald J. Butler, "Natural Belief and the Enigma of Hume," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 42 (1960): 73-100.
4. In "Of miracles" Hume says that it is a mistake to base religion and miracles on reason rather than faith: "Our most holy religion is founded on *Faith*, not on reason; and it is a sure method of exposing it to put it to such a trial as it is, by no means, fitted to

## HUME ON NATURAL BELIEF AND ORIGINAL PRINCIPLES

- endure." David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 3d ed., rev., ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975), 130 (hereafter cited as "E").
5. David Hume, *Natural History of Religion*, in *The Philosophical Works*, ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, 4 vols. (Darmstadt, 1964), 4:362 (hereafter cited as "NHR").
  6. J. C. A. Gaskin, "God, Hume and Natural Belief," *Philosophy* 49 (1984): 281-94.
  7. Whether the fact that Hume grants that it is possible to doubt our belief in the external world prevents it from being "natural" in the sense presented by Kemp Smith is discussed below.
  8. Another discussion of the relation of natural beliefs to religious ones is Terence Penelhum's "Natural Belief and Religious Belief in Hume's Philosophy," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 33, no. 131 (1983): 166-81. Some others interested in Hume's doctrine of natural belief are Dorothy P. Coleman, "Hume's 'Dialectic'," *Hume Studies* 10, no. 2 (November 1984): 139-55; and M. J. Ferreira, "Hume's Naturalism—Proof and Practice," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 35, no. 138 (1985): 45-57.
  9. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2d ed., rev., ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1987), 474 (hereafter cited as "T").
  10. An example of how this is done is discussed below.
  11. Beliefs which are "natural" in the special sense of being "unavoidable," "indispensable," etc., I call "fundamental." If a belief is "natural" in one of the other senses described, it is not fundamental.
  12. Many writers suggest that Hume holds a distorted view of history and human nature. These writers are mainly concerned with section 8, part 1 of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. There Hume says that "in all nations and ages, ... human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations" (E 83). He also says that history can teach us nothing new or strange about mankind, but that its "chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature" (E 83). This view concerning the constancy of human nature is found in the parallel section of the *Treatise*: "Whether we consider mankind according to the difference of sexes, ages, governments, conditions, or methods of education; the same uniformity and regular operation of natural principles are discernible" (T 401).

On the basis of such remarks, many critics find Hume's view of human nature distorted. An example of such criticism is found in W. H. Walsh, "The Constancy of Human Nature," in

*Contemporary British Philosophy*, ed. H. D. Lewis (London, 1976), 277. Walsh refers to Hume's "lack of historical sense" and his display of *naïveté* because of his apparent oversight of the fact that people are not always the same. Others who are concerned about Hume's view of history are R. G. Collingwood, J. B. Black, Duncan Forbes, David H. Fischer, and S. K. Wertz.

This interpretation of what Hume takes as being "constant" or "universal" in human nature, I take to be a serious misunderstanding. As Berry points out, Hume does not think people's minds, actions and societies are unchanged. Rather, because foreign or historical action is so diverse, he appeals to original principles of human nature to help us understand this diversity.

13. Christopher J. Berry, *Hume, Hegel, and Human Nature* (The Hague, 1982), 59.
14. Twenty characteristics Berry lists from the *Treatise* are: sympathy and fellow feeling, dissatisfaction with a short-falling from a standard, benevolence and resentment, love of life, kindness to children, credulity, a seeking for society, personification, a diminution of aversion through familiarization, a despising of that to which one is accustomed, stimulation in the face of opposition, curiosity, unpleasantness of too sudden a change, a preference for the contiguous over the remote, an addiction to general rules, blaming the present and admiring the past, selfishness, a sense of morals, an inclination to truth, and the contraction of habits.

The others which Berry says are not found in the *Treatise* are: fortification through unanimity, an assumption of the resemblance between the experienced and non-experienced (this seems to me to be found in the *Treatise* as well), arrogance and presumptuousness, a delight in liberty yet a submission to necessity, a disapproval of barbarity and treachery, a tenacity of memory, shame in the detection of committing a falsehood, imitateness, a propensity to the marvellous, a propensity to self-overvaluation, a propensity to adulation, a propensity to fame, a propensity to divide into factions, a propensity to believe what is to the disadvantage rather than the advantage of government, and the propensity to believe in an intelligent and invisible power.

15. In the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Hume does not systematically discuss sympathy as a principle of communication. He does, however, discuss the closely related principle of humanity and fellow-feeling. In a footnote he says the following: "It is needless to push our researches so far as to ask, why we have humanity or a fellow-feeling with others. It is sufficient, that this

is experienced to be a principle in human nature. We must stop somewhere in our examination of causes" (E 219-20).

16. Given that the invention of justice is dependent on circumstances in which humans find themselves, it might seem odd that Hume explicitly calls it "inseparable from the species" (T 484). For the same species, in different circumstances, would not have to develop the rules of justice. In what sense, then, one may ask, is it a necessary "invention"?

It is only the original principles themselves which must remain constant. It is these principles which define the human species. But given that the species is found in this world, it makes sense to call the invention of justice "inseparable from the species." For given the kind of creatures humans are and the world they inhabit, the invention of justice necessarily arises. If a world was discovered with seemingly human creatures but where all desires were filled and no dangers existed, it is likely that society and the rules of justice would not be invented. What Hume would say about such a world is that if its inhabitants were part of the human species, that is, if they shared the same original principles, then if ever they found themselves unable to supply their own needs and scarcity began to exist, the rules of justice would be invented.

17. Most discussions concerning Hume's view of religious beliefs concern themselves mainly with the *Dialogues*. This is the case with the articles by Butler, Gaskin and Penelhum cited above. I have not referred to the *Dialogues* because, given the character of that work, I do not think it is possible to take crucial religious conclusions as clearly Hume's. Even if in *Dialogues* part 12 Philo does agree that the fact of design *proves* that there is some kind of intelligent designer (and it is debatable that he does agree to this), it is not clear that Hume would have accepted the argument from design. If Philo does "give in," that could just be a demonstration that there exists quite a strong propensity to believe in God.

I have been concentrating on the *Treatise* because this seems to be the work where Hume presents his opinions the most directly. There, as in the *Enquiries*, Hume expresses contempt for those offering arguments for the existence of God or the immateriality of the soul. But Hume does not wish to offer his opinion as to whether there is, in fact, a God. He wishes not to participate in the debate: "If my philosophy, ... makes no addition to the arguments for religion, I have at least the satisfaction to think it takes nothing from them, but that every thing remains precisely as before" (T 250-51). It is understandable and "natural" that many people believe in God. And their belief may turn out to be justified. But

those who do not believe can still lead normal lives and they have made no logical errors.

18. Nicholas Capaldi maintains that God simply is Order for Hume: "the God whom Hume accepts is not the traditional Judeo-Christian God. ... This God is the God of the philosophers, a kind of principle of order, although we really do not, and probably will never, fully comprehend it." Nicholas Capaldi, *David Hume: The Newtonian Philosopher* (Boston, 1975), 189.

This position does not seem tenable. Hume can explain why we believe in order. It is not a hazy mystery. It is because of the structure of our minds. Hume does not attempt, however, to determine why our minds are so structured. Nor does he ever say that there is a *real* order which exists independently of the workings of our mind. If Hume maintained that Order was God, he would be going beyond experience, and be guilty of "presumptuous and chimerical" philosophy. All we can be sure of is that the world appears ordered and so leads many people to view this order as demonstrating that some kind of God exists.