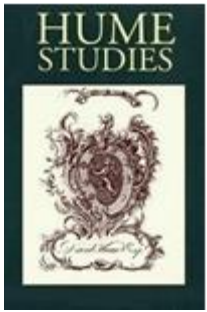

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Millican's "Abstract," "Imaginative," "Reasonable," and "Sensible" Questions about Hume's Theory of Cognition

DON GARRETT

In a 1998 *Hume Studies* book symposium, Peter Millican provided excellent critical comments on my *Cognition and Commitment in Hume's Philosophy* (Millican, "Hume on Reason," 141–60), and I am grateful that he has done the same for *Hume* (Millican, "Skepticism," *Hume Studies* 40 [this issue]). Many of the new or revised interpretations in the latter book result, directly or indirectly, from his extraordinary stimulus, both in his writings and in person, as a philosophical scholar and interlocutor. His comments range over much of the book, but the majority of them concern chapter 2 ("Principles of Perceptions"), chapter 3 ("The Mind and its Faculties"), chapter 4 ("Sense-Based Concepts"), and chapter 8 ("Morality and Virtue"). In a brief concluding section, he also touches on chapter 9 ("God and Religion"), rightly observing that the source of our main differences about Hume on miracles lie in the crucial role I see Hume giving to his distinction between "proofs" and mere (that is, non-proof) "probabilities." Millican focuses chiefly, however, on abstract ideas, imagination and reason, and the moral sense, and I will limit my replies to those topics. In doing so, I will follow his section divisions.

It may be helpful to note from the outset, however, two respects in which Millican and I differ in our overall approaches to Hume's philosophy. Both of these are, of course, matters of degree. First, he is readier than I am to dismiss aspects of Hume's philosophy as confused or contradictory; or, to put it the other way

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around, I tend to find Hume to be, upon close examination, a more consistent philosopher than he does. Second, Millican tends to see the *Treatise* in particular as a work containing many errors that Hume corrects, most typically by simple omission, in the *Enquiries*. In my view, each of the *Enquiries* has more narrowly defined aims than does the corresponding book of the *Treatise*, and each strives for greater impact through greater accessibility, with the result that they generally seek to minimize the amount of psychological detail provided that is not essential to achieving those narrower aims. Whereas Millican tends to interpret the omission of a doctrine from the *Enquiries* as itself positive evidence that Hume rejected it, I do not.

1. Teaching and Tone

Whereas *Cognition and Commitment* aimed to shed light on Hume's philosophy through the solution of a discrete set of interpretive puzzles, *Hume*—in keeping with the series of which it is a part—seeks to explain within a manageable compass Hume's most important ideas across the full range of philosophical topics he discussed. As Millican notes, it tries to do so in a way that will be accessible to readers who have no specialized training in philosophy and little prior knowledge of Hume, while at the same time presenting those ideas and revealing their relations in a distinctive way that will make the book of substantial interest to historians of philosophy and to other philosophers grappling with questions like those that animated Hume. I am gratified that Millican finds the book to be mostly successful in both respects, which can easily be in tension with one another.

To maintain the book's manageable compass despite its scope, I generally refer readers to the annotated "Further Reading" following each chapter, both for competing interpretations and for work of my own that provides further textual support for interpretive claims I make in the text. I do try to signal within the text itself distinctions among what Hume says (or at least seems to say); what we might reasonably infer that he believes, in order to explain what he says; and what he is more or less committed to granting by what he says, whether he recognizes it or not. In doing so, I also try to observe the distinction between what Millican calls "agreed facts" and "interpretive claims" (207)about each of these classifications.

Given the truly vast variety of interpretations of Hume, however, one reader's "agreed facts" are often another's dubious "interpretive claims." For example, Millican and I both regard it as an agreed fact that interpretations of Hume's negative argument about induction that limit its scope to so-called "deductivist" or "demonstrative" justifications have been decisively refuted in recent years, but there are nevertheless a good number of commentators, I suspect, who would still regard this as a controversial interpretive claim. Indeed, to take an example closer

to hand, what Millican reports as straightforward "facts" about Hume's use of the terms 'justified' and 'just' I regard as questionable interpretive claims.[1] Where I have failed to draw the distinctions as well as I might, I can only plead, along with Hume: "'Tis easier to forbear all examination and enquiry, than to check ourselves in so natural a propensity, and guard against that assurance, which always arises from an exact and full survey of an object" (T 1.4.7.15; SBN 274).[2]

2. Boundaries, Abstraction, and Negation

Concerning chapter 2, Millican especially questions my interpretive treatment of Hume's theory of abstract ideas, which I take to be his theory of what we would call *concepts*. I appreciate this focus, because the nature and status of abstract ideas is indeed central to my interpretation. Millican notes and questions the interpretive status of several claims made in the course of that treatment: (1) that abstract ideas of relations must involve a *revival set* (that is, the set of ideas disposed to be revived for use in discourse and reasoning) of pairs, or other multiples, of related objects; (2) that abstract ideas typically involve an inferential role (and sometimes even a broader conceptual role) consisting of accepted inferences (and sometimes other mental transitions as well); (3) that there should be abstract ideas of individuals as well as of kinds; and (4) that judgments must sometimes involve *expanded* revival sets (that is, revival sets including ideas of merely possible resembling objects) and sometimes involve *idealized* revival sets (to account for error). I hope and believe that my book indicates what I take the status of each of these claims to be, but let me be more explicit.

Because Hume recognizes abstract ideas of relations as well as of qualities, he can hardly avoid believing (1) that abstract ideas of relations must involve a *revival set*. As evidence that he does think about the specific relation of cause and effect in this way, I cite two passages. The first is this: "We have no other notion [that is, idea or concept] of cause and effect, but that of certain objects, which have been *always conjoin'd* together, and which in all past instances have been found inseparable" (T 1.3.6.15; SBN 93). In context, Hume makes this claim about what the idea of the relation of cause-and-effect is—namely an idea of certain pairs of objects—in order to establish that it *includes* the ideas of pairs whose first member is a word and whose second member is an idea of the thing for which the word stands. The second passage is this: "We must not here be content with saying, that the idea of cause and effect arises from objects constantly united; but must affirm, that 'tis the very same with the idea of these objects" (THN 2.3.1.16; SBN 405). It is difficult to make any sense of these passages, or of his dual definitions of 'cause', within his declared cognitive psychology unless he *is* thinking of the abstract idea of cause and effect as the idea of pairs of objects.

In the case of (2), the claim that abstract ideas typically involve an inferential role consisting of accepted inferences, I cite a passage at the heart of the section "Of abstract ideas":

> I believe every one, who examines the situation of his mind in reasoning, will agree with me, that we do not annex distinct and compleat ideas to every term we make use of, and that in talking of *government*, *church*, *negotiation*, *conquest*, we seldom spread out in our minds all the simple ideas, of which these complex ones are compos'd. 'Tis however observable, that notwithstanding this imperfection we may avoid talking nonsense on these subjects, and may perceive any repugnance among the ideas, as well as if we had a full comprehension of them. Thus if instead of saying, *that in war the weaker have always recourse to negotiation*, we shou'd say, *that they have always recourse to conquest*, the custom, which we have acquir'd of attributing certain relations to ideas, still follows the words. (T 1.1.7.14; SBN 23)

If Hume is not attributing an inferential role to a number of abstract ideas in this passage, then I do not know what he is doing there. I also invoke inferential roles of this kind to explain how Hume could think that our revival sets of certain general terms (for example, 'distance') only *improperly* contain ideas of items which everyone nevertheless does include in them. Similarly, Hume quite explicitly attributes a broader conceptual role (not merely an inferential role) to morally normative concepts when he writes that terms for virtues are "taken in a good sense" in such a way that failing to use them as terms of approbation "violates the idiom" with "the most obvious and grossest impropriety" and is evidence of "ignorance of language" ("Standard of Taste," 227–29 and EPM 1.10; SBN 174).[3] In the case of inferential and conceptual roles specifically, as well as in other cases more generally, I suspect that Millican and I have not only somewhat different views of how likely Hume is to appreciate the implications of his own views and to keep them consistent but also different standards for how *often* Hume must say something before we are convinced that he means it.

With respect to claims (3), that there should be abstract ideas of individuals as well as of kinds, and (4), that judgments must sometimes involve *expanded* revival sets and sometimes involve *idealized* revival sets, in contrast, I describe concepts of individuals, expanded revival sets, and idealized revival sets all simply as entities that Hume will be obliged to recognize, whether he realized it or not, if his theory of concepts is to do all of the work that he requires it to do—such as allowing for a flexible idea of self, for modal judgments, and for correction and learning, respectively.[4]

More broadly, however, Millican doubts whether Hume's theory of abstract ideas itself had "so significant an influence" within Hume's philosophy as I ascribe to it. He gives as his reason that Hume refers to the theory in only "half a dozen or so" sections of the *Treatise* and "once" (in a note) in the first *Enquiry* (208). In reply, I would emphasize first that Hume devotes the longest section of T 1.1 (T 1.1.7, "Of abstract ideas") entirely to the topic of abstract ideas, carefully developing and defending his own original theory, heaping extravagant praise on Berkeley just for taking a step towards it (T 1.1.7.1; SBN 17), claiming that it explains how generality in thought is possible, and applying it to solve the problem of explaining what "distinctions of reason" are and how they can be compatible with what many have called his "Separability Principle." In addition to this entire section, I cite in the final version of the book eight passages from eight different sections and all three Books of the *Treatise* that invoke or apply the theory (T 1.2.3.5–6; 1.2.4.12; 1.3.1.7; 1.3.6.15; 1.3.14.13; 2.3.1.16; 2.3.6.2; 3.3.1.21; SBN 34–5; 43; 72; 93; 161; 405–06; 424–25; 585) plus a passage from the appendix (T App. 2; SBN 623). I also cite two references to it in the first *Enquiry* (EHU 12.15 and 12n20; SBN 154–55 and 158n);[5] in the second, Hume declares it to be the basis of the only promising solution to the important paradoxes of infinite divisibility.

Thus, as I see it, Hume proudly announces and extensively defends an original theory on a topic—namely, the generality of thought—that is crucial to his aims, and he explicitly invokes or applies the theory quite often in a wide variety of contexts in which it is pertinent. These include, most notably, his discussions of space and time, causal power and the causal relation, and the "natural correction" of sentiments that is essential to the operation of sense-based concepts, including VIRTUE and VICE. All of these further topics are both especially important to him and central to the interpretive uses I make of his theory. Much of what he says about ideas and judgments makes good sense in light of that theory but little sense without it. I think it is, therefore, fair to explicate his discussions of other thoughts that obviously require generality in light of the relatively straightforward application of that selfsame theory—as capturing, as it were, his assumed and intended account of the psychological *implementation* of various other claims he makes. That Hume's theory of abstract ideas has a very significant influence on his philosophy seems to me to be a simple inference to the best explanation.

Along similar critical lines, Millican questions my treatment of contrariety and negation in Hume's cognitive psychology. He judges Hume's discussion of the relation of contrariety to be "ill-considered and cursory," and he takes it as a straightforward fact (demonstrated by Jonathan Bennett) that Hume's attempt to appeal to four kinds of relations, including contrariety, in order to provide a "criterion of demonstrability" is just "nonsense" (209). More accurately, Hume claims that of the seven kinds of philosophical relations, there are only four "invariable" ones that, because they "depend solely upon ideas," can provide in his very strict

sense "knowledge and certainty" through intuition or demonstration (T 1.3.1.2; SBN 70). In Millican's view, Hume simply failed to notice that a proposition like "Every grandmother is a mother" could be intuitively or demonstratively certain despite the fact that causal relations such as *mothering* are not instances of his four kinds of invariable relations.

To my mind, however, this quick and confident dismissal confuses two quite different things: the relations that are (at least arguably) *referenced* in a statement and the invariable relations that *explain how* a judgment can achieve a certain epistemic status. Lest this seem arbitrary, let me emphasize that a parallel distinction of just this kind is *already* needed to explain how Hume can say in the very next paragraph that beliefs about matters of fact beyond our memory and senses "are founded on the connexion of *cause and effect*" (T 1.3.2.2–3; SBN 74). For a judgment like "The train will be here soon" is not itself a judgment *referencing* a causal relation, as Hume surely appreciated; rather, our making the judgment about a train arrival time *depends on our recognizing* one or more causal relations.

Accordingly, I observe in the book that a particular invariable relation of *resemblance*—one of the four relations on Hume's list—holds between the abstract idea MOTHER and the abstract idea GRANDMOTHER in virtue of the fact that every idea in the revival set of the latter is also included in the revival set of the former. I then propose that Hume would appeal to this relation of resemblance to explain the certainty of the judgment that every grandmother is a mother. If this is correct, then it provides some further evidence that Hume does regularly think in terms of his theory of abstract ideas. It also suggests, more specifically, that he does so in the context of thinking about demonstration—which, notably, he also calls "abstract reasoning."

Returning now to contrariety itself, I propose that Hume's theory of abstract ideas is also needed to explain a quite specific yet otherwise quite unintelligible remark:

> no two ideas are in themselves contrary, except those of existence and non-existence, which are plainly resembling, as implying both of them an idea of the object; tho' the latter excludes the object from all times and places, in which it is supposed not to exist. (T 1.1.5.8; SBN 15)

This statement is explicable on the theory of abstract ideas, because employing an abstract idea of all the circumstances in which an object does not exist will require the use of an idea of the object itself in order to render *salient by contrast* the kind of resemblance that holds among all of the multitudinous and highly diverse circumstances in which the object *does not* exist (that is, from which it is "excluded"). Similar considerations are also relevant to explaining how Hume's cognitive psychology, which lacks a basic sentiment of "denial" to stand in opposition to the

affirmative sentiment of belief, could accommodate the denial of a judgment in a way that would be both more direct and more general than merely affirming a single but contrary positive judgment could be. I do not claim that Hume actually offers such explanations, however.

3. A Last-Minute Footnote and a Disputed Distinction

I begin chapter 3, "The Mind and its Faculties," with a section devoted to mind and consciousness. This is because I found it necessary to state early on the positive conception of the mind or self as a causally related "bundle of perceptions" that governs the main body of the *Treatise* and helps to explain Hume's remarks about consciousness. Contrary to Millican's report, I do not describe there Hume's positive theory of *personal identity* (or the general theory of identity on which it depends), except to note that in the later Appendix to the *Treatise*, Hume expresses strong misgivings about it. I defer the discussion both of the positive theory of personal identity and of the misgivings to the final main section of the chapter on skepticism (chapter 7), since Hume presents the problem he has discovered (whatever specifically it may be) as a late additional skeptical consideration. I observe that Hume there expresses a hope that he himself or others might later resolve the problem—which I also try to diagnose—and that he seems obliquely to revisit the question of a substantial self briefly in the suppressed essay "Of the Immortality of the Soul," but I also remark that he does not in fact offer any developed competitor theory of personal identity, or of the constitution of the mind, in any of his later works. I do not see that he positively "retracted" (in Millican's term, 210) the bundle theory of mind specifically after the *Treatise*, but at the same time I do not see that anything discussed in the later works directly depends on the question. I also disagree with Millican's suggestion that Hume positively rejected the Separability Principle in his later writings so as to avoid the "absurd results" (210) related to the Appendix. As I argue in the book, the Separability Principle is quite nearly a direct consequence of Hume's important distinction between simple and complex perceptions. What the Appendix calls into question is at most whether perceptions qualify as "distinct existences" for the purposes of this principle.

Millican's primary objection to chapter 3, however, is with the distinction I attribute to Hume between the *inclusive imagination* (as the faculty of having non-memory ideas) and the *unreasoning imagination* (as the same faculty minus demonstrative and probable reason). This distinction runs implicitly throughout the text of the *Treatise*, but Hume states it explicitly and for the record in a straightforward passage from a footnote added to the *Treatise*: "When I oppose the imagination to the memory, I mean the faculty, by which we form our fainter ideas. When I oppose it to reason, I mean the same faculty, excluding only our demonstrative and probable reasonings" (T 1.3.9.19n22; SBN 118).

Millican grants that the first sentence should be interpreted as stating that when Hume opposes the imagination to the memory, he means the faculty by which we form our fainter ideas—that is, what I called the *inclusive imagination*. However, he then takes on the challenging task of arguing that the second sentence should *not* be interpreted as showing that when Hume opposes the imagination to reason, he means the same faculty, excluding only our demonstrative and probable reasonings. Millican is willing to bite this bullet because he insists that Hume *cannot* mean by 'reason' simply our faculty of demonstrative and probable reasoning but must instead be read as using the term more broadly and evaluatively, for something essentially distinguished by its being "*disciplined*, . . . *respectable* and *reliable*" (212). There is no reason why Hume could not have said this in the same amount of space if that had been his intention.

On Millican's interpretation, the distinction that Hume *means* to draw between imagination (in a non-inclusive sense) and reason in the last sentence of the cited passage is instead the same distinction that Hume does draw many sections later—after criticizing the "antient philosophers" (T 1.4.3; SBN 219–25) for their imagination-based inventions—between two kinds of "principles":

> I must distinguish in the imagination betwixt the principles which are permanent, irresistable, and universal; such as the customary transition from causes to effects, and from effects to causes: And the principles, which are changeable, weak, and irregular; such as those I have just now taken notice of. (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225)

In fact, however, Hume is not here drawing a distinction, *within the inclusive imagination*, between reason and the imagination in a narrower sense, as he did in the much earlier passage; in this passage Hume mentions neither reason nor two senses of the word 'imagination'. Instead, he is drawing a distinction *within the unreasoning imagination* itself, between those principles of the unreasoning imagination that are "changeable, weak, and irregular," such as those influencing the "antient philosophers," and those principles of the unreasoning imagination that are "permanent, irresistible, and universal," such as the "*customary transition* from causes to effects, and from effects to causes" (emphasis added).

To appreciate this difference, recall Hume's central question in the famous section *Treatise* 1.3.6 ("Of the inference from the impression to the idea"). It is precisely whether the "transition" from cause to effect (or vice versa) that he has found to be *essential to* the process of probable reasoning is *itself accomplished by* any (mediating) instance of *reasoning* (such as demonstrative or probable reasoning to the conclusion that nature is uniform) or is instead produced through "the imagination" (by a means that will later be identified as the operation of "custom,"

a feature of the unreasoning imagination with wide application in many parts of life). This is why Hume expresses his main question there in these words:

> whether experience produces the idea by means of the understanding or *imagination*; [that is,] whether we are determin'd by *reason* to make the transition, or by a certain association and relation of perceptions. (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 88–89; emphasis added)

Immediately after examining this question, Hume goes on to state his answer explicitly no fewer than *four* times in four successive paragraphs (T 1.3.6.12–15): the transition is due to "the imagination" rather than to reason.[6]

What can Millican suppose that Hume means by this answer? On the one hand, he cannot say that Hume means simply that the customary transition is due to the *inclusive* imagination as the faculty of having non-memory ideas: that would be utterly trivial on Hume's usage, and it would in no way require first ruling out reason as an alternative. (As Millican writes, "It is important to bear in mind that for Hume, *all* thinking involves ideas of the imagination" in this sense [211].) On the other hand, however, Hume also cannot mean that the "customary transition" is an example of the "changeable, weak, and irregular principles" that Millican takes to constitute the "imagination" in the narrower sense that Hume opposes to reason. For the point of the passage that Millican cites from *Treatise* 1.4.4.1 is precisely to *exclude* the customary transition from the class of "changeable, weak and irregular principles" and to place it instead in the opposite category. I conclude that Millican's interpretation cannot be sustained.[7]

Nonetheless, Millican quite rightly raises a problem for Hume as I have presented him. Although Hume "rarely mentions" it (215), he recognizes a non-inferential "intuition" of obvious relations of ideas that he treats, when he does mention it, as falling under "the understanding." Yet as Millican has shown, Hume often uses the term 'the understanding' interchangeably with 'reason,' and (as we have just seen) he defines the latter in terms of inference or reasoning. This is a topic that I have discussed at greater length in other writings referenced in the book,[8] but I will summarize briefly. The "arguments," "inferences," and "proofs" that Hume calls "intuitive" pose no particular problem for him on my interpretation, because these are just short demonstrative *reasonings*; Hume calls them "intuitive" inferences because they are *mediated by* a single intuition rather than by any *component* demonstrations. It is only the case of immediate intuition itself that poses a classificatory problem for Hume. For that case, chapter 3 of my book offers (in section 3) a hypothesis, beginning from Locke's tripartite definition of 'the understanding' and the manner in which it would have to be adapted to fit Hume's quite different cognitive psychology, to explain why Hume would so readily come to think of the understanding as limited to reason and intuition. It

also explains why their potential difference with respect to intuition would not generally be salient to him in most contexts, given the plausible principle that whatever can be grasped intuitively can also, at least in principle, be demonstrated. Such a minor slide on Hume's part would be far more understandable than the egregious error about "invariable relations" that Millican attributes to him.[9]

4. Reason and Induction

I take Hume seriously when he explains in the cited footnote that he uses the term 'reason' to designate only the faculty of "demonstrative and probable reasonings" (T 1.3.9.19n22; SBN 117–18n1). This reading receives strong support from the fact that he treats 'reason' and 'reasoning faculty' as equivalent terms—for example, introducing a section devoted to "the reason of animals" by describing it as "examin[ing] the reasoning faculty of brutes" (T 1.3.15.12; SBN 176; see also EHU 9), a faculty that proves to consist in the ability to make inferences. Perhaps most tellingly, however, at three of the most important junctures of the *Treatise*, Hume concludes that something—the supposition of the uniformity of nature (T 1.3.6; SBN 86–94), voluntary action (T 2.2.3; SBN 413–18), or moral distinctions (T 3.1.1; SBN 455–70), respectively—cannot be produced by "reason" alone (or, more or less equivalently, "the understanding" alone) *simply* from the premises that (1) it cannot be produced by demonstrative reasoning (perhaps including intuition) and (2) it cannot be produced by probable reasoning.

In his section 4, Millican comes to interpret 'reason' in Hume as instead designating a most general "faculty of cognition" (see also his note 18 and "Hume's 'Scepticism' about Induction," 83). For historical support of this broad interpretation of the term, he has appealed (in "Hume's 'Scepticism" about Induction" and *Reason, Induction, and Causation*) to the usage of several of Hume's near contemporaries. For historical support for my reading, in contrast, I cite Locke himself, who is the predominant influence on Hume's epistemological terminology. I also cite the example of James Beattie. Beattie distinguishes and describes no fewer than four senses of the term 'reason' that he finds to be in common use, but he adopts as his own the same sense that I ascribe to Hume—"the power of the human mind by which we draw inferences," in Beattie's words. Beattie adopts this sense on the grounds that it is the one used by those who are "most accurate in distinguishing" (Beattie, *Essay on Truth*, 32–33). Of course, Beattie did not *influence* Hume in this regard, but he is likely to be reporting on senses that were also available to Hume, and he is in fact likely *recognizing* Hume's own recent usage, among others. It is also worth noting that Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* of 1755 offers as the *first* meaning of 'reason': "the power by which man deduces one proposition from another, or proceeds from premises to consequences." None of Johnson's eleven definitions is very close to the highly inclusive one that Millican ascribes to Hume.

Millican also rightly observes that Hume declares in several places—although nowhere in *Treatise* Book 1 or in the first *Enquiry*, where one might most expect to look for a definition of 'reason'—that reason "discovers truth and falsehood" (215). I do not see, however, that Hume ever intends to declare it to be the *only means of access* to truth and falsehood, as Millican's interpretation seems to require. For surely Hume allows that memory and the senses—both of which he consistently contrasts with reason—are also means of access to truth and falsehood. Nor do any of his arguments require this stronger claim. To be sure, in passages contrasting reason with the passions, Hume alludes to reason as "the same faculty, with that, which *judges* of truth and falshood" (T 2.3.3.8; SBN 417; emphasis added) and later writes of "reason, in a strict sense, as meaning the *judgment* of truth and falsehood" (DP 5.1; emphasis added).[10] However, he also explicitly distinguishes both memory and the senses from judgment (T 1.3.9.3, 1.3.10.10, 3.3.4.13; SBN 108, 631, 612). So far as I can tell, judgment for Hume is always simply the outcome of reasoning or (rarely) intuition.

Millican's interpretation thus faces what might be called a "dangerous dilemma" concerning the question of what the operations of reason actually are. To say that reason is the general truth-finding faculty of cognition suggests that the operations of reason must include those of what Hume calls "the senses" (including belief in the continued and distinct existence of bodies) and "memory," since these are both cognitive and by themselves produce beliefs that are frequently true, in his view. Millican seems to concede as much when he remarks in his section 3 that, on his interpretation, "belief in body" must fall on the side of "reason." Furthermore, he interprets Hume's famous conclusion that "our conclusions from . . . experience are *not* founded on reasoning, or any process of the understanding" (EHU 4.15; SBN 32) as specifically intended to exclude a foundation in the senses. This interpretation strikes me as tortured, but it also seems to require that the operations of the senses are *among* the "operations of the understanding" or reason for Hume. In fact, however, Hume regularly *contrasts* reason with the senses—for example, when he examines whether an opinion is due to "the *senses*, *reason*, or the *imagination*" (T 1.4.2.1; SBN 187; italics in the original), or distinguishes "scepticism with regard to reason" from "scepticism with regard to the senses" (T 1.4.1 and 1.4.2, respectively), or alludes to qualities of which we are informed by "neither sense nor reason" (EHU 4.16; SBN 29). Moreover, he *never* describes an operation of the senses or memory as itself an operation of reason.[11]

Implicitly recognizing this, Millican seeks to avoid the implausible consequence that the operations of the senses and memory are operations of reason for Hume by declaring that the senses and memory instead only "report to" reason (223n24). But if this means that they merely provide input on which reasoning (or "judgment" construed as reasoning) operates, without their operations being themselves operations of reason, then I completely agree, and there is no genuine

point of dispute. If, however, the metaphor of "reporting to" means something more than this in the present context, then I frankly don't understand what it is. For in Hume's distinctive cognitive psychology, the senses, memory, and reasoning each already fully provide, from their own resources, the degree of liveliness that constitutes belief or assent, and there is simply no further cognitive role available for any more general faculty of "reason" to play.

5. Sense-Based Concepts and Morality

I hold that when Hume titled *Treatise* 3.1.2 "Moral distinctions deriv'd from a moral sense," it was because he believed that moral distinctions are derived from a moral sense. Millican—equaling in audacity his interpretation of the meanings of 'reason' and 'imagination' in *Treatise* 1.3.9.19n22, as discussed in section 3 above—challenges this. As I understand and use the term, a *moral sense* theorist holds that distinctively moral feelings are the original sources of moral discriminations and hence of moral judgment, in partial analogy with the way in which the external senses are the original sources of discriminations about colors, sounds, tastes, and smells and hence of judgments about these qualities. On this conception, which I think is also Hume's, both Hume and Hutcheson qualify. Whether the moral sense (in Millican's phrase) "reports to reason" or not is a separate question, although I would say that Hume's moral sense *does* report to reason—without being a part of it—in the sense of providing original information that the mind can employ in reasoning, just as the external senses do.

Millican discounts Hume's references to a "sense of morals," a "sense of virtue," and a "sense of justice"[12] as "mostly generic references to moral *judgment*" (217). I presume that he would say the same about Hume's references to a "sense of beauty" and even of "wit." On the contrary, I think these references are not, in context, best understood as making reference to *judgment* but rather to the ability to have "without reflection" the *feelings* (pleasant moral approbation and unpleasant moral disapprobation, in the moral case) that constitute the epistemological source for such judgments. Otherwise, Hume's invocation of "delicacy" of sense or sentiment in application to several of them makes no sense.[13] Analogously, 'the sense of hearing' refers not to considered judgments about noise-making objects but to the capacity to hear the sounds themselves.

Millican finds a fundamental change of view about the relative roles played in moral appraisal by reason and sentiment from the *Treatise* to the second *Enquiry*, with reason doing "the bulk of the work" in the latter work by "identifying the practical tendencies of characters" (219). As I see it, however, Appendix 1 of the second *Enquiry* marks only a change of emphasis, not a change of doctrine, about these roles. As I remark in the book, the way in which the first *Enquiry* sounds a much more conciliatory tone about liberty and necessity without actually changing any

doctrine from the *Treatise* is very similar to the way in which the second *Enquiry* sounds a more conciliatory tone about the relation between reason and sentiment without actually changing any doctrine from the *Treatise*.[14]

It is true that an emphasis on the role of reason makes more salient the ways in which many particular moral judgments can go wrong, despite what I call the "resistance to global error" of "sense-based concepts" generally. Hume's continued recognition of the latter, however, is indicated by the second paragraph of the second *Enquiry*:

> Those who have denied the reality of moral distinctions, may be ranked among the disingenuous disputants; nor is it conceivable, that any human creature could ever seriously believe, that all characters and actions were alike entitled to the affection and regard of every one. The difference, which nature has placed between one man and another, is so wide, and this difference is still so much farther widened, by education, example, and habit, that, where the opposite extremes come at once under our apprehension, there is no scepticism so scrupulous, and scarce any assurance so determined, as absolutely to deny all distinction between them. Let a man's insensibility be ever so great, he must often be touched with the images of RIGHT and WRONG; and let his prejudices be ever so obstinate, he must observe, that others are susceptible of like impressions. The only way, therefore, of converting an antagonist of this kind, is to leave him to himself. For, finding that no body keeps up the controversy with him, it is probable he will, at last, of himself, from mere weariness, come over to the side of common sense and reason. (EPM 1.2; SBN 171–72)

This is remarkably similar, I suggest, to Hume's ultimate response to a parallel skepticism about *the reality of probability* distinctions that temporarily rears its head in the *Treatise*: "The *intense* view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another" (T 1.4.7.8; SBN 268–69). This response is discussed at length in my reply to Louis Loeb ("Loeb's 'Standard' Questions," [this issue, 279–300]).

6. Conclusion

Hume remarks, "Of all crimes that human creatures are capable of committing, the most horrid and unnatural is ingratitude" (T 3.1.1.24; SBN 466). I am truly grateful to Peter Millican for his extremely probing and insightful comments, both now and over many years. Where we disagree, I am always provoked to re-examine and

sometimes to revise; where we do agree—and agreement has gradually become more common—I am certain that we must be right.

NOTES

1 The scope of the remarks about these terms to which Millican refers (206) was limited to their use in purely epistemic evaluations, thereby excluding their applications to actions and comparisons. In other passages that he cites, however, Hume seems to me to characterize the parties to disputes and the makers of assertions (for example, "Longinus thought himself sufficiently justified, in asserting . . ." ["Of Civil Liberty," 90] rather than characterizing the beliefs themselves. Nonetheless, I concede that my universal generalization about the terms is contestable. My larger point still stands, however: that the full array of passages in which Hume employs them does not sustain the proposal that JUSTIFICATION is one of his fundamental epistemically normative concepts. In another case that Millican mentions, he correctly notes that I now treat the term 'evidence' as systematically ambiguous for Hume in much the same way that 'virtue,' 'beauty,' and 'power' are (220n4). The description I gave of its use in *Cognition and Commitment* remains substantially accurate, however, when restricted, as I had originally intended, to the *Treatise*.

2 References to the *Treatise* are to Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Norton and Norton, hereafter cited in the text as "T" followed by Book, part, section, and paragraph number, and to Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Selby-Bigge, rev. by Nidditch, cited in the text as "SBN" followed by the page number.

3 References to the second *Enquiry* are to Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Beauchamp, hereafter cited in the text as "EPM" followed by section and paragraph number, and to Hume, *Enquiries Concerning the Principles of Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Selby-Bigge, rev. by Nidditch, hereafter cited in the text as "SBN" followed by page numbers.

4 Millican quotes my remark, "Explaining the full meaning of an abstract idea or concept therefore involves, in principle, several elements for Hume," italicizing "for Hume" (208). I take the point that this phrase is ambiguous, but I would have emphasized "in principle."

5 References to the first *Enquiry* are to Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Beauchamp, hereafter cited in the text as "EHU" followed by section and paragraph number, and to Hume, *Enquiries Concerning the Principles of Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Selby-Bigge, rev. by Nidditch, hereafter cited in the text as "SBN" followed by page numbers.

6 Hume recognizes that being "the offspring of the imagination" is an "opprobrious character" in the minds of many. However, Hume himself does not paint with so broad a brush; it is only some of the principles of the unreasoning imagination that deserve opprobrium. These include irregular principles that are not reasoning but can influence reasoning for the worse, such as the influence of apprehension and fear (as in the final sentences of T 1.4.4.1 [SBN 225–26]).

7 I agree that Hume's treatment of the "dangerous dilemma" in *Treatise* 1.4.7 invokes the distinction between "universal" principles and "irregular" principles drawn in *Treatise* 1.4.4.1. Hume's point there, however, is that an *irregular* principle of the unreasoning imagination, first identified in *Treatise* 1.4.1 ("Of scepticism with regard to reason"), is now needed to save reason or "the understanding," which had previously been assumed to depend *only* on *universal* principles of the unreasoning imagination—specifically, on the customary transition between causes and effects.

8 Garrett, "Hume on Reason" and Garrett, *Reason, Induction, and Causation*.

9 In an earlier version of Hume's footnote of *Treatise* 1.3.9.19 (a version initially printed at T 2.2.7.7n; SBN 371) it is precisely the understanding that is said to consist only of "our demonstrative and probable reasonings." This confirms that Hume sometimes uses 'the understanding' without attending to the status of intuition.

10 References to Hume's *Dissertation on the Passions* are cited in the text as "DP," followed by section and paragraph number.

11 See also T 1.4.7.3 (SBN 265), which contrasts "the memory, senses, and imagination."

12 I take the "sense of justice" to be the moral sense as applied to feeling approbation specifically for the virtue of justice. I agree that the "sense of interest" contrasted with it is a sense only somewhat metaphorically, but I believe Hume is still using the term to refer to feeling rather than judgment.

13 Note in particular the role of delicacy in relation to the sense of beauty in "Of the Standard of Taste" and also the opening paragraph of the *Abstract*, which *contrasts* "a delicacy of sentiment, a sense of morals" with "a depth of reasoning and reflection." In connection with wit, Hume writes, "Besides all those qualities which render a person lovely or valuable, there is also a certain *je-ne-sçai-quoi* [sic] of agreeable and handsome that concurs to the same effect. In this case, as well as in that of wit and eloquence, we must have recourse to a certain sense, which acts without reflection, and regards not the tendencies of qualities and characters" (T 3.3.4.11; SBN 612).

14 Millican also sees a "move away from egoism" from the *Treatise* to the second *Enquiry* (224n34). I think this, too, is a change of emphasis; as I read Hume, he was never a psychological egoist, despite Locke's evident influence.

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