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SYMPOSIUM

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Reason, Reflection, and *Reductios*

DAVID OWEN

In "An Anthropologist on Mars," Oliver Sacks tells the story of Temple Grandin, an autistic woman who has not overcome but worked around her condition to become a successful animal facilities designer and Assistant Professor in the Animal Sciences Department at Colorado State University at Fort Collins. Almost entirely lacking in Humean sympathy, and severely deficient in Humean passions, she has learned how to function by almost exclusive use of reason and inference. Through observation and experience, she has learned "how to behave" with other people "without having much personal perception of how other people felt—the nuances, the social subtleties involved." She takes no pleasure in Shakespeare because of "her failure to empathize with the characters, to follow the intricate play of motive and intention." "Much of the time," she said, "I feel like an anthropologist on Mars."¹

Growing up was a nightmare. At the age of six months, Sacks reports, she started to stiffen in her mother's arms, at ten months to claw her "like a trapped animal....Normal contact was almost impossible in these circumstances." But she developed an intense power of concentration and attention. Her ability to get along with other people is a matter of building up

a vast library of experiences over the years...like a library of videotapes, which she could play in her mind...[in order to] predict how people in similar circumstances might act...."It is strictly a logical process," she explained.²

Like many autistic people, she is a fan of Star Trek's Data and his predecessor, Mr. Spock.

What was lacking, when growing up, was "an implicit knowledge of social conventions and codes, of cultural presuppositions of every sort....Lacking it, she has instead to 'compute' others' feelings and intentions and states of mind, to try to make algorithmic, explicit, what for the rest of us is second nature." She couldn't get along with other children, even after she learned language. "Something was going on between the other kids, something swift, subtle, constantly changing—an exchange of meanings, a negotiation, a swiftness of understanding so remarkable that sometimes she wondered if they were all telepathic."³

Sacks' description of Temple is the closest thing I have come across to a description of what people might be like, and what they would lack, if they were instantiations of pure Humean reason, without the passionate interactions with other people so necessary not just to our social lives but to our entire being. It is arguable that Hume's philosophy can best be seen as a rejection of this conception of a person as a solitary, Cartesian reasoner in favour of the whole person, interacting with his fellows. And no commentator of Hume has stressed, indeed addressed, this aspect of Hume's philosophy with the verve, elegance, comprehensiveness, and persuasiveness of Annette Baier.

Baier's *A Progress of Sentiments*⁴ is a book that treats Hume's *Treatise*⁵ as a whole. The book begins with the last section of Book I of the *Treatise*, the often neglected but crucial "Conclusion of this book." Baier rightly treats it not just as the despairing rejection of the conception of a person solipsistically reliant solely on calculative reason, but also as the turning point in the *Treatise*, the stage where Hume starts to consider the "mind all collected within itself" (T 270), ready to forge the science of human nature not simply by concentrating on the understanding but treating people as passionate individuals with social natures. People in general cannot function like Temple; they have and use more than their reason and this affects every aspect of their life, including the cognitive side. In lacking passions, Temple did not simply fail to have certain feelings; she was also cognitively deprived. Ordinary people seemed to know things by telepathy, things forever shut off from the emotionally deprived Temple. By the end of Book I, it appears, Hume is ready to launch his investigation into the whole person.

Baier also rightly finds in the "Conclusion of this book" the key to an understanding of the nature of Hume's scepticism. Rarely is Hume simply a negative sceptic; rather he is a meta-sceptic, turning sceptical doubts onto themselves:

A true sceptic will be diffident of his philosophical doubts, as well as of his philosophical conviction; and will never refuse any innocent satisfaction, which offers itself, upon account of either of them.
(T 273)

This emphasis on the reflexivity of Hume's thought is one of the central themes of Baier's account. Combined with the emphasis on treating the *Treatise* as a whole, these themes compel us to do some radical re-thinking. Not only is Book I not an independent work that can stand on its own (as, say, the first *Enquiry* is), it is also not simply a prelude to what comes later when Hume considers the whole person or "the mind collected within itself" either. Rather, we are invited to reconsider and reinterpret the arguments of Book I in light of what comes later. Hume's concerns about personal identity cannot be considered in isolation from the robustly passionate and social self of Books II and III. His doubts about the rational basis of probable and causal reasoning must be considered in the light of his complete reliance on that way of reasoning throughout the *Treatise*. "If Hume really distrusts causal inference," Baier says (55), "then he must distrust his own *Treatise*." And again, unless some causal inferences "are well grounded, most of the claims of the *Treatise* itself will be groundless" (56).

The emphasis on reflexivity and its attendant reconsideration has powerful consequences. Towards the end of the *Treatise*, Hume remarks that the moral

sense must certainly acquire new force, when on reflecting on itself, it approves of those principles, from whence it is deriv'd, and finds nothing but what is great and good in its rise and origin. (T 619)

But this can be generalized: a mind must be "able to bear its own survey" (T 620). The warrant of causal reasoning, grounded as it is in habit and custom, comes not from a basis in calculative reason (Hume showed that to be impossible), but from the ability of causal reasoning to survive its own survey. If this is correct, Baier has solved what I consider to be the most fundamental problem in Hume scholarship: Hume's negative arguments about causal and probable reasoning are apparently supplemented only by explaining that pattern of inference in terms of an association of ideas established by custom and habit. But how can we get from these meager beginnings to a warranted account of the distinction between the correct and incorrect use of causal reasoning? Baier's answer is that by reflecting on its own operations, causal reasoning results in a set of normative rules: the rules by which to judge of causes and effects. Although many have noticed the importance of the fact that Hume gives us these rules, no one, I think, has given them the attention that Baier does. Throughout the book, she frequently explains how an instance of Humean causal reasoning actually meets the standard laid out by one or other of the rules: causal reasoning, by reflecting on its own operations, transcends its humble origins and becomes warranted by the reflective recognition of its own rules.

This is a powerful and compelling account of Hume's thought as displayed in the *Treatise*. Far from treating Hume as rejecting reason, Baier sees Hume's project as not so much dethroning reason as enlarging our conception of it to make it "social and passionate" (278). Her book culminates in the chapter "Reason and Reflection," where she reminds us that towards the end of the *Treatise* Hume claims that "I have all along endeavour'd to establish my system on pure reason" (T 548). But I wonder whether this picture is exactly right. Temple's problem does not consist in needing to enlarge her reason. In fact her reason works wonderfully well, so well that she can get along remarkably by using her reason to approximate what we passionate and social creatures know apparently by telepathy. It is not that her reason needs to be enlarged; rather, her mind and person need to be supplemented by, and integrated with, the passions and social nature that we all take for granted. In Humean terms, she lacks the sympathy required to supplement reason in order to become a whole person. In general, it must be admitted that this is a trivial complaint. It matters not a whit whether we diagnose Temple's problem as an impoverished faculty of reason (because that faculty is purely algorithmic) or whether we see her problem as being one of having an excellent faculty of reason but lacking other essential human capacities of sympathy, passions and emotions. But in terms of Hume scholarship, the difference is crucial.

There is an apparently obvious textual objection to Baier's account. Reason can't validate itself by reflecting on its own operations, because when it does so reflect, it utterly destroys itself. That is the apparent argument of the section "Scepticism with regard to reason." The certainty of demonstrative reasoning is, on reflection, reduced to probability and successive and reflexive probability judgements reduce to nothing. But Baier's account of this crucial section is different. Hume's argument here isn't directed at his account of reason, carefully crafted in Part 3 of Book I; rather, it is directed at the outmoded rationalist conception of reason as purely calculative, algorithmic, and intellectual. Hume's argument against reason here becomes more like a *reductio*; an over-intellectual account of reason implodes, leaving Hume's own account of reason, based on the imagination and its principles, intact. This picture of what is going on in "Scepticism with regard to reason" is held by others⁶ as well as Baier and there is good textual support for it. First of all, the argument appears in the first section of Part 4 of Book I, called "Of the sceptical and other systems of philosophy." This lends support to the claim that Hume is talking of another system's conception of reason, a conception that leads to scepticism. And immediately after giving the argument, Hume claims that the question whether he or anyone else believes the conclusion of the argument is "entirely superfluous....Nature, by an absolute and uncontrollable necessity has determin'd us to judge as well as to breathe and feel." Hume's purpose is not to refute "the cavils of this *total* scepticism," but rather to show

that "the arguments of that fantastic sect" should

make the reader sensible of the truth of [Hume's] hypothesis, *that all our reasonings concerning causes and effects are deriv'd from nothing but custom; and that belief is more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cogitative part of our natures.* (T 183)

Baier's strategy of treating this argument as a sort of *reductio* of an intellectualist account of reason is extended to two other famous arguments in the *Treatise* concerning reason: the argument concerning probable and causal reasoning (commonly miscalled "Hume's problem of induction") and the argument that purports to show that moral distinctions are not based on reason.⁷ Concerning the latter, Baier explicitly compares the arguments of III 1 i with the *reductio* arguments of I 4 i:

Hume in this early section is appealing to the rationalist moralists' own presuppositions, and trying to reduce their positions *ad absurdum*, just as he did in Part IV of Book One. (184)

Concerning the former, Baier says,

If we read Section VI of Part III carefully, we will find the negative conclusions concern "intelligibility" in the narrow sense in which it means what we would call interdeducibility. The 'reason' whose limits Hume draws in Section VI is the tracer of 'intelligible' connections. (61)

[I]t is only experience, not deductive reason even when that is helped by experience, that is responsible for our conviction that fire will continue to bring painful burns to human flesh. (64)

[D]eductive reason cannot be the source of our confidence "*that the course of nature continues always uniformly the same*" (T 89). (65)

Hume argues that it is not this or some other "explicitly formulated generalization, along with deductive inference" (67) that leads us to have beliefs about the unobserved. Nor can reason

get assurance of the principle of induction by other means. If it is not a case of "knowledge," is it a case of "probability"? By reason's own rules, that would be to beg the question, to assume the principle of induction in order to give the wanted grounding. It is reason that needs a "principle," spelled out and ready to serve as part of a demonstration. (67-68)⁸

Characterizing these famous arguments as *reductios* is significant, and not just because it is required to sustain Baier's overall position concerning Hume's development of his own account of reason. If these arguments are directed only at a conception of reason that Hume seeks to discredit, then they have less range and comprehensiveness than one might have thought, and our overall picture of Hume takes on a very different hue. If on the other hand, as I want to maintain, these negative arguments concerning reason are interpreted as having full range against reason even as Hume conceives it, we must see Hume as not enlarging our conception of reason but rather as boldly characterizing its limits. This is not necessarily a sceptical result. It is important to realize that if we adopt the view I am suggesting, we are not forced to see Hume as rejecting reason, but only as requiring its supplementation. Temple's problem does not require us to reject the understanding, but only to see that it requires supplementation and integration with the imagination and the passions. Arguing this fully would require book-length treatment, and I limit myself here to a few general comments about Hume and reason, and a few more detailed comments about "Scepticism with regard to reason." I admit in advance that if I am right, and Hume's arguments can't be treated as *reductios*, then we are left with the large problem that Baier had apparently so attractively solved: if causal and probable inference are not grounded in reason but rather in custom or habit, from whence comes their warrant? Reflexivity can't be the whole answer because reason reflecting on itself

entirely subverts itself, and leaves not the lowest degree of evidence in any proposition, either in philosophy or common life. (T 267–268)⁹

As the above passages indicate, Baier frequently characterizes the rationalist, intellectualist, algorithmic account of reason that Hume is attacking as "deductive." Furthermore, she is quite careful to remind us (302, note 8) that when characterizing the sort of reason that Hume is attacking as "deductive," she is using it in "our sense, not in the eighteenth-century sense." One seventeenth and eighteenth century sense of "deduction," commonly used by Locke and occasionally by Hume,¹⁰ is as a synonym for argument and inference, and I would suggest that we should never use it any other way when speaking of Hume. "Deductive" in our sense means formally valid. The only conception of formal validity available to Hume was syllogism. So if the deductive conception of reason was Hume's target in the arguments about reason, one might have expected him to mention "syllogism" or its cognates. He never does in the *Treatise*,¹¹ although there are occasional contemptuous references to "scholastic headpieces and logicians" (T 175). Scholastic logic, and its attendant conception of reason, was beneath contempt to Hume, and not the target of his arguments.

Hume inherited from Descartes and Locke a conception of reasoning that had nothing to do with formal validity.¹² They had sufficiently argued against the formal, syllogistic account of reason, the precursor to our notion of deduction, and had put in its place an account of reasoning, argument or inference in terms of a chain of ideas. An argument or inference is what gets you from one idea to another idea via a chain of intermediate ideas. Hume took this notion on board, but refined and supplemented it with his theory of the association of ideas. Baier gets Hume's positive conception of reason and inference absolutely right (60): in general, reason is the cause of truth, and is often restricted to the faculty of intuition and demonstration. But our reasonings also encompass causal and probable inferences, and so

he extends the term 'reason', within Part III, to whatever it is that enables any thinker or "reasoner" to make transitions from belief to belief. (60)

Furthermore, Hume takes inference, to be a "special form" of "mental association" (31), "one where vivacity is transferred from associate to associate in such a way as to enliven the "younger" associate enough to make it a belief" (53).

Now according to Baier, "As with 'reason', so with 'probability'; there are purely cogitative and more empirical versions of each"(61). There is to be found in Hume both his own conception of demonstrative and probable reasoning, and an outmoded, rationalist, intellectualist and deductive conception of demonstrative and probable reasoning. Let us leave demonstrative reasoning on one side, and concentrate on probable reasoning.¹³ Baier thinks that Hume's target in the negative arguments about probable reasoning in Book I Part 3 is a conception of probable reasoning requiring valid deductive inference from a suitable generalization such as the principle of the uniformity of nature. But if I am right, Hume never considered syllogistic argument as even a contender. He was, from the very beginning, working within the Cartesian/Lockean framework of reasoning as a chain of ideas. The point of his main negative argument concerning probable reasoning was, not to attack the possibility of an account of probable reasoning grounded in deductive reason, but rather to show that reason, as he himself conceived it, could not ground our probable inferences. Our most basic causal inferences lead directly from the idea of the cause to the idea of the effect (or vice versa), not via some chain of intermediate ideas, but because of an association set up by past experience.

Baier traces the development of Hume's positive account of causal and probable reasoning with great insight and subtlety. She rightly sees that "Hume's bold and interesting question is what a warrant is like when it comes from sources other than the human intellect"(59). Her answer to the question

of the warrant of causal inference, arising as it does out of custom and habit, is that the warranted causal inferences "are those which exhibit the workings of habits of belief-formation which can 'bear their own survey'" (96). But this absorbing and persuasive account, the details of which every Hume scholar ought to work through, comes up against the apparent counter-example of I 4 i, where Hume seems to say that reason, even as he conceives it, far from bearing its own survey, disintegrates under its own gaze. Baier maintains that the argument of I 4 i is directed, not at Hume's own conception of reason as developed in the later stages of I 3 but at a deductive, intellectualist conception of reason, already discredited in the earlier sections of Part 3. I want to maintain that from the very start of the *Treatise*, Hume was concerned, both positively and negatively, with a non-formal conception of reason. His argument about "induction" was concerned to show that reason so conceived could not validate itself when it came to probable reasoning but required an explanation in terms of principles of the imagination. But even this conception of reason, Hume's own, was not self-sustaining. Left to itself, it disintegrates under its own gaze, as I 4 i shows.

I have already indicated some of the textual support for Baier's interpretation of this crucial section. I now want to argue for mine. First, if Baier is correct, and Hume's target is a calculative conception of reason, then Hume's argument here destroys the calculative conception of both demonstrative and probable reasoning. So one would have expected him to highlight his own, improved versions of both demonstrative and probable reasoning. But concerning probable reasoning, nowhere else in the *Treatise* is it even remotely plausible to see Hume as referring to or using the results of a discredited version of probable reason in contrast to his own, preferred version. And it must be admitted that Hume nowhere presents his own theory of demonstrative reasoning as being significantly new, and standing in contrast to a discredited earlier version. So it is more reasonable to interpret Hume's target in I 4 i as his own conception of reason.

Secondly, what is Hume's response to or resolution of the negative argument of I 4 i? He does not say "so much the worse for this conception of reason," or that the reasoning is faulty, or that if we replace a bad conception of reason with his preferred one, the conclusion no longer follows. Rather, he says that his *own* principles of reasoning lead to this impasse:

I have here prov'd, that the very same principles, which make us form a decision upon any subject, and correct that decision by the consideration of our genius and capacity, and of the situation of our mind, when we examin'd that subject; I say, I have prov'd, that these same principles, when carry'd farther, and apply'd to every new reflex judgement, must, by continually diminishing the original evidence, at last reduce to nothing and utterly subvert all belief and opinion.
(T 184)

Note these words come after he has claimed that the point of presenting the argument is not to align himself with scepticism. There is no suggestion that the reasoning itself, or some general account of reasoning, is faulty. It is "the very same principles" upon which we reason that brings us to this impasse, and any reflective reasoner "will find no error in the foregoing arguments." These are not the words of someone who has just put forward a *reductio* of a discredited theory of reason.

What is needed is not a new theory of reasoning, but an answer to the question "how it happens, that even after all we retain a degree of belief, which is sufficient for our purpose, either in philosophy or common life"(T 185). Hume's answer is disarmingly simple: we retain a degree of belief and conviction in spite of the reflexive diminution to zero probability because the reasoning is too complex and artificial to have any influence on us:

I answer, that after the first and second decision; as the action of the mind becomes forc'd and unnatural, and the ideas faint and obscure; tho' the principles of judgment, and the ballancing of opposite causes be the same as at the very beginning; yet their influence on the imagination, and the vigour they add to, or diminish from the thought, is by no means equal. (T 185)

There is nothing wrong with the reasoning; it is simply that it has, in these circumstances, no effect on our belief.

Whatever one thinks of the adequacy of this response, it must be admitted that it is entirely in keeping with what Hume has to say elsewhere. He frequently is concerned with the difficulty of keeping one's attention on a long chain of reasoning, and worried about the diminution of its effect on our beliefs.¹⁴ For instance, at the beginning of Book III, Hume speaks of the trouble in retaining the convictions of reason, which seem to vanish "in the common affairs of life...like the phantoms of the night on the appearance of the morning"(T 455). He goes on to say that

This is still more conspicuous in a long chain of reasoning, where we must preserve to the end the evidence of the first propositions, and where we often lose sight of all the most receiv'd maxims, either of philosophy or common life. (T 455)

And in I 3 xiii, he is concerned about the fact that the impact of any piece of historical evidence is vitiated by passing "'thro many millions of causes and effects, and 'thro a chain of arguments of almost immeasurable length" (T 145). In fact, *prima facie*, any complex and lengthy chain of reasoning will have little influence on us. A special case must be made when Hume wants to claim that any complex and lengthy chain of reasoning can or should influence us. In the historical evidence case, he argues that every step in the long

chain of reasoning is the same:

There is no variation in the steps. After we know one, we know all of them; and after we have made one, we can have no scruple as to the rest....By this means a long chain of argument, has...little effect in diminishing the original vivacity. (T 146)

And at the beginning of Book III, he argues that his lengthy chain of reasoning should influence us, because of the importance of the subject matter:

Morality is a subject that interests us above all others: We fancy the peace of society to be at stake in every decision concerning it; and 'tis evident, that this concern must make our speculations appear more real and solid, than where the subject is, in a great measure, indifferent to us. (T 455)

But no such special circumstances attend the argument of I 4 i. The reasoning there neither can nor should influence us. Hume's claim in general is that long and complex patterns of reasoning have less and less influence on us, in proportion to the length and the abstruseness of their subject matter. And as the number of steps required to reduce the probability of our judgements to zero approaches infinity, so its influence on our beliefs gets vanishingly small:

Where reason is lively, and mixes itself with some propensity, it ought to be assented to. Where it does not, it never can have any title to operate on us. (T 270)

Reason's hold on us is limited, and a good thing too. If its influence was unlimited, it would entirely destroy itself. It is only because its influence is limited by other aspects of our nature that it can have any influence. We can only be rational if we are only partly rational. This isn't a new theory of reason; it is a new theory of how reason plays only a limited role in belief formation.

Thirdly, Hume clearly considers the argument of I 4 i to be extremely important. It is unique, I think, in being referred to at least three times, twice before the argument occurs and once after. This lends credence to my view that it is intended to show how reason, even Hume's reason, can and should not act entirely on its own, in isolation from the rest of human nature. Hume first refers to it at T 145–146, immediately after posing the historical evidence conundrum mentioned above, and before providing the solution to it. He says:

Every new probability diminishes the original conviction; and however great that conviction may be suppos'd, 'tis impossible it can

subsist under such reiterated diminutions. This is true in general; tho' we shall find¹⁵ afterwards, that there is one very memorable exception, which is of vast consequence in the present subject of the understanding. (T 145-146)

This passage requires a little unpacking. Hume says that it is true in general that reiterated diminutions of probability reduce the original probability. Here the reiterated diminutions refer to the successive judgements of each person who passes on historically the original testimony that is the origin of the historical claim. What is true in general is that reiterated probability judgements reduce the original conviction. Although true in general, Hume argues in the next paragraph (as noted above) that in the case of an historical chain of testimony, the original conviction survives this apparent diminution. And like the case of historical evidence, the argument in I 4 i is also a "memorable exception" to the general truth of probability diminution. It is an exception, like the historical evidence case but for a different reason, because the conviction of the original judgment survives the long chain of reason. It is memorable because unless it was an exception, we would have no faith in reason at all.

This forward reference to I 4 i is important. Not only does it show that Hume attached great importance to the argument and his response to it, but it shows, again, that the argument in I 4 i, or rather Hume's response to it, is but another instance of a general truth of Hume's theory of reasoning. Long chains of reasoning have little effect on us, especially when the content is abstruse. But all this only makes sense if Hume is thinking all along of his own theory of reasoning and not some already discounted intellectualist account.

Hume next refers to I 4 i at T 153, just a few pages later. The context is remarkable, and could have occurred in Book II as one of the innumerable subtle observations of the working of the passions. Hume here is concerned to explain why an "open and avow'd" violation of honour "the world never excuses, but which it is more apt to overlook, when the appearances are sav'd and the transgression is secret and conceal'd"(T 152). The explanation is complex, but the reference to I 4 i comes in the following passage:

The labour of the thought disturbs the regular process of the sentiments, as we shall observe presently. [footnote referring to I 4 i]
The idea strikes not on us with such vivacity; and consequently has no such influence on the passion and imagination. (T 153)

This reference to I 4 i is important because it shows, as Baier forcefully argues throughout, how reason and the sentiments are intertwined in a Humean person. The phenomenon referred to here is not the sceptical argument of I 4 i but rather the feature of human nature that saves us from its consequences, that is, the quite general feature that ideas which lack sufficient vivacity have

little influence on us.

Hume goes on, in the pages immediately following, to extol the virtues of his account of probable reasoning largely because he has imbedded it in the larger context of belief formation. Unless a theory can account for the belief we have in the conclusion of an argument, it is going to run into just the problems that Hume outlines in I 4 i. Hume's theory of reasoning, like his predecessors', would run into just that problem if it were not imbedded in his overall account of belief as being formed by custom and the imagination. He says, having summarized his account of probable reasoning and having pointed out how it is sensitive to his account of belief as a more forceful and vivacious idea,

All these phenomena lead directly to the precedent system; nor will it ever be possible upon any other principles to give a satisfactory and consistent explication of them. Without considering these judgments as the effects of custom on the imagination, we shall lose ourselves in perpetual contradiction and absurdity. (T 154–55)

Baier says of this passage that it "is either heavy irony or one of the smuggest and least sceptical passages in the *Treatise*, devoid for the moment not just of despairing scepticism, but even of true scepticism, of proper diffidence" (88). I do not see it as smug so much as a grim warning. Any theory of reasoning, including Hume's own, will lose itself in the "perpetual contradiction and absurdity" of the argument of I 4 i if it is considered in isolation from the fact that our beliefs are as much a part of our sensitive as our cogitative natures. As the forward-looking references indicate, Hume already has the argument of I 4 i in mind.

The third reference to the argument in I 4 i occurs in "Conclusion of this book," and is probably the most important:

For I have already shewn [foote referring to I 4 i], that 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, either in philosophy or common life. We save ourselves from this total scepticism only by means of that singular and seemingly trivial property of the fancy, by which we enter with difficulty into remote views of things, and are not able to accompany them with so sensible an impression, as we do those, which are more easy and natural. (T 267–268)

Although the dialectic of this section, as Baier is the first to admit (and the first to pay it sufficient attention), is extremely difficult, it seems to me clear that we must read this passage this way: when the understanding, or reason, even

on Hume's view of reason, acts alone, it is prey to the argument of reiterative probability diminution. But on Hume's view, reason does not act alone: the beliefs we form as a result of a chain of reasoning are only formed when enough vivacity is communicated to the last idea in the chain. Beliefs cannot be formed in isolation from our sensitive natures. If ideas are not caused in the right way, and have no causal impact on us, they are not beliefs. To go back to the Temple Grandin case, a person who has a strong faculty of reason but little else is not just deprived of passions; she is cognitively deprived as well: certain important beliefs will be unavailable to her.

Hume's argument in I 4 i is directed against reason, on any view including Hume's own, as acting alone. It is not a *reductio* of a view of reason already discarded. The argument has wider scope than that: no view of reason, considered in isolation, is going to explain our beliefs. They are the product of every aspect of human nature. Beliefs are a result of our sensitive, as well as our cogitative, natures. Hume's solution to the argument of I 4 i is not a new theory of reason, but a new theory of how reason is but one component in the complex story of how beliefs, and other determinants of behaviour, are formed. By extension, I would argue, the other famous arguments concerning reason in the *Treatise*, the arguments about "induction," reason and the passions, and moral distinctions are also, not *reductios* of "deductive" theories of reason, but rather arguments designed to show the limitations of reason, on any view, when acting alone. Hume, in these sections, is not arguing for a replacement of a discredited view of reason, nor is he arguing for a rejection of reason; he is arguing for a larger conception of human nature in which reason plays a more limited role than hitherto had been allowed.

I must admit, with true Humean diffidence, that no single piece of evidence I have cited is decisive. Most of the passages I have cited, Baier also mentions and interprets as evidence for her view. In the end one's judgement about how to interpret this section is going to hinge on one's overall picture of what Hume is up to. Baier has defended in great detail, and with great persuasiveness and elegance, her picture of Hume as enlarging our conception of reason to include our social and passionate natures. I have only sketched an alternative picture of Hume as arguing for the limitations of reason, even as he conceives it, in the complete picture of a person as social and passionate as well as rational. I mentioned earlier that, in a sufficiently broad perspective, the differences between Baier's view and mine are trivial: it doesn't matter whether we conceive of Hume as enlarging our picture of reason to include our social and passionate natures, or whether we conceive him as showing how reason, even in Hume's corrected view, plays only one of the many parts needed to adequately explain our beliefs. But in understanding Hume, there are I think two major differences between Baier's account and mine:

1. On Baier's view, the most famous arguments in the *Treatise* concerning reason have a much more limited scope than has been thought. They are best seen as *reductios* of a discredited, intellectualist view of reason. On Hume's own, enlarged and naturalized, view of reason, reason has none of these flaws. I have argued that these arguments have a much broader scope: they are meant to encompass any view of reasoning, including Hume's own. But note: they are not meant to lead us to reject reason; they are only meant to lead us to reconsider its role.

2. On Baier's view, reason, especially causal and probable reason, is warranted when and only when it can "bear its own survey." Hume's view of reason can and does bear its own survey, and hence is warranted. Baier's development of this view, whether or not in the end it is completely correct, constitutes one of the most significant advances in Hume scholarship in recent years. But if I am correct, no account of reason, considered in isolation, can, on Hume's view, bear its own survey. That is the lesson of "Scepticism with regard to reason." Hume's own words in "Conclusion of this book" seem to bear this out. After explaining how his account of belief saves us from the argument of I 4 i, he says:

Shall we, then, establish it for a general maxim, that no refin'd or elaborate reasoning is ever to be receiv'd? Consider well the consequences of such a principle. By this means you cut off entirely all science and philosophy... If we embrace this principle, and condemn all refin'd reasoning, we run into the most manifest absurdities. If we reject it in favour of these reasonings, we subvert entirely the human understanding. We have, therefore, no choice left but betwixt a false reason and none at all.(T 268)

The problem of the warrant of Humean reason remains.

I cannot forbear adding to these reasonings an observation, which may, perhaps, be found of some importance. Baier urges us, by exhortation and example, to consider the *Treatise* as a whole. Hume's philosophy is to consider human nature as a whole. Baier's book is a complete pleasure when considered as a whole. It is a delight to read, and not just for the advances it has made in Hume scholarship. It combines elegance with thoroughness and originality. Scholarly references are confined mainly to the footnotes at the back. The book reads smoothly without them, but the notes are full of gems. They not only contain enough references to give one a solid reading list both of Hume scholarship and of related philosophical issues, they are also a delight. On reading the pleasing characterization of Hume's view of perception as "our receivings of the 'perishing' impressions that we are naturally determined to trans-substantiate into in the real presence of lasting bodies" (80), my pleasure

was complete when I read in the accompanying note that in the *O.E.D.* one finds, "Perception: The receiving or partaking of the Eucharist or sacred elements. *Obs.*" (304, note 1). The book is substantial, with rich, thick paper and elegant typeface. The lovely portrait of Hume that serves as the frontispiece is not one with which most readers will be familiar, and Baier seems to have tracked it down during several trips to Edinburgh. The chronology at the end of the book contains entries with which even Hume specialists may be unfamiliar. The book is a delight, in contents, form, and physical substance. In every respect it exhibits the love and respect the author feels towards its subject. Without it, "I *feel* I shou'd be a loser in point of pleasure."¹⁶

NOTES

I have benefited from the comments of my co-symposiasts and members of the audience at the symposium on Baier's book at the Pacific APA, March 1994, as well as from the comments of the editors of this journal.

1 Oliver Sacks, "An Anthropologist on Mars," *The New Yorker*, December 27, 1993/January 3, 1994, 106–125; passages cited from 111–112, 112.

2 Sacks, 111, 112.

3 Sacks, 116.

4 Annette C. Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments: Reflections on Hume's Treatise* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), hereafter cited in the text.

5 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, edited by L.A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. revised by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), hereafter cited in the text.

6 See, for instance, William E. Morris, "Hume's Scepticism About Reason," *Hume Studies* 15 (1): 39–60.

7 The remaining famous argument concerning reason found in the *Treatise* is that reason alone cannot move us to action. This argument receives different treatment, and is not treated by Baier as a *reductio*. Although I won't further discuss it here, I must say that Baier's treatment of II 3 iii is a model of Hume scholarship. That section cannot be treated in isolation but must be seen as followed by "Of the influence of the imagination on the passions." Even more importantly, it is preceded by Hume's own account of belief, especially in "Of the influence of belief" where Hume gives a virtually causal-functionalist account of belief. Astonishingly, I don't recall anyone discussing II 3 iii in the light of I 2 x before.

8 Note the shift from deduction to demonstration.

9 Reflexivity is certainly part of the answer, though. See my "Philosophy and the Good Life: Hume and Laws of Nature," presented at the 19th International Hume Conference, University of Nantes, Nantes, June 1992; and "Inference, Reason and Reasoning in Hume's *Treatise*, Book I," *The Southwest Philosophy Review* 10 (1994): 17–27.

10 See, for instance, T 156 where Hume refers to his own arguments as "deductions."

11 It occurs only twice in the entire IntelLex database of Hume's works, and one of those occurrences is in the mouth of Demea in the *Dialogues*.

12 This is a long and complex story. For more details see my "Hume and the Lockean Background: Induction and the Uniformity Principle," *Hume Studies* 18(2): 179–207; "Locke on Reason, Probable Reasoning and Opinion," *The Locke Newsletter* 24 (1993): 35–79; and "Hume on Demonstration," presented at the 21st International Hume Conference, La Sapienza, Rome, June 1994.

13 But see my "Hume on Demonstration" where special problems with respect to demonstration are discussed. I should add here that treating Hume's target as a deductive conception of reason (both demonstrative and probable) usually leads to confusing "demonstration" with "deduction." Baier explicitly warns us against such an assimilation (302, note 8), but I fear she sometimes makes this mistake herself. See, for example, page 63, where she rightly claims that "Right at the start of his investigation of the causal relation, he has *contrasted* causal inference with 'demonstration'." But she takes this to "prejudge the question of whether causal inference can be recast as sound deductive argument." This only follows if deduction is limited to demonstration and has as a consequence that Hume's main argument about "induction" has no role to play, if it is conceived of as attacking the claim that probable or causal reasoning can have no grounding in deductive reasoning. Baier does so conceive it (see 65).

14 This is further evidence, I think, that Hume is concerned both positively and negatively with an account of reasoning of the sort Descartes sketches in the *Regulae*, i.e., an account in terms of "chains of ideas." Descartes, like Locke after him, thought that "reasoning" produced less certainty than intuition because the relation between the relevant ideas, while direct in the case of intuition, was mediated in the case of reasoning by intermediate ideas. And the more intermediate ideas, the longer the chain of reasoning, the more indirect the relation between the two ideas at the "extremes," and the less the certainty.

15 Here Hume has a footnote referring to Part 4 Section i. The footnote is Hume's, not an editor's. This can be confirmed by checking the first edition, or the David Fate Norton text of the *Treatise* in HUMETEXT1 which uses the first edition as a copytext. HUMETEXT1 is an electronic version of most of Hume's texts, available from Tom Beauchamp at Georgetown University.

16 I noticed two minor errors in the notes. On page 311, note 4, the internal reference should be to Chapter 3, note 8, not note 4. And on page 322, note 6, the reference should be to Chapter 11, note 9, not note 7. Dare one suspect automatic footnote numbering of calculative, algorithmic word processors? The book cries out for an *index locorum*.