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# Setting the Standard: Don Garrett's *Hume*

LOUIS E. LOEB

Who other than Don Garrett could construct a work this rigorous and comprehensive, encompassing Hume's aesthetics, political philosophy, and philosophy of religion—not as add-ons but tightly integrated into a genuinely new interpretation? Garrett's intricate reading has no equal in the architectonic it locates in Hume's philosophical corpus. This elegantly crafted work will reinvigorate thinking about Hume's theory of normativity across the epistemic and moral realms.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Introductory Overview

I center my comments on a central line of argument in chapters 4, 5, and 7. In chapter 4, Garrett focuses on four “sense-based” concepts or pairs of such concepts: VIRTUE (and VICE), BEAUTY (and DEFORMITY), CAUSATION, and PROBABILITY. (Following Garrett, I place names of concepts in small capital letters. See *Hume*, xxii). The sense-based concepts arise from distinctive “senses” (*Hume*, 118; see also 5), “primitive capacities to have a specific kind of felt mental response” (*Hume*, 119; see also 137, 162). In this characterization, the mental response must be felt. This is by design. Hume's account of CAUSATION and PROBABLE TRUTH is “modeled” (*Hume*, 5) on his treatments of VIRTUE and BEAUTY, so that the two sets of concepts are “analogous in many crucial respects” (*Hume*, 117); “it is not unreasonable to suppose that the parallels . . . result at least in part from Hume's extension, however conscious or unconscious,” of Hutcheson's “conceptions of beauty and virtue as discerned by the ‘senses’” (*Hume*, 118). As Garrett appreciates, this thesis has affinities with a proposal due to Norman Kemp Smith: that Hume was guided

by “a realization prompted by reflection on the sentiment-based moral theory of Francis Hutcheson . . . specifically, that a similar feeling-based approach could be ‘carried over to the theoretical domain of belief’” (*Hume*, 13).<sup>2</sup>

Garrett identifies “four elements—best thought of as overlapping stages—in the full development of a Humean sense-based concept” (*Hume*, 119). I judge the third element, “*natural correction*” (*Hume*, 120), pivotal. According to Garrett, a sense-based concept involves a standard of judgment; correction results from proper application of the standard. At this level of description, the idea is familiar from Hume’s “steady and general points of view” or “common point of view” in the correction of moral judgment (*Hume*, 121). Judgments are “corrected and refined through convergence on a standard” (*Hume*, 139), “serv[ing] to reduce intrapersonal and interpersonal disagreement” (*Hume*, 126). Application of sense-based concepts is nevertheless susceptible to “blameless diversity” (*Hume*, 127) or “blameless disagreement” (*Hume*, 144) “as a result of openness in the specification of an idealized set of respondent qualities” (*Hume*, 141), and thus “openness of the standard of judgment” (*Hume*, 144).

Garrett does not distinguish between “ideal” points of view and ones idealized to some extent. Hume invokes a merely “judicious” spectator (T 3.3.1.14; SBN 581).<sup>3</sup> Though one could stipulate that the “ideal” point of view is that on which humans converge, it is an interpretive question whether, for Hume, humans would converge on a standard involving endowments that are optimal or perfect. Garrett allows that “it might be better just to speak of a ‘standardized’ observer rather than an ‘ideal’ or ‘idealized’ observer” (“Replies,” n1). In order to preempt confusion, I will most often write that the corrected and refined judgments issue from *the standardized* or *the standard* point of view; similarly, I will refer to the occupant of that point of view as *the standard observer*.

Garrett writes, “In its general form, a standard of judgment for a sense-based concept consists of an idealized situation or ‘point of view’ *from which* to be responsive, plus idealized endowments or ‘qualities’ of a perceiver *with which* to be responsive” (*Hume*, 120). The standard of moral judgment consists in the point of view of the “individual [judged] himself together with those who ‘have a connexion with him’ (THN 3.3.1.15/581; THN 3.3.1.30/591)”—Hume’s doctrine of the narrow circle—and respondent qualities that include “sympathy” and “strong but delicate moral sentiments” (*Hume*, 121).<sup>4</sup> The standard of judgments of probability consists in the point of view of “‘experience’ (THN 1.3.9.12/113)” and respondent qualities “of ‘a wise man’, who ‘proportions his belief to the evidence’ (EHU 10.4/110)” (*Hume*, 139).

In addition to four developmental elements, sense-based concepts, “when fully established” (*Hume*, 123), exhibit five “characteristic features” (*Hume*, 144). These include “general *resistance to global error*” (*Hume*, 127), provided that

standards of judgment are correctly applied and that reflection on the results does not ultimately undermine application of the concept (*Hume*, 128). This is resistance, not immunity (*Hume*, 128). Also, neither belief in the resistance, much less recognition of the argument for it, is built into the standard point of view (*Hume*, 237). Garrett cites *Treatise* 3.2.8.8 (SBN 546–47) as evidence that Hume recognizes that the sense-based character of VIRTUE implies resistance to global error (*Hume*, 127–28).

Corrected and refined judgments that issue from the standard point of view are resistant to global error because the standard of judgment for a sense-based concept is the ultimate authority in its domain. For any sense-based concept, “the idealized point of view [is] partly constitutive of the standard” (*Hume*, 139). “Partly,” as I read Garrett, only because a standard of judgment consists not only in a point of view but also in the standard observer’s endowments; these “respondent qualities” (*Hume*, 139) are also partly constitutive of the standard. For Garrett, “just as Hume holds that the ultimate arbiter of morality is the ideally corrected and refined moral sense of all humankind, so the ultimate judge of the probability of truth is the ideally corrected and refined sense of probability” (*Hume*, 142). In the case of PROBABLE TRUTH, “the corrected and refined sense of probability itself . . . contributes to the establishment of its own standard of judgment” (*Hume*, 235). PROBABLE TRUTH exhibits resistance to global error “[b]ecause it is sense-based” (*Hume*, 237). The sense-based concepts are not simply associated with a standard of judgment; that claim is innocuous. Sense-based concepts are self-judging or self-arbitrating; they set their own standards of judgment.

Garrett devotes chapter 5 to four pairs of “normative concepts”: VIRTUE (and VICE), BEAUTY (and DEFORMITY), TRUTH (and FALSEHOOD), and PROBABLE TRUTH (and PROBABLE FALSEHOOD). Basic normative concepts are said to structure domains of value (*Hume*, xix, 164, 168, 169). Concepts are “normative” in virtue of the role they play in human life (*Hume*, 148)—including shared appreciation, interpersonal consequences, personal engagement, and our understanding of their positive and negative value (*Hume*, 148–50). (Sense-based concepts that do not structure domains of value—CAUSATION and PROBABILITY—though not in Garrett’s sense “normative,” are associated with standards for correct or proper judgment.)

Retracing our steps, VIRTUE and BEAUTY are sense-based and normative. CAUSATION and PROBABILITY are sense-based but not normative. TRUTH and PROBABLE TRUTH are normative. In addition, PROBABLE TRUTH, unlike TRUTH, is sense-based, inheriting its sense-based character from that of PROBABILITY, so that PROBABLE TRUTH is “mediately” sense-based—“because it results from the application of PROBABILITY to that subset of possible matters of fact that consist in a *belief’s being true*” (*Hume*, 159). This yields the following interpretive scheme:

	Sense-based?	Normative?
VIRTUE (and VICE)	Yes	Yes
BEAUTY (and DEFORMITY)	Yes	Yes
CAUSATION	Yes	No
PROBABILITY	Yes	No
TRUTH (and FALSEHOOD)	No	Yes
PROBABLE TRUTH (and PROBABLE FALSEHOOD)	Yes	Yes

Color concepts are also sense-based (*Hume*, xix, 120–21, 122, 143, 257), though they have some special features (*Hume*, 127–28).

Let us return to TRUTH. In Garrett’s account, TRUTH and FALSEHOOD are “among the fundamentally normative concepts in the epistemic domain of value, in much the way that BEAUTY and DEFORMITY . . . and VIRTUE and VICE . . . are for [Hume] the fundamentally normative aesthetic and moral concepts, respectively” (*Hume*, 153). Garrett writes, “‘true’, like ‘virtue’, serves for Hume as a term of approbation” (*Hume*, 158); similarly, “TRUTH and FALSEHOOD come to be normative concepts for belief, implying prescription or evaluation” (*Hume*, 154; see also 158).

I will not much discuss Garrett’s direct arguments for these provocative claims. I see his thesis that PROBABLE TRUTH is *sense-based*, not that it is normative, as the lynchpin of what is novel in Garrett’s telling of Hume’s epistemology. I do find TRUTH an odd candidate for an *epistemic* concept in Hume. In my view, the texts Garrett cites (*Hume*, 152–53, 163) show that we direct approbation at *opinions* or *beliefs* we regard as true—“self judged” or “attributed” (*Hume*, 155, 157) truths—not at truth itself. I think REASONABLENESS and JUSTIFICATION are better candidates for normative epistemic concepts. Garrett has substantial arguments against these proposals, though he allows that cognates of ‘just’ are *derivatively* normative concepts (*Hume*, 169–70; “Replies,” n2). Whether TRUTH and PROBABLE TRUTH are “normative” may turn heavily on Garrett’s understanding of the four features of the role he assigns to normative concepts (*Hume*, 168).

In the chapter on normative concepts, Garrett introduces claims about “*semantic ascent*” (*Hume*, 155, 161). These will prove important. Let ‘p’ designate the name of a possible matter of fact and ‘{p}’ be the name of an idea of p (*Hume*, xxii, 153). For Garrett’s Hume, if one holds the *belief-that-p*, reflecting on that belief “leads naturally” to holding the *belief-that-{p}-is-true* (*Hume*, 154); indeed, “it will be very difficult to . . . be resistant to” this latter belief (*Hume*, 154). Similarly, if one holds the *belief-that-it-is-probable-that-p*, reflecting on that belief “leads naturally” to holding the *belief-that-{p}-is-probably true* (*Hume*, 161); “it will be very difficult”

to have the former belief “while being resistant to” the latter (*Hume*, 154). These are *principles of the naturalness of ascent*.<sup>5</sup> In sections 5.2 and 5.3, Garrett gives parallel accounts of these two principles (see *Hume*, 160); where possible I focus on ascent for TRUTH, the simplest case.

The principles of the naturalness of ascent arise in the course of Garrett's offering a naturalistic explanation of how it is that TRUTH and PROBABLE TRUTH “[come] to be socially appreciated and falsehood deprecated” (*Hume*, 157), of how they come to be normative. (If this explanation works, it supplies an indirect argument that TRUTH and PROBABLE TRUTH *are* normative.) Contesting the role of these principles in this explanation, however, is not my concern. Rather, I will question their supporting role in Garrett's interpretation in chapter 7 of Hume's response to far-reaching skepticism.

In section 2, I summarize and examine Garrett's account of key doubt-inducing or skeptical considerations and of how the standard of judgment for PROBABLE TRUTH interacts with the naturalness of semantic ascent to secure mitigated rather than a more Pyrrhonian skepticism. In section 3, I turn to Garrett's claim that the standard of judgment for PROBABLE TRUTH results from convergence on a point of view. Section 4 considers Garrett's interpretation as it applies to the belief in body. In section 5, I question whether Hume maintains there is a sense-based concept of PROBABLE TRUTH on the model of his treatment of VIRTUE. This is the fundamental interpretive issue raised by Garrett's book.

## 2. The Doubt-inducers and Their Mitigation

Garrett wants to identify a response to severe skepticism sufficiently general to encompass both *Treatise* 1.4.7 and section 12 of the first *Enquiry*.<sup>6</sup> He inventories “five discoveries” (*Hume*, 213), five “doubt-inducing considerations” (*Hume*, 167, 218, 231)—I will say *doubt-inducers*—that arise in one or both of these locations. Garrett finds that the mitigation of only two of the doubt-inducers—reason's self-subversion deriving from *Treatise* 1.4.1 (*Hume*, 223–26) and the very dangerous dilemma (*Hume*, 226–27)—requires appeal to the Title Principle, made famous in his 1997 book.<sup>7</sup> In the *Treatise*, “PROBABLE TRUTH . . . serves” not only “to determine the proper scope and degree for skepticism” but also “to legitimize [the Title Principle]” itself (*Hume*, 215). The Title Principle plays no role in the first *Enquiry*, where reason's self-subversion and the dangerous dilemma do not appear (*Hume*, 233). In Garrett's view, Hume's response to the three other doubt-inducers depends on a “default principle” for reason together with Hume's account of PROBABLE TRUTH, without any role for the Title Principle (*Hume*, 229–30). My discussion does not appeal to either of the two doubt-inducers that require the Title Principle. This facilitates focus on the role of PROBABLE TRUTH, the core of the new machinery Garrett locates for Hume's overcoming skepticism.

In chapter 7, Garrett brings the naturalness of ascent (section 1 above) to bear on beliefs based on reason—presumably demonstrative and probable reason (*Hume*, 86–95): “Because reason typically carries assent to its own conclusions with it, and reflection naturally adds belief that those conclusions are true or probably true [5.2–3] . . . reasoners will naturally find themselves at least supposing . . . the default principle: *reason ought to be assented to*” (*Hume*, 230; see also 233); “As we have seen [5.2–3], Hume’s psychology makes it nearly impossible to hold a belief with a given degree of strength without, upon reflection, also holding with a similar degree of strength that that belief is true or probably true—thereby attributing to it a fundamental epistemic value” (*Hume*, 232). (The square brackets in these quotations are Garrett’s.) The principles of the naturalness of ascent for TRUTH and PROBABLE TRUTH—the topics of sections 5.2 and 5.3, respectively—transmute into a normative default principle.

Perhaps Garrett can exploit the principles about ascent to show that, *ceteris paribus*, one values or endorses the beliefs one holds, or even that one ought to assent to them. Such implications, however, must be quite weak in light of cases where there is a disconnect or tension between *the-belief-that-p* and *the-belief-that-{p}-is-true*.<sup>8</sup> (For Garrett’s use of curly brackets, see section 1 above.) Suppose I believe that *p*, and I also believe that this belief is due to nefarious anti-truthers who indoctrinate me with falsehoods. In such a case, I will ascend to the *belief-that-{p}-is-false*. I might do so even without relinquishing the *belief-that-p*, if that belief is ingrained owing to highly effective indoctrination. Hume has such cases in view in his discussion of “education”—“opinions . . . [which] take such deep root, that ’tis impossible . . . to eradicate them” (T 1.3.9.17; SBN 116). (Garrett does not discuss Hume on education.) Ascent in belief is psychologically natural *only if there are no countervailing considerations*.

The same results hold in cases of probable reasoning, the default principle’s home turf. Consider the person securely suspended from a high tower in an iron cage. (Garrett discusses the fourth kind of unphilosophical probability—*Hume*, 97—but not this example.) By custom, he associates rapid descent with unsupported great height; he believes that it is probable that he will fall. By custom, he also associates secure systems of suspension with not falling. This prevents his ascending to the *belief-that-{his-future-fall}-is-true*. Again, countervailing considerations defeat ascent.<sup>9</sup> Garrett thinks, “plausibly,” the conflict will tend to diminish the strength of the first-order belief (“Replies,” section 2). Hume writes, however, “The . . . depth and descent strike so strongly upon [the man], that their influence cannot be destroy’d by the contrary circumstances of support and solidity” (T 1.3.13.10; SBN 148).

Though he does not provide examples, Garrett recognizes the possibility that countervailing considerations defeat ascent; reflection and experience “may each often lead reason itself to give an *ultimate verdict* different from its initial or

provisional one" (*Hume*, 230, emphasis added and deleted). Garrett reformulates the default principle accordingly: "the *final decision* of reason, as developed by experience, reason, and reason's own self-reflection, ought to be assented to" (*Hume*, 230, emphasis added and deleted).<sup>10</sup>

Consider in this light two of the three doubt-inducers not beat back by the Title Principle.<sup>11</sup> One discovery takes the form of a Berkelian argument against the conceivability and hence the possibility of "extended bodies" (*Hume*, 221).<sup>12</sup> The argument proceeds along these lines: primary qualities are inconceivable without secondary qualities; cause and effect reasoning shows that secondary qualities exist only in the mind; since whatever is inconceivable is impossible, we have empirical reason to believe that primary qualities exist only in the mind.<sup>13</sup> Garrett allows, "Hume regards this result as posing a serious problem because . . . it seems that the mind cannot specifically conceive [bodies] at all" (*Hume*, 221). What will be reason's ultimate verdict? One might think that once the Berkelian argument is on the table, reason possesses countervailing considerations that militate against ascent from the *belief-that-extended-bodies-exist* to the *belief-that-[extended-objects-exist]-is-true*.

Garrett has two responses. First, "it may be that bodies do have the familiar sensory colors or tangible qualities, despite the 'satisfactory' probable argument to the contrary. For probable reasonings are not demonstrations, and even 'satisfactory' ones sometimes have false conclusions" (*Hume*, 221–22). In other words, it is possible that the Berkelian argument has a false conclusion—just as it is possible that any probable reasoning has a false conclusion. Second, bodies might possess "unsensed and unknown" qualities that we "can conceive . . . only indirectly and obscurely, by means of a relative idea . . . as *whatever* . . . qualities allow bodies to be extended" (*Hume*, 222).<sup>14</sup> In other words, perhaps the existence of extended qualities can be salvaged in the way it might be possible to salvage any target of Hume's empiricism about meaning—by invoking "relative ideas."<sup>15</sup> I cannot see that either the theoretical possibility of a probable, but false, conclusion or the theoretical possibility that an extended quality is something-I-conceive-not-what should prevent Hume from concluding, in light of the Berkelian argument, that it is probable that extended bodies do not exist.<sup>16</sup>

Second, there is the discovery that belief consists in vivacity, a quality "seemingly . . . so trivial" (T 1.4.7.3; SBN 265). In Garrett's interpretation, there are two Humean arguments—in the *Treatise*, from the probability of chances and in the first *Enquiry*, from the probability of causes—to show that "the truth of lively ideas appears relatively improbable" (*Hume*, 219).<sup>17</sup> This doubt-inducer applies to beliefs based on the senses, memory, and probable reasoning (*Hume*, 218–19); it casts a wide net. What will be reason's final judgment? One might think that once the probabilistic arguments are on the table, reason possesses countervailing

considerations that militate in all cases against ascent from the vivacious *belief-that-it-is-probable-that-p* to the *belief-that-{p}-is-probably-true*.

Within Garrett's apparatus, "the particular amount of belief-diminishing force that [the doubts about reason] properly have is to be determined ultimately precisely by their considered impact on the corrected and refined sense of probability itself" (*Hume*, 235). What is the impact of the doubt-inducers *on a standard observer* (see section 1 above), a "wise man" (*Hume*, 163; see also 139, 303) who also possesses the arguments for the doubt-inducers? (This formulation leaves open the question whether Garrett would build *possession* of any doubt-inducers into the standard point of view.) The Berkelian argument does "decrease our previous assessment of the probability that reason provides true belief" (*Hume*, 222); more generally, the doubt-inducers "carr[y] some negative weight . . . in judging how probable it is that our faculties are veracious" (*Hume*, 234). The issue, however, is why possession of the Berkelian argument does not lead to the conclusion that it is highly improbable that extended bodies exist or, more generally, why the doubt-inducers are not much more damaging than Garrett allows.

Why should our everyday judgments largely trump or outweigh the doubt-inducers? Perhaps the standard observer would, instead, approve the doubt-inducers in spite of his inclination to hold his other beliefs. Or perhaps the standard observer would find himself caught in a standoff between these other beliefs and the doubt-inducers, resulting either in *epoché* or in oscillation—"successively assent[ing] to both, as is usual among philosophers" (T 1.3.7.4; SBN 266). I am not suggesting that, for Hume, there should be a way to adjudicate these options "in advance" (*Hume*, 235; see also 166) or *a priori* (*Hume*, 164–66, 234). One does, however, want to attribute to Hume a principled or motivated way to do so. Garrett finds that in Hume's philosophy of religion "notable differences . . . in susceptibility to . . . skeptical considerations" (*Hume*, 301) are a locus of blameless diversity; this exacerbates the present worry. Why is philosophical temperament not also a variable within the standard point of view in assessing the impact of the doubt-inducers?

Garrett is confident of a constructive outcome: "Probable reasoning and the senses are powerful sources of belief that make powerful appeals to the general sense of probability, and they cannot in the end be defeated by the skeptical considerations" (*Hume*, 236; see also 235). (This explains why the truth of vivacious ideas merely "appears" improbable in light of the doubt-inducers. See *Hume*, 219.) Garrett elaborates:

[Skeptical considerations] have genuine belief-diminishing force, and they do not leave the final epistemic status of human beliefs entirely untouched. Rather, the . . . outcome of the confrontation . . . has two distinct parts. The first is an overall lowering to some extent of one's

degree of belief regardless of scope, together with a recommendation of this lowering and a lowering of one's assessment of the probable truth of one's belief. The second is a loss of belief about 'high and distant' matters beyond the scope of 'common life', together with a recommendation to refrain from assessing the probable truth of claims about such matters. (*Hume*, 236)

The standard point of view yields mitigated, rather than a more severe, skepticism (*Hume*, 236). This is a familiar interpretation of Hume's position in the first *Enquiry* 12 and even *Treatise* 1.4.7.<sup>18</sup> Garrett's manner of securing it is distinctive.

Whereas in chapter 5 belief "leads naturally" to ascent (*Hume*, 154, 161), which is "difficult" to resist (*Hume*, 154, 161), in chapter 7 "Hume's psychology makes it nearly impossible" to avoid ascent (*Hume*, 232). Garrett leans on this stronger claim: "[I]n fact, [the doubt-inducers] generally don't [block semantic ascent], at least when the original belief is a strong one. Moreover, that is not surprising"; ascent, "so simple as to be nearly inevitable," occurs "*automatically*" ("Replies," section 2). Whether or not Hume holds doctrines that commit him to the naturalness of ascent—see my note 5—I do not see that he is aware of that commitment, much less that he wants to rely on it for the purposes of an argument for mitigated skepticism.

Hume does not shrink from claiming that belief-forming mechanisms are exceptionally potent: demonstration is "irresistible" (T 1.2.2.6; SBN 31); causal inference "precedes reflection, and . . . cannot be prevented by it" (T 1.3.13.8; SBN 147) and is "irresistible" and "unavoidable" (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225). There is no remotely comparable textual evidence for the near inevitability of ascent or the near impossibility of blocking it. There is a similar textual worry about the starting point of Garrett's chapter 5, that belief "leads naturally" to ascent because of the "easy mental transitions" (*Hume*, 156) or "easy transitions" to the higher-order belief (*Hume*, 154, 161, 162). Hume often writes that there is an "easy and natural" transition, an "easy transition" or "easy passage"—due to habit or custom (T 1.3.9.16; SBN 115; see also T 1.3.8.2; SBN 99), to the propensity to misattribute identity to diverse objects (T 1.4.2.35, 1.4.3.3, 1.4.6.7, 1.4.6.10, 1.4.6.11; SBN 204, 220, 255, 256, 257), which I discuss in section 4 below, and to the propensity to add relations to related objects (T 1.4.5.12; SBN 237), among others. Garrett provides no passage where Hume declares *ascent* easy or natural. Indeed, in sections 5.2–5.3 Garrett provides no passage where Hume discusses ascent.

Whatever its psychological force, it is unclear how the naturalness of ascent could serve to mitigate skepticism. Garrett gives no reason to think that ascent is *less* natural, *easier* to resist, for the doubt-inducers than for ordinary beliefs. We should expect, for example, that ascent operates on the conclusion of the Berkeleyan argument to produce the *belief-that-[extended-objects]-nonexistence-is-probably-*

*true*. Ordinary beliefs and the doubt-inducers oppose each other “all the way up” Garrett’s semantic ladder. The problem is to explain why the ordinary beliefs win the face off at each rung.

Garrett writes:

The prior deliverances of the sense of probability . . . are weighed and balanced in psychological force against the probable arguments of the doubt-inducers themselves. It should be emphasized that conflicts between different probable arguments about the same proposition that appeal to different and non-coordinated considerations (for example, arguments about which horse will win a race) are by no means rare, and there is very often no previously agreed-upon algorithm for resolving them—one must simply feel, “wisely,” how they balance against each other. (Something similar, of course, is often true in morals.) In the present case, the force of the doubt-inducers is largely overcome, but not without first producing some overall diminution in the liveliness of the original beliefs. (“Replies,” section 2)

This is less than satisfying on two counts, one discussed here, the second in the next section.

In the first place, Garrett’s appeal to judging “wisely” does not *explain* why ordinary beliefs substantially resist the doubt-inducers. When Hume appeals to the “wise” in discussing judgments of probability (T 1.3.13.12; SBN 150), he not only explains what wisdom consists in—regulating first-order habits or general rules by higher-order ones—but also why that is wise—because the latter are “more extensive and constant” (T 1.3.13.11; SBN 149; see *Hume*, 97). I take it Garrett thinks that in the case of judging “wisely” within the standard point of view, there is no comparable explanation; this is the point of the analogy to arguments about which horse will win a race.

We can grant there is no algorithm for judging the outcome of the race without granting the relevance of the analogy. When there are “different and non-coordinated considerations” with respect to whether a particular horse will win, one is open to different judgments in different situations.<sup>19</sup> These sometimes include the conclusion that the horse will lose; the judgments are not the result of systemically discounting the reasons for doubting the horse’s success. In the standard point of view, by contrast, ordinary beliefs systematically prevail over the doubt-inducers. We want a Humean explanation of this systematic bias.

One can construct such explanations. The Berkelian argument applies to every positive belief about extended objects, the worry about the triviality of vivacity to every belief in matters of fact. Hume might suggest that the breathtaking generality of these doubt-inducers does not engage us when juxtaposed with ordinary beliefs.

Or Hume might claim that the arguments for these doubt-inducers are too abstract, abstruse, or metaphysical to have much psychological force. These are at least gestures in the direction of explaining why the doubt-inducers dwindle. Garrett does not tell us why dampening the doubt-inducers is the wise result. It is just “a matter [of] psychological fact” (“Replies,” section 3), a brute fact about the workings of the mind of a standard observer.

### 3. Convergence

There is a second reason—beyond the appeal to judging “wisely”—why Garrett’s account of the doubt-inducers’ impact is unsatisfying. It is not evident that Hume does tell us “the force of the doubt-inducers is largely overcome” (“Replies,” section 2) *within the standard point of view*. In the sustained discussion of doubt-inducers in *Treatise* 1.4.7, ordinary beliefs triumph when Hume relaxes his bent of mind (T 1.4.7.9; SBN 269) or focuses intently on “*particular points*” (T 1.4.7.15; SBN 273); when he takes an “*intense view*,” he is “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). Indeed, *Treatise* 1.4.7 is sometimes read to suggest that highly reflective inquirers are destined to oscillate between this and other points of view.<sup>20</sup> Hume does not in the *Treatise* announce that one of these postures manifests convergence on a standard of judgment.<sup>21</sup>

Considerations of this sort motivate interpretations that distinguish radically different and incommensurable points of view. In the perspectivalist interpretation, there are multiple perspectives for assessing reasonableness—that of the vulgar, the natural philosopher, and the Pyrrhonian skeptic.<sup>22</sup> These arise from different levels of investigation, each on an epistemic par. In contextualist interpretations, skeptical arguments generate a context that raises epistemic standards to the point that knowledge is undermined; in everyday contexts, where the standards are relaxed, knowledge is restored.<sup>23</sup> In these interpretations, no point of view is epistemically privileged.

Garrett says little about the nature of “convergence.” He remarks that it is achieved through a “tacit convention” (*Hume*, 120). He also requires “shared convergence” (*Hume*, 163); “the operative standard of correctness . . . is the one on which human beings naturally converge” (*Hume*, 121; see also 142). Garrett’s line of thought might be that because not all humans are privy to the doubt-inducers, convergence on the intense view that induces skepticism is not possible. This invites the question—which I left open in section 2 above—whether the endowments with which to be responsive in the standard point of view (section 1 above) include, or ought to include, a degree of reflection that has access to the doubt-inducers.

Garrett might maintain that the standard of judgment is more constrained by typical human endowments and psychology. This suggestion raises other

misgivings. I agree that Hume's psychological theory generates pressure toward convergence. Belief is reinforced when we encounter humans who agree (*Hume*, 10, 162) and shaken when we encounter persons who disagree (*Hume*, 120, 156). Because it is unsettling, disagreement is unpleasant, producing "painful vacillations of doubt" (*Hume*, 155, 156; see also 162). Disagreements are "naturally disturbing to the individuals who observe or experience them, thereby inclining them toward some way of reaching and maintaining intrapersonal and interpersonal agreement" (*Hume*, 120). The aversive character of disagreement supplies a motive for convergence.<sup>24</sup> These features of Humean human psychology create *pressure toward* reaching agreement. They do not determine the character of any agreement or even insure agreement is secured.

Garrett gives no reason to think that "philosophers" (T 1.3.9.19, 1.3.13.2; SBN 117, 143), "honest gentlemen" (T 1.4.7.14; SBN 272), or landholders, much less the "vulgar," converge on a standard. We can worry about cases of resilient disagreement in belief—polytheism, religious sects, competing theologies, and views about evolutionary theory, economics, or climate science that are decided outliers; *prima facie*, we are far from having achieved convergence. Garrett's Hume has resources with potential to deflect such examples. These include—in my collation—(1) misapplication of agreed upon standards (*Hume*, 128); (2) psychological causes that conflict with the standard; (3) openness in the standard of judgment; and (4) differences in inputs—relativization "to a given body of experimental evidence" (*Hume*, 163; see also 141), "possessed at a time by one individual or group" (*Hume*, 139). We cannot simply assume that Hume can explain every case of disagreement with these resources; the problem is to make a plausible case that they do explain nearly all disagreement without significant residue. Hume does hold that there exists extensive agreement germane to morals (T 3.2.8.8n80; SBN 547n1; see also T 2.1.3.4; SBN 281, and *A Dialogue*)—where, as Garrett notes, "comprehensive understanding of causes and effects" is built into the standard point of view (*Hume*, 121)—but Hume says nothing analogous about matters of fact.

Two of the resources require special comment. Consider (2), disagreement due to "*pathological* causes such as . . . credulity . . . that conflict with the cognitive operations properly deemed 'reasonable'" (*Hume*, 308; see also 139). This presupposes an independent determination of the standards on which humans converge. To the extent that humans *are* contentedly credulous or superstitious, there is no convergence on a standard that *excludes* credulity and superstition. If these causes of belief conflict with operations on which humans converge, why should "judging wisely" not decide between the non-coordinated considerations—as when ordinary beliefs do battle with the doubt-inducers (*Hume*, 236; see also 141 and "Replies," section 2)?

Consider (3), openness in the standard of judgment. Any plausible reconstruction of the standard of moral judgment will display some indeterminacy.<sup>25</sup> It is

reasonable to expect the same for the standard of probability. Garrett finds “lack of precision” due to assessments of degrees of probability or analogy (*Hume*, 276; see also 126–27, 141–42) and to “differences in philosophical temperament” (*Hume*, 301). From these sources, we can “expect a very considerable range of blameless diversity concerning judgments of . . . the probability to be ascribed to the existence of a supreme intelligent designer” (*Hume*, 301; see also 313). In a quite different case, that of belief in “unobservable secret powers or ultimate principles,” “for at least some philosophers a degree of credence may remain even after the diagnosis of the source of the belief in conflation and error has been made and accepted. . . . [T]here may be room for blameless diversity in philosophical belief” (*Hume*, 205, 222). (Garrett explains the conflation at *Hume*, 189–90.) Openness in the standard, it appears, might be fairly broad. Garrett’s Hume needs to steer a delicate course; the standard of judgment cannot be so “open” as to admit troublesome beliefs nor so narrow that convergence is a heavy lift. Garrett’s Hume also has to confront cases where there is direct disagreement about standards themselves, persons who implicitly or explicitly adopt and do their best to apply extra-sensory perception, mystical intuition, faith, science constrained by religious commitment, or by secular or religious authority.

Perhaps what matters is convergence on a standard of judgment in the long run.<sup>26</sup> The standard point of view results from “gradual adoption and refinement” (*Hume*, 120; see also 143), an historical process. How would Garrett’s Hume know how such a process would unfold? Here there is a damaging problem. Again, Garrett does not quote, paraphrase, or cite Hume’s discussion of “education” (see section 2 above). According to Hume, indoctrination, one of two “kinds of custom” (T 1.3.9.16; SBN 116), is “in reality . . . built almost on the same foundation of custom and repetition as our reasonings from causes and effects” (T 1.3.9.19; SBN 117). This commonality with causal inference makes indoctrination a difficult test of interpretations of Hume’s epistemology. Because they result from repetition, opinions arising from indoctrination “take such deep root, that ’tis impossible for us, by all the powers of reason and experience, to eradicate them” (T 1.3.9.17; SBN 116; see also T 1.3.9.19; SBN 117). Centuries of authoritarian indoctrination might result in convergence on standards and judgments far from the mark. (This would also be a problem were Garrett to propose that, in Hume’s view, a specified consensus standard would emerge were there eventual convergence.) Or perhaps there will be societal oscillation, a flux and reflux of dark ages and enlightenment.

While Hume *hopes* for progress toward convergence (*Hume*, 163–64), actual progress is sensitive to contingent historical and social conditions. In the long run, different social or epistemic communities might converge on different standards of judgment, so that “the” standard either splinters or does not exist. Garrett’s Hume would have to “relativize”—as at (4) above—not simply to a given body

of evidence but also to a given standard of judgment. This is to say that PROBABLE TRUTH misfires as a sense-based concept.

Perhaps Garrett has in view hypothetical convergence, convergence that would occur were specified social conditions satisfied, for example, if authoritarianism or indoctrination were not to prevail. This faces its own problem. It is convergence that is supposed to do the work of fixing the standard. One wants to see how to flesh out the hypothetical conditions without begging the question about the content of the standard.

For Garrett's Hume, the respondent qualities encompassed in the standard of judgment for probability are "those of 'a wise man', who 'proportions his belief to the evidence'" (see section 1 above). This is uninformative; most anyone could agree on a standard formulated in terms of concepts as thin as "wise man" and "evidence." I believe Garrett would maintain that greater determinacy is achieved through "rules" that supplement and further specify a standard (*Hume*, 121–22, 131–32, 139–40, 163). Thus, he writes, there has been "ongoing development of the concept PROBABILITY through the adoption of new rules of probability and through refinement in its standard in the centuries since Hume" (*Hume*, 277). For concreteness, suppose Bayesianism is one development Garrett has in view. Not all humans will converge on that. Nor will they converge on a standard that incorporates enhanced endowments, for example, that characterizes "the wise" as the philosophically and mathematically sophisticated and "evidence" as the principles *they* endorse. Such epistemic deference seems reserved for a very distant possible world. The alternative is to focus on hypothetical convergence, the standard any human would adopt were they philosophically and mathematically sophisticated. This raises anew the question of how to specify the hypothetical conditions.

Hume is not reticent about advancing standards of judgment.<sup>27</sup> He draws an epistemic distinction between "principles which are permanent, irresistible, 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" (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225). He advances "[r]ules by which to judge of causes and effects" (T 1.3.15; SBN 173). Earlier, in *Treatise* 1.3.13, "wise men" are guided by "a second influence of general rules" and "the vulgar" by their "first influence" (T 1.3.13.12; SBN 150); and there is a distinction between legitimate memory beliefs and ones overly responsive to changes in conviction as memory fades (T 1.3.13.2; SBN 143). Hume also adduces grounds for rejecting beliefs based on indoctrination (T 1.3.9.19; SBN 117). Garrett takes note of some of these principles (*Hume*, 140). Hume is confident that causal inference (together with perception and memory, which provide its inputs), suitably regulated by general rules—but not indoctrination, not "rashly" formed generalizations (T 1.3.13.7; SBN 146), not superstitious "apprehension" (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 226), and not the "trivial propensit[ies]" (T 1.4.3.11; SBN 224) he "has just now taken notice of" (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 224)—is one source of belief that has

epistemic pride of place. (I say “one source” in order to maintain neutrality, at this stage, on issues I raise in section 4 about Hume’s posture toward trivial propensities of the imagination.) Hume does not bother to contend that we can discern shared standards notwithstanding the wide disagreement in belief across our globe. Nor does Hume suggest that, prior to advancing these distinctions, he must bide time to observe the character of a long run convergence. Failure to converge on this set of standards does not count against its legitimacy.

The texts recommend an alternative to Garrett’s looking to convergence to fix the standard of probability. Hume takes causal inference to be epistemically worthy “going in” or “out of the gate”—more on this in section 4 below. He seeks to explain—most prominently, in *Treatise* 1.3.9, 1.3.13, 1.3.15, and 1.4.4.1—how convergence can be optimized *from that starting point*, the starting point of raw association by cause and effect.<sup>28</sup> In this conception, historical accidents do not matter; more generally, the difficulties in showing that humans in fact converge, or under appropriate conditions would converge, on a specified standard vanish. Hume is identifying and explicating, while also elaborating and refining, the foundation of the standard of judgment that is “recogniz’d” (T 1.3.9.19; SBN 117; see also T 1.3.10.1; SBN 118) or “receiv’d” (T 1.3.13.1; SBN 143) by “philosophers”—natural philosophers.

#### 4. Belief in Body

In this section, I consider resistance to global error (see section 1 above) and convergence (section 3) applied to the belief in “body,” “things having ‘continued and distinct’ existence” (*Hume*, 98)—another test case for any theory. The vulgar believe that the very objects they perceive are bodies (*Hume*, 98). Philosophers subscribe to a hypothesis of double existence of perceptions and a second set of objects (*Hume*, 101–102). Unlike the vulgar, philosophers distinguish perceptions and objects, believe that perceptions are the immediate objects of sense-experience, and that they do not have a continued existence (*Hume*, 101). The vulgar and philosophers disagree in all these respects.

Or do they? The vulgar belief in body “arises at an early stage of development of every human mind” (*Hume*, 98; see also 220). Though the double existence view must arise later, humans at large do not converge on it. Indeed, Hume “acknowledges that he, like other philosophers, will readily slip back into the vulgar way of thinking” (*Hume*, 104).<sup>29</sup> Any convergence is in the direction of the vulgar belief. Yet, “Hume readily acknowledges the vulgar view to be positively false” (*Hume*, 104). If humans converge on this false belief, how would Garrett’s Hume preserve resistance to global error?

Garrett writes, “it would be difficult, though not impossible, for humanity to be fundamentally wrong about what kinds of things . . . are at least probably

true" (*Hume*, 237). Perhaps resistance to global error is confined to mistakes about "what kinds of things" exist, to errors about fundamental ontology. This *weakened* thesis of resistance to error is satisfied, technically; the vulgar and philosophers agree that "bodies"—objects with a continued and distinct existence—exist. (Even this nominal agreement obscures disagreement whether "bodies" are immediate objects of perception.)

Do the vulgar and philosophers agree on a more determinate ontology? Philosophers presumably take bodies to be one of the following: extended perceptions (*Hume*, 37, 69–71, 102); matter devoid of secondary qualities that resemble perceptions (*Hume*, 221–22); matter that possesses secondary qualities that resemble perceptions (*Hume*, 221–22); objects we "can conceive . . . only indirectly and obscurely, by means of a relative idea [2.2–3]; that is, as *whatever* . . . qualities allow bodies to be extended" (*Hume*, 222); or some disjunction of these. (Perhaps Garrett thinks selection among some subset of these options a matter of blameless diversity.) All but the first of these options, among others (*Hume*, 102, 220), are instances of "a double-existence view" (*Hume*, 105). Only were philosophers to opt for the third, matter that possesses secondary qualities that resemble perceptions, would there be any prospect of agreement with the vulgar on a specific ontology.<sup>30</sup> Hume's hold on even the weakened thesis of resistance to global error is tenuous.

Convergence on the vulgar view is also compromised, even though philosophers slip into it "in ordinary life" (*Hume*, 104). Philosophers have an "admitted permanent susceptibility" to "bouts of doubt" about continued and distinct existence (*Hume*, 104). Susceptibility to doubt must infect the vulgar view—"readily . . . shown to be false by simple experiments," double vision and perceptual relativity (*Hume*, 101). For philosophers, some oscillation is unavoidable, unless they permanently forego the simplest reflection that undermines the vulgar belief. Garrett again makes convergence look too easy: "As is often the case in Hume's psychology, conflicting forces tend to diminish one another until there is a resolution, which may be more or less stable" (*Hume*, 236). Often, but not in the case of "the flux and reflux" of theism and polytheism (NHR 8);<sup>31</sup> not in the case of the manifest contradiction, where we find that philosophers "successively assent" (T 1.4.7.4; SBN 266) to both sides; perhaps not in the case of intense and relaxed views (see section 3 above); and not in the case of the vulgar belief in body, where philosophers must fluctuate. Garrett's emphasis on convergence obscures this distinctive Humean theme.

Philosophers' permanent susceptibility to reflection and doubt is inhospitable to yoking the standard of judgment to convergence: "powerful . . . skeptical doubts can continue to recur" (*Hume*, 218). Any "convergence" is on modest *fluctuation*. There is an alternative within Garrett's broad framework. Even as skeptical doubts are powerful, they are "temporary" (*Hume*, 104), "transitory" (*Hume*, 143), "momentary"

(Hume, 103, 214, 218). Garrett thus observes that belief, “[w]hile subject to some fluctuations, is largely constant” (Hume, 242). Similarly, the belief-inducers lead to an outcome that is “slightly fluctuating but largely stable” (Hume, 236)—“largely” stable because it is constant during periods other than the brief intervals of destabilizing reflection. This suggests identifying corrected and refined judgments with those that enjoy *high average stability*—for all humans, the vulgar and philosophers alike.<sup>32</sup> This alternative yields exactly the mitigated skepticism Garrett wants (see Hume, 218) without muting Humean oscillation. Destabilizing reflection is episodic; it lowers average stability while leaving intact high stability weighted for the length of time beliefs are held. By contrast, perspectivalism and contextualism (see section 3 above) do not countenance aggregating the degree of stability across different perspectives or contexts.

Yet, appealing to high average stability is less than satisfying. In Hume’s view, the vulgar belief is relatively constant but plainly false—an unhappy result quite independently of any thesis of resistance to global error. A variant of this problem remains if, as Garrett would have it, we focus on convergence on *a standard* of judgment, not judgment itself.

First, some terminology. For Garrett, *reason* is comprised of demonstrative and probable arguments or inferential transitions (Hume, 88–89). *Probable reasoning*—I focus on “probability” in the inclusive sense that includes proofs (Hume, 94–95, 137–38)—consists of non-demonstrative reasoning or inference about matters of fact or real existence (Hume, 173). *Regular* probable reasoning is “causal or inductive” (Hume, 205); it consists, I take it, in enumerative inference due to custom or habit extrapolating from observed regularities—as distinct, for example, from theoretical inference or inference to the best explanation.<sup>33</sup> The *broad* or *inclusive imagination* is the faculty of producing ideas that are not memories (Hume, 86–88) and includes “what [Hume] calls ‘reason’” (Hume, 87). The *unreasoning imagination* is the inclusive imagination exclusive of (demonstrative and probable) reasoning (Hume, 87–89).

Let us begin with the vulgar. Strictly speaking, the senses alone do not produce the belief in continued or distinct existence (T 1.4.2.3–13; SBN 188–93). The senses must be supplemented by a propensity to conflate diverse objects with identity, or, in Garrett’s terms, a propensity “to misattribute a perfect identity to the in-fact-interrupted succession of many of its impressions” (Hume, 99; see also 180). I call this *Identity Misattribution*. The constancy of perceptions triggers this propensity’s operation. Garrett writes, Hume “ascribes to the unreasoning imagination that sub-operation of the senses that results in the belief in continued and distinct existence” (Hume, 100).<sup>34</sup> The standard of judgment implicit in the vulgar belief in body approves reliance on Identity Misattribution, an operation of the unreasoning imagination that does not qualify as even irregular probable reasoning.

For their part, philosophers most often revert to the vulgar belief in body. Perhaps in so doing they are not correctly applying their standard of judgment. The feel of the texts, however, is that they are (temporarily) relinquishing the standard of judgment that had led to rejecting the vulgar view. It is for this reason—the instability in philosophers’ standard of judgment—that the perspectivalist and contextualist interpretations have their attractions. Even when philosophers do embrace a double existence view, they are not engaged in regular probable reasoning, which “requires immediate experience of a constant conjunction between cause and effect—something that is impossible in this case” (*Hume*, 102; 220). Also, they are still relying on Identity Misattribution: the psychological hold of double existence “derives entirely from the . . . operations giving rise to the vulgar view” (*Hume*, 102); the “etiology [of the double existence view] depends on the same ‘trivial qualities of the fancy’—that is, of the unreasoning imagination—as the vulgar view” (*Hume*, 103). The vulgar and philosophers alike converge on a standard that requires Identity Misattribution. Garrett might prefer to say that, strictly, the “standard” consists in wisely proportioning belief to evidence on the basis of experience (see section 1 above); the point is that any standard that licenses belief in body must approve Identity Misattribution.

Deciding whether Hume can abide this result is a major fork in the interpretive road. Garrett writes: “Section 4 of the first *Enquiry* . . . begins with . . . the question . . . ‘What is the nature of all our reasonings concerning matters of fact?’ Hume answers that they are all ‘founded on cause and effect’” (*Hume*, 175; see also 137). The beliefs that bodies, and particular bodies, exist are beliefs about “matters of fact.” How can we square the first *Enquiry* 4.4 (SBN 26) claim Garrett cites—that all our reasonings concerning matters of fact are founded on causal inference—with the claim that the belief in body is founded on Identity Misattribution, a propensity that is not a form of probable reasoning? Garrett might say this: in 4.4 (SBN 26), Hume is elucidating *what he means by the term ‘probable reasoning’*, restricting it to causal inference; this is consistent with his claim that belief in body is due to the unreasoning imagination.

This maneuver depends on a misreading of the first *Enquiry* 4.4. In the preceding paragraph, Hume inquires into “the nature of that evidence which assures of any real existence and matter of fact, beyond the present testimony of our senses, or the records of our memory” (EHU 4.3; SBN 26; see also EHU 4.5; SBN 27).<sup>35</sup> In the *Treatise*, “Tis only *causation*, which . . . give[s] us assurance from the existence or action of one object, that ’twas follow’d or preceded by any other” (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–74). For Locke, ‘assurance’ is the “*highest degree of Probability*” (*Essay* 4.16.6).<sup>36</sup> When Hume uses cognates of ‘assure’ in this Lockean way, as he often does, the terminology connotes a positive epistemic status.

That Hume assigns such a status to causal inference is confirmed many times over: causation “*informs* us of existences and objects, which we do not see or feel”

(T 1.3.2.3; SBN 74, emphasis added); it is “custom, . . . the relation of cause and effect . . . which . . . *brings us acquainted* with such existences . . . [that] lie beyond the reach of the senses and memory” (T 1.3.9.3–4; SBN 108, emphasis added); “A person, who stops short in his journey upon meeting a river in his way, *foresees* the consequences of his proceeding forward” (T 1.3.8.13; SBN 103, emphasis added). The italicized expressions are “success terms” indicating an epistemic achievement. At *Treatise* 1.3.8.13, the person’s “*knowledge* of these consequences is convey’d to him by past experience” (SBN 103, emphasis added). In the first *Enquiry*, Hume also assigns a positive epistemic status to causal inference: “Had not the presence of an object instantly excited the idea of those objects, commonly conjoined with it, all our *knowledge* must have been limited to the narrow sphere of our memory and senses” (EHU 5.21; SBN 55, emphasis added).<sup>37</sup> Garrett does not quote or cite any of the passages in this and my preceding paragraph.

Hume’s thesis is substantive and normative: causal inference—Garrett’s “probable reasoning”—is the only source of epistemically reputable belief in matters of fact—whether we call this “assurance” or “knowledge.” I will call the thesis Hume introduces in *Treatise* 1.3.2 and in first *Enquiry* 4 his *causal theory of knowledge*. (This is not knowledge “in the strict technical sense,” intuitive and demonstrative knowledge, but “‘knowledge’ in a looser . . . sense” that Hume “often” employs “throughout his writings.” See *Hume*, 42.) Garrett writes that the “search for the impression from which the idea of necessary connection is derived . . . provides the overall structure and rationale for the discussion of causation and probable reasoning that occupies all of sections 3–14 of *Treatise* 1.3” (*Hume*, 132). Only in his next chapter does Garrett note that Hume “selects the relation of causation for special scrutiny (THN 1.3.2) because of its distinctive capacity to underwrite beliefs about unobserved matters of fact” (*Hume*, 174). Even there, the thesis Garrett attributes to Hume is about the source of *belief* (*Hume*, 173, 175), not about epistemically estimable belief.<sup>38</sup>

How can Garrett reconcile Hume’s thesis that causal inference is the only source of meritorious belief in unobserved matters of fact with the role of the unreasoning imagination in the belief in body, vulgar and philosophical alike? This is Garrett’s response: “[T]he unreasoning imagination is not merely a source of whimsy and error but also plays an essential role, through an involvement in custom and habit, in the operation of probable reason and, through its involvement in attributions of identity, in the operations of the senses as well” (*Hume*, 114; see also 179, 207). The unreasoning imagination is involved in custom and habit because “probable inferences are not ‘determin’d by reason’” (*Hume*, 178). Hume’s treatment of the belief in body in *Treatise* 1.4.2 is “directly analogous” (*Hume*, 180) to that of the supposition of the uniformity of nature in 1.3.6 and the corresponding material in the first *Enquiry*. The unreasoning imagination is baked into the standard of judgment, quite apart from the belief in body.

I reject the claim that the unreasoning imagination is essential to the operation of habit. Suppose, as Garrett would have it, that probable reason involves the unreasoning imagination. Combine this with the thesis that the unreasoning imagination consists of the inclusive imagination exclusive of reasoning—a thesis that correctly captures *Treatise* 1.3.1.19n22 (SBN 117n1), the original note at *Treatise* 2.2.7.6 (SBN 371n1), and other textual data (*Hume*, 86–88). The result is to expel from the unreasoning imagination one of its own operations. This is a symptom of a larger problem, as I show in section 5 below.

Fortunately, at this stage we can sidestep these issues. Even if *some* operations of the unreasoning imagination are essential for probable reason, it does not follow that Hume would approve *just any* operation of the unreasoning imagination. In *Treatise* 1.4.2, Identity Misattribution—which Garrett describes as “somewhat confused” (*Hume*, 102; see also 57, 98–99)—depends upon “error and deception” (T 1.4.2.32; SBN 202; see also T 1.4.2.44; SBN 210), an “illusion” (T 1.4.2.25, 1.4.2.56; SBN 200, 217), and in a summary paragraph, “a gross illusion” (T 1.4.2.56; SBN 217) due to a “mistake” (T 1.4.2.32, 1.4.2.35; SBN 202, 204) in which different relations are “confounded” (T 1.4.2.32, 1.4.2.33, 1.4.2.34; SBN 203, 204).<sup>39</sup> Belief in secret powers results from a conflation but falls within the scope of blameless diversity owing to openness in the standard of judgment (see section 3 above); in the case of belief in body, reliance on Identity Misattribution is not an option within the standard point of view—it is required. It is this same propensity that leads to the belief in immaterial substrata or souls (T 1.4.6.6–7; SBN 253–55) and to the ancient philosophers’ belief in material substrata (T 1.4.3.3–4; SBN 220–21). (Garrett does not cite these two stretches of the *Treatise*.) In the paragraph immediately following *Treatise* 1.4.3, Hume sets out to “justify himself” for “blaming the antient philosophers for making use of [the imagination]” (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225). Admission of Identity Misattribution into the standard of judgment is utterly antithetical to everything Hume says about that propensity, on the one hand, and causal inference, on the other. This is the fork in the road.

For Garrett’s Hume, we cannot tell in advance (see section 2 above) what the corrected and refined sense of probability will approve. We find convergence on a standard for beliefs about body—though, I presume, not for beliefs about material or immaterial substrata—that embraces Identity Misattribution.<sup>40</sup> The effect of Garrett’s interpretation is to prioritize Identity Misattribution in the context of body over the causal theory of knowledge of matters of fact. More generally, although Hume distinguishes between two sets of principles within the imagination (see section 3 above) at sentences two through seven of *Treatise* 1.4.4.1—material Garrett does not quote, paraphrase, or cite—Garrett must take “the ultimate judge of all systems of philosophy” (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225) to be the *inclusive* imagination (*Hume*, 244).

John Immerwahr proposed an alternative. His idea is that Hume's assigning a crucial role to Identity Misattribution in accounting for the belief in body is a fundamental *failure*—a *failure on Hume's own terms*, given his decided epistemic preference for causal inference.<sup>41</sup> Garrett's Hume, by contrast, almost never makes or recognizes a mistake. (For exceptions, see *Hume*, 192, 227.) Immerwahr deems the first *Enquiry* an attempt to remedy the failure of the *Treatise* by eliminating any reliance on Identity Misattribution and related propensities.<sup>42</sup> He provides a developmental story about Hume's preference for the first *Enquiry*, "a skeptic's progress" from the *Treatise* to the later work. Garrett is "firmly convinced" of the "overall consistency and coherence" of Hume's philosophy (*Hume*, xxi). He writes in a matter-of-fact way: "Hume provides the details of his explanation [of *how* impressions of sensation are taken to provide information about the external world] only in the *Treatise*" (*Hume*, 98)—in that Hume omits constancy and coherence in the first *Enquiry*. Garrett's wording is consistent with—perhaps is intended to imply—that the first *Enquiry* treatment of the belief in body merely simplifies that of the *Treatise* (*Hume*, 256). This suggestion is an instance of an old narrative about the relationship between the two works, one Immerwahr rejects. Though I am sympathetic with a developmental story in the neighborhood of Immerwahr's, I have mainly tried to bring some of the issues to the surface.

## 5. PROBABLE TRUTH as Sense-based—the Analogy to VIRTUE

Because PROBABLE TRUTH is "sense-based," convergence determines the standard for judgments of probability, and judgments that accord with that standard resist global error. Does Garrett succeed in establishing that PROBABLE TRUTH is sense-based? We need to be clear about the reason why sense-based concepts are self-judging or self-arbitrating, setting their own standards of judgment (see section 1 above). Garrett writes, "Hume does not treat [human beings] as striving to adopt a particular standard because it is somehow antecedently the correct or 'ideal' one at which to aim" (*Hume*, 121). This formulation leaves open the possibility that there exists an antecedently correct standard, though humans do not settle on that standard by means of aiming for it. This is not what Garrett means. Rather, sentiments are the "ultimate source" (*Hume*, 108–109) of aesthetic and moral distinctions; more generally, a standard of judgment "becomes the operative standard of correctness . . . because it is the one on which human beings naturally converge" (*Hume*, 121). An antecedently correct standard does not exist. There is no fact of the matter about the proper application of a sense-based concept independent of convergence on a standard.<sup>43</sup>

An analogy might be instructive. Hume acknowledges—adopting at this juncture the common-sense supposition that extended bodies exist—a standard for judgments about primary qualities (T 3.3.3.2; SBN 603, EHU 12.6; SBN 151). In

itself, this does not show that this standard parallels that for VIRTUE, that it becomes the correct standard because it is the one on which we converge. We think there is an antecedently correct standard, conformity to the sizes and shapes objects possess independently of our perception and judgments.

Why does Hume think that there is no antecedent standard for VIRTUE? Because moral distinctions are derived from sentiment rather than from demonstrative or probable reason, agreement or disagreement with reason cannot constitute “the very essence” of morality (T 3.1.1.13, 3.1.1.19; SBN 460, 463; see also T 3.1.1.19n69, 3.1.1.25; SBN 464n1, 468). Hume is clear about his alternative: “The uneasiness and satisfaction are not only inseparable from vice and virtue, but constitute their very nature and essence” (T 2.1.7.5; SBN 296); “The very essence of virtue . . . is to produce pleasure, and that of vice to give pain” (T 2.1.7.4; SBN 296).<sup>44</sup> The *essence* of morality consists in feelings of pleasure or pain.<sup>45</sup> In Garrett, “moral distinctions . . . depend essentially on human sentiments” (*Hume*, 2). This doctrine explains why there is no standard of virtue independent of feelings of pleasure and pain.

Consider color concepts, which are also sense-based (see section 1 above). I reconstruct Hume’s analogy to VIRTUE as follows. Hume’s comparison of virtue to sounds and colors (T 3.1.1.26; SBN 469) comes on the heels of his argument that agreement with reason does not constitute the essence of virtue. Elsewhere, Hume compares beauty to (gustatory) tastes: “Though it be certain, that beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external; it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings” (“*Standard of Taste*,” 235). Adapting these observations to color, ascriptions of color are judgments that an object is fit to produce particular color sensations. Color concepts cannot be characterized independently of these sensations. For Hume, BLUE (Garrett’s example—*Hume*, 122) and VIRTUE involve essential reference to sensation or feeling, respectively. *The conditions of application for these concepts include facts about human responses essentially*.<sup>46</sup> I will say such concepts are *robustly* sense-based. The claim that VIRTUE (and BEAUTY) and color concepts are robustly sense-based explains why they set their own standard.

Garrett associates his notion of “sense-based” concepts with our contemporary notions of “response-dependent” concepts (*Hume*, 144), “in which a characteristic mental response plays a special *conceptual* and epistemological role” (*Hume*, 144, emphasis added). In my terminology, such concepts are robustly sense-based. Yet, elaborating his preferred terminology—“sense-based”—Garrett writes, “the concepts in question pick out qualities that, as things stand, *do produce* a characteristic response” (*Hume*, 144, emphasis added). In this characterization, the conceptual role of the response in fixing the conditions of application disappears. This slip-page will prove important.

Notions of response-dependence made their debut in the 1980s. There is now an extensive literature.<sup>47</sup> Early discussions viewed concepts of secondary qualities and of value, often thought to be importantly “subjective,” as the most natural home for the notion. Hume’s analogy between virtue and color—I would say Hume’s “projectivism”—prefigured and helped to inspire contemporary discussion (*Hume*, 144).<sup>48</sup> Subject to caveats about the term “response-dependence,” Garrett holds that, for Hume, response-dependent concepts include not only those for secondary qualities and moral and aesthetic properties, but also (“surprisingly”) CAUSATION and PROBABILITY (*Hume*, 144; see also 334).<sup>49</sup> This is the paramount issue Garrett’s book raises: how far Hume sought to generalize his treatment of robustly sense-based concepts beyond their most natural home.

Garrett needs to show not merely that Humean judgments of probability are “feelings,” but that they involve feelings *essentially*. This is required if PROBABLE TRUTH is to be robustly sense-based. In the book, there is no such showing. According to Garrett, “Hume is explicit on multiple occasions that on his theory vivacity *is* constitutive of belief” (“Replies,” n6). I am unsure this is so. In *Treatise* 1.3.7, an inquiry into “the nature” of belief, Hume’s arguments have an empirical quality. The claim that “[t]he idea of an object is an essential part of the belief of it” (T 1.3.7.1; SBN 94) is not about how belief “feels” or even about its vivacity. When Hume wants to make constitutive claims, he writes of the “very essence” of the phenomenon in question—for example, of power or connexion (T 1.3.14.16; SBN 163), of necessity (T 2.3.1.10, 2.3.2.2; SBN 403, 409, EHU 8.22n18, 8.25n19; SBN 94n1, 96n1), of cause and effect (T 1.4.5.33; SBN 250), of associative relations (T 1.4.6.16; SBN 260), and of beauty (T 2.1.8.2, 2.1.8.3; SBN 299, 300), as well as of virtue in passages cited above. I find but *one* such claim about belief—“the very essence of belief consists in the force and vivacity of the conception” (T 1.4.2.24; SBN 199). This does not mention “feeling” or “sentiment,” is well removed from Hume’s primary discussions of belief, and does not appear in the *Treatise* Abstract or the first *Enquiry*.

No one would deny “parallels” (see section 1 above) between Hume’s treatments of probability and moral judgment. For one, “general rules” are prominent in both Books 1 and 3. Garrett himself, however, observes that Hume “does not use the terms ‘causal sense’ and ‘sense of probability’” (*Hume*, 5). The notion of an idealized point of view that issues in corrected and refined judgments of *probability* is Garrett’s *interpretive construct*.

Consider the general complexion of the texts. In Book 3, there are six relevant occurrences of ‘point of view’ or ‘points of view’ (T 3.3.1.15—twice—3.3.1.16, 3.3.1.30, 3.3.1.32—twice; SBN 581, 582, 591, 602, 603), none in Book 1. In Book 3, in these same contexts—*Treatise* 3.3.1 and 3.3.3—Hume writes of a “standard of merit and demerit, which may not admit of so great variation” (T 3.3.1.18; SBN 583); of “interests and pleasures . . . [that] being more constant and universal . . .

are alone admitted in speculation as the standard of virtue” (T 3.3.1.30; SBN 591); of “some general inalterable standard by which we may approve or disapprove of characters” (T 3.3.3.2; SBN 603). In Book 1, where ‘standard’ often occurs in discussions of arithmetic and geometry, relevant occurrences are confined to the claim that “experience [is] the true standard of [the veracity of men], as well as all other judgments” (T 1.3.9.12; SBN 113; see also *Hume*, 139). In Book 3, there are at least nine occurrences of ‘correct’ and its cognates in the relevant context (T 3.3.1.15, 3.3.1.16—four times—3.3.1.17, 3.3.1.21—twice; SBN 582, 583, 585), versus one relevant occurrence in Book 1 (T 1.3.13.12; SBN 150—not cited by Garrett).

Hume does, in Book 3, compare correcting spontaneous moral judgments to correcting perceptual judgments of size for variation in spatial distance (T 3.3.1.15, 3.3.3.2; SBN 582, 603; see *Hume*, 120–21). That he does so counts against Garrett’s view that Hume’s account of PROBABLE TRUTH is parallel to, and modeled on, his account of VIRTUE (see section 1 above). Hume’s comparison takes a class of judgments of matters of fact as a model for the account of corrections in the case of VIRTUE; Garrett wants the modeling to go in the other direction. Further, there is no discussion in Book 1 of corrections to judgments about size and distance, save in the Appendix (T App. 1.3.10.12; SBN 632)—published with Book 3 after Book 1 appeared in print. This suggests Hume devised this analogy after developing his treatment of factual judgment. Nor does the comparison show that Hume has a conception of PROBABLE TRUTH that so much as parallels that of VIRTUE; whereas for Garrett all corrected and refined judgments of probability issue from the standard point of view, Hume confines the comparison to a restricted subset of judgments of probability.<sup>50</sup>

What about Garrett’s direct argument that PROBABILITY, and hence PROBABLE TRUTH, is sense-based? Does it show these concepts are robustly sense-based?<sup>51</sup> Garrett cites *Treatise* 1.3.8.12 (SBN 103), where probable reasoning is said to be a matter of “taste or sentiment,” so that belief accords with a “feeling” about the weight of the evidence (*Hume*, 137). He also cites *Treatise* 1.4.1.8 (SBN 183), where Hume says that “*belief is more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cogitative part of our natures*” (*Hume*, 137). It is unsurprising that Garrett relies on these two passages. Garrett’s interpretation is a highly sophisticated descendent of Kemp Smith (see section 1 above). These passages offer the most promising foothold for the thesis that Hume’s theory of moral judgment determines his theory of factual judgment; Kemp Smith cited both.<sup>52</sup>

As James Ward Smith argued in 1960, assimilating Hume’s theory of belief to his theory of moral judgment makes a hash of his insistence on a contrast between reason and sentiment.<sup>53</sup> Once he has chased demonstrative (T 3.1.1.18–25; SBN 463–68, EPM App. 1.7–9; SBN 288–89) and probable reason (T 3.1.1.26; SBN 468–69, EPM App. 1.6; SBN 287–88) from the field, Hume offers the sentimental account of moral distinctions as the alternative (T 3.1.2.1; SBN 470, EPM App.

1.21; SBN 294). Moral distinctions are founded on sentiment rather than reason (EPM 1.3, App. 1.10; SBN 170, 294). Were all belief a matter of sentiment, moral distinctions would be derived from sentiment even if they did arise from reasoning about matters of fact!<sup>54</sup> Hume does not say—as he would need to say were Kemp Smith and Garrett on firm ground—that moral distinctions are derived from *a different kind of sentiment than are judgments of matter of fact*. This problem for understanding the course of Hume's argument across Books 1 and 3 does not arise independently of Kemp Smith's, and Garrett's, interpretation; their line of interpretation generates the problem.

Garrett maintains that Hume “intentionally assimilates” the “feeling” of belief “to aesthetic and moral sentiments by referring to it frequently as ‘the sentiment of belief’” (Hume, 137). I find only two occurrences of “sentiment of belief”—(EHU 5.13, 6.3; SBN 50, 57)—neither in the *Treatise*. In any case, we need to consider the broader context of *Treatise* 1.3.8.12 and 1.4.1.8 (SBN 103, 183). Each of *Treatise* sections 1.3.3–1.3.13 and 1.3.16 contribute to Hume's argument for two interrelated theses: that all belief in matters of fact—perceptual belief, memory belief, and belief in the unobserved—consist in lively or vivacious ideas; and that the transition to the belief in the unobserved arises, not from “reason,” but from association due to custom or habit.

By the close of *Treatise* 1.3.8, Hume's initial exposition of the nature and causes of factual belief is complete. Yet, he adds, “However convincing the foregoing arguments may appear, we must not rest contented with them, but must . . . find some new points of view, from which we may illustrate and confirm” them (T 1.3.9.1; SBN 106). *Treatise* 1.3.9–10 develops some of these new points of view, as does *Treatise* 1.3.16. Even so, *Treatise* 1.3.11 begins: “But in order to bestow on this system its full force and evidence, we must . . . consider its consequences, and explain from the same principles some other species of reasoning, which are deriv'd from the same origin” (T 1.3.11.1; SBN 124). These other species of reasoning are the topics of 1.3.11–13, a subset of the sections that “illustrate and confirm” Hume's principles about belief. The penultimate paragraph of *Treatise* 1.3.13 begins with a summary: “Thus it appears upon the whole, that every kind of opinion or judgment . . . is deriv'd entirely from the force and vivacity of the perception, and that these qualities constitute in the mind, what we call the BELIEF in the existence of any object” (T 1.3.13.19; SBN 153).<sup>55</sup> At the beginning of the next section, Hume writes of “[h]aving thus explain'd” (T 1.3.14.1; SBN 155) the operation of causal inference.<sup>56</sup>

The *Treatise* 1.3.8.12 passage is embedded in the discussion of associationism in *Treatise* 1.3.3–13 and 1.3.16, a sustained, cumulative set of arguments for Hume's position on the nature and causes of belief in matters of fact. Hume “must” provide multiple illustrations and confirmations, because he sees himself as arguing for a “new hypothesis,” for “principles” that are “fundamental,” even “extraordinary”

(T 1.3.9.1; SBN 106–107). Why so extraordinary as to require development over the course of twelve sections of *Treatise* 1.3? The key is to consider the target Hume seeks to dislodge. For the purposes of the argument at *Treatise* 1.3.6.4–12, Hume contrasts “reason” with “a certain association and relation of perceptions” (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89), with “certain principles which associate together” (T 1.3.6.12; SBN 92) the ideas of cause and effect; “reason” is characterized negatively as an operation of the mind that is not associative.

Hume does not provide a direct, positive characterization of “reason” in *Treatise* 1.3.6. Often, Hume’s targets are amorphous clusters of interrelated views—as in his attack, as I see things, on doctrines of “necessity” or “necessary connexion.” Edward Craig provides a helpful suggestion: Hume’s quarry is any doctrine of irreducible intellectual insight, of purely intellectual “seeings” or graspings with “the mind’s eye” that have no naturalistic basis or realization—this, for Craig, on the model of intellectual apprehension in the mind of God.<sup>57</sup> (Perhaps the “supposed faculty” of “[t]he intellect” Garrett discusses at *Hume*, 86 is an example.) Association is Hume’s naturalistic replacement for the pure intellect; as he says, “the imagination of itself supplies the place of . . . reflection” (T 1.3.6.14; SBN 93). The intellectual insight Hume opposes—a supposed faculty lying entirely outside the domain of association—would qualify as an operation of “reason” in much of *Treatise* 1.3.6. Much, but not all. In *Treatise* 1.3.2, causal inference is the only source of knowledge of matters of fact (see section 4 above). Soon after Hume dispatches and replaces the intellectualist conception of causal inference in paragraphs 4–12 of *Treatise* 1.3.6, he is eager to appropriate cognates of ‘reason’ to refer to inference or association by the relation of cause and effect—at *Treatise* 1.3.6.15, 1.3.6.17 (SBN 93, 94), and throughout the remainder of Book 1 (for example, T 1.3.19.9n27, 1.4.2.14, 14.4.15; SBN 117–18n1, 193, 231).<sup>58</sup> This explains why Hume’s *Treatise* 1.3.6.12 claim that probable inference is “not determin’d by reason” (SBN 92)—a putative non-associative faculty of the sort Hume rejects—does not imply that it is due to the unreasoning imagination; it is due to “reason” in Hume’s naturalized sense (see section 4 above).

Craig’s perspective explains Hume’s insistence on a number of claims about the transition to belief in the unobserved. Hume assumes that any contribution of the pure intellect to inductive inference would not take the form of a single intuition—the uniformity of nature is not self-evident; in the view Hume opposes, the intellect must rely on “arguments” (T 1.3.6.5; SBN 89; see also T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89) or a “process of argument” (EHU 4.21, 4.23; SBN 37, 39; see also EHU 5.2; SBN 41), “reasoning” (T 1.3.6.8; SBN 90, EHU 4.15; SBN 32), or “ratiocination” (EHU 4.23; SBN 39). In fact, the transition to belief in the unobserved proceeds “immediately” (T 1.3.6.15, 1.3.8.10—twice; SBN 93, 102, 103), or “instantly” (EHU 5.21; SBN 55), without “a moment’s delay” (T 1.3.6.14, 1.3.8.13; SBN 93, 104), “before we have time for reflection” (T 1.3.8.13; SBN 104). Similarly, in the intellectualist

view, the operation of reason, Hume presumes, is a conscious process. In fact, the transition to the belief in an unobserved object occurs “in such an insensible manner as never to be taken notice of” (T 1.3.8.13; SBN 103). Two of these quotations occur in *Treatise* 1.3.6 and four in the two paragraphs sandwiching 1.3.8.12. This is no coincidence; their purpose is to show that everyday experience of causal inference coheres with Hume’s grounding belief in the unobserved in custom and precludes the intellectualist account.

The final sentence of *Treatise* 1.3.8.12 states Hume’s main contention, that no “other principle [than] custom operating on the imagination” underwrites causal inference (SBN 103). Why also the comparison to “poetry and music,” “taste and sentiment?” Although this language needlessly overstates the difference between intellection and custom, it does so in the service of highlighting the contrast. Garrett’s hermeneutics is literalist. Consider, for example: “The same principle cannot be both the cause and effect of another; and this is, perhaps, the only proposition concerning that relation, which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain” (T1.3.6.7; SBN 90). Garrett’s reading of this passage (*Hume*, 180–82) requires that he not see Hume’s smirk.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, he does not see the rhetorical flourish as Hume begins to close out the laborious, eighty-plus page development (in the Selby-Bigge edition) of his new and extraordinary hypothesis. Hume is not arguing for a sentimentalist account of belief, but against an alternative model of inference.

Similar considerations apply to *Treatise* 1.4.1.8. In the first six paragraphs of *Treatise* 1.4.1, Hume works to establish reason’s self-subversion. In *Treatise* 1.4.1.7, he pauses to ask “whether I sincerely assent to this argument” (SBN 183). He observes, “My intention then in displaying so carefully the arguments of that fantastic sect [total skepticism], is only to make the reader sensible of the truth of my hypothesis, *that all our reasoning 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 1.3.1.8; SBN 183).<sup>60</sup> William Wishart seized on this passage in the “Specimen” of the *Treatise* preceding his six charges against Hume (see *Letter to a Gentleman*, 7) because *Treatise* 1.3.1.8 ratcheted up the rhetoric—smart political warfare, but not good Hume interpretation. Hume’s governing concern in *Treatise* 1.4.1.8 is to provide yet another argument that favors his naturalized, associationist account of causal inference and belief over the intellectualist model of pure cogitation, not to assimilate belief to the sorts of sentiments or feelings central to his theory of morality. The only other occurrence of ‘sensitive’ in the *Treatise* is a Book 2 reference to “the whole sensitive creation” (T 2.2.12.1; SBN 397; see also EHU 9.5; SBN 107). In *Treatise* 1.3.1.8, ‘sensitive’ cannot bear the theoretical weight Garrett wants to assign to it.

Garrett is sympathetic with Kemp Smith’s claim that Hume’s “new Scene of Thought” consists in the realization that aspects of a Hutchesonian theory of

moral sentiment can be transferred to the domain of factual belief (*Hume*, 13). A competing reading, supported by my account of the thrust of the argument in *Treatise* 1.3.3–1.3.13 and 1.3.16, identifies the new scene of thought with “the use . . . [Hume] makes of the principle of the association of ideas” (Abs. 35; SBN 661–62); in the same paragraph, “if any thing can entitle the author [of the *Treatise*] to so glorious a name as that of an inventor,” it is this.

Kemp Smith recognized that Hume made the mistake of assigning multiple uses to ‘feeling’ and ‘sentiment.’<sup>61</sup> We need to track these uses. In *Book 3*, where moral distinctions derive from feelings of pleasure and pain, the contrast is with beliefs about relations of ideas or matters of fact. In *Book 1*, where beliefs in matters of fact derive from a “feeling” of vivacity induced by custom or association, the contrast is with the products of a putative faculty of intellectual insight. Garrett writes that this sort of distinction between impressions of reflection and liveliness “is not to Loeb’s purpose, for *either* kind of felt response is sufficient to serve as the basis for a Humean ‘sense’ (as too, of course, are impressions of sensation)” (“Replies,” section 3). Agreed, if “senses” are identified with “primitive capacities to have specific kinds of felt mental response”: sensations—“visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile”—due to the “external senses” (*Hume*, 118; see also 97); also “a ‘sense of beauty’ . . . and a ‘moral sense’” (*Hume*, 118; see also 97); and also the “sense of probability, . . . the capacity to feel liveliness, in varying degrees, in having ideas” (*Hume*, 137; see also 162). The issue, however, is not whether humans possess a primitive capacity to experience liveliness or vivacity; it is whether those responses set their own standard.

Much as Kemp Smith’s interpretation evacuates the distinction between judgments derived from sentiment and judgments of matters of fact, Garrett’s interpretation assimilates concepts that are merely associated with standards for judgment to concepts that are robustly sense-based. This dilution of the concept SENSE-BASED results in the collapse of the arguments to show that a point of convergence determines the standard for judgments of probability and that judgments issuing from that standard are resistant to global error. Such is my view. I have no expectation of convergence; readers will want to evaluate Garrett’s enormously rich, methodical, and resourceful book for themselves.

## NOTES

I am grateful to Don Garrett for dialogue on multiple occasions about themes in *Hume*. I have also benefitted from discussion with Matthew Evans, Jim Joyce, and Lewis Powell.

1 This paper descends from my “Setting the Standard: Comments on Don Garrett’s *Hume*,” comments based on a manuscript of Garrett’s book. In the interest of advancing

discussion, I also refer—with Garrett's generous permission—to his "Replies to Loeb's 'Standard' Questions."

2 Garrett distances himself from Kemp Smith in two respects. He disagrees with Kemp Smith's thesis about the order of composition of Books 1 and 3 (*Hume*, 117) and thinks his claim that Hume rejects "evidence" in favor of feeling overstated (*Hume*, 118). In fact, Kemp Smith himself was conflicted on this point. See my "What is Worth Preserving?" esp. section 4.

3 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.

4 I have attempted a fuller account of Hume's standard of moral judgment in "Another Look," section 1, esp. 1.3–1.4.

5 The argument for these principles (*Hume*, 153–54, 160–61) depends upon three assumptions: first, that belief is a lively idea; second, that truth—an idea's "agreement" with, its conformity or correspondence to, the objects it represents—is fully analyzable in terms of the conjunction ( $\{p\}$  and  $p$ ); and third, that if one has a lively idea of  $\{p\}$  and a lively idea of  $p$ , one has a lively idea of the conjunction ( $\{p\}$  and  $p$ ). Each of these assumptions is open to question. (There is a reciprocal phenomenon of semantic *descent*—see *Hume*, 153–54, 161—where I think Garrett on firmer ground.) I am indebted to Lewis Powell for helpful discussion of ascent.

6 I avoid 'extreme skepticism'; Garrett assigns a particular meaning to this phrase (*Hume*, 217–18).

7 I follow Garrett in treating the 'Title Principle' as a proper name. Garrett advanced the principle in his *Cognition and Commitment*, 234–37, 240. There is an extensive literature.

8 Weak, but not nonexistent; the principles might help to support a preference or presumption for retaining one's beliefs, a principle of methodological conservatism.

9 Garrett thinks the issues between us on this point depend, in part, on our differing interpretations of Hume's account of belief. If, as I see it, belief is a steady disposition to mental and behavioral manifestations—not a lively idea—"semantic ascent [is] a stiffer climb" ("Replies," section 2). This is right, but even Garrett's traditional interpretation of Hume on belief will need to accommodate the fact that ascent can be defeated.

10 Here and elsewhere (*Hume*, 166, 235), Garrett's account has affinities with reflective approval interpretations. Similarly, doubt-inducing considerations are assessed in terms of "their considered impact on the corrected and refined sense of probability itself" (*Hume*, 166). Insofar as the grounds for and psychology of approval are unspecified, "reflective approval" is an amorphous notion. Garrett is clear that the standard observer reflects on the probability of the truth of beliefs. For reflective approval, see Korsgaard, "Normativity as Reflexivity" and *Sources of Normativity*, Lecture 2; and Baier, *Progress of Sentiments*, esp. chaps. 1–5 and 12.

11 I do not discuss one doubt-inducer, Hume's claim to worry that he is unable to identify any "tie, which connects" (T 1.4.7.5; SBN 266) cause and effect (*Hume*, 222). See note 49 below.

12 This is not an apt formulation of the conclusion of the Berkelian argument. A "body" is an object with a continued and distinct existence (*Hume*, 98) and Garrett takes Hume to hold that perceptions themselves can be extended (see my section 4). If so, for all the Berkelian argument shows, an extended *perception* might be a "body." Hume's target is *matter* (T 1.4.4.9, 1.4.7.4; SBN 229, 266). The term 'matter' does not appear in Garrett's discussion of the Berkelian argument. In this section, however, I adhere to his terminology.

13 Garrett thinks that Hume does not accept the premise that whatever is inconceivable is impossible ("Replies," n4). I think Hume implicitly accepts this principle within his statement of the Berkelian argument. He writes, "'tis impossible to conceive extension, but as compos'd of parts, endow'd with colour or solidity," concluding that "the simple and indivisible parts" composing extension "must be non-entities, unless conceiv'd as colour'd or solid" (T 1.4.4.8; SBN 228). In any event, Garrett thinks Hume would distinguish between inconceivability *tout court* and inconceivability by us; other beings might possess ideas we lack (see "Replies," n4). This helps pave the way to Garrett's second response to the Berkelian doubt-inducer I discuss in the next paragraph in the text.

14 Without the second ellipsis: "as *whatever* extended qualities allow bodies to be extended." I am assuming that the first occurrence of 'extended' is in error.

15 Garrett's passing discussions of Hume's "concept empiricism" (*Hume*, 3, 44, 77, 143, 170, 208, 318, 322, 327, 331) would scarcely lead one to suspect that there is a pronounced tendency in Hume to employ semantic empiricism to support *arguments to meaninglessness*. Hume's position on "relative ideas" is highly contested. I am sympathetic with the approach in Stanford, "Manifest Connection." See also my "Meaningless Beliefs."

16 I see Garrett's response to the Berkelian argument as an attempt to make room for his position that double existence is Hume's "own considered view" (*Hume*, 104). See also my section 4 and note 29 below.

17 Garrett maintains, "we can reconstruct the reason" why the seeming triviality of vivacity should induce doubt "with reasonable confidence" (*Hume*, 219). Perhaps, but what Hume means by "trivial"—psychological weakness, metaphysical contingency, unreliability, or epistemic deficiency—is controversial.

18 Familiar, but not universal. Janet Broughton takes the skeptical considerations to have the stronger pull. See her "Inquiry." Also, perspectivalist and contextualist interpretations (my section 3) cannot attribute mitigated skepticism to Hume. For interpretations opting for mitigated skepticism, see Passmore, *Hume's Intentions*, chap. 7; Williams, "Unity"; Fogelin, *Hume's Skeptical Crisis*, chap. 8; and Campbell, "Surprise Twist." (I think this line of interpretation is much more promising for the first *Enquiry* than for the *Treatise*. See my "Another Look," section 4.3.)

19 It is puzzling that Garrett takes this route. In his discussion of judgments about CAUSATION, the existence of "multiple distinct and incommensurable bodies of

evidence" (*Hume*, 141) provides a rationale for disagreement about degrees of probability owing to blameless diversity (*Hume*, 142). But in Garrett's interpretation, there is *agreement* in the standard point of view that ordinary beliefs substantially overcome the doubt-inducers.

20 See, for example, Laird, *Human Nature*, 103; Hookway, *Skepticism*, 179; and Singer, "Nature Breaks Down," 237–38.

21 Garrett finds evidence in *A Letter from a Gentleman* that Hume does not endorse the intense view (*Hume*, 234). In this letter, written a half dozen years after the *Treatise* in the context of Hume's fight for an Edinburgh professorship, downplaying any "scepticism" suited his purposes (see *Hume*, 19). Garrett perhaps also sees *Treatise* 3.3.3.6 (SBN 621) as evidence (*Hume*, 167).

22 See Fogelin, "Garrett on Consistency."

23 See Williams, *Unnatural Doubts*, esp. 2–10 and 350–60.

24 I elaborate these themes, perhaps somewhat more than Garrett, in *Stability and Justification*, section 4.5.

25 See my "Another Look," section 2.4.

26 Michael Williams adopts a close cousin of this position. Whereas Garrett focuses on *standards* of judgment, Williams focuses on consensus in *belief*; and whereas Garrett focuses on all humankind, Williams focuses on the learned. Thus, for Williams, Hume identifies justified belief with the consensus that emerges in the (very) long term *within the community of inquirers*. We might call these "Peircean" views—not of truth, but of justification. See Williams, "Unity." For reservations, adapted below, see my "Another Look," section 4.4.

27 For detailed discussion, see my "Epistemological Commitment," esp. section 5.

28 For development of this idea, see my "Epistemological Commitment."

29 Acceptance of a double existence view is "admittedly inevitable" (*Hume*, 105). Not psychologically inevitable, not for the vulgar; Garrett's point must be that the double existence view is inevitable in logical space: "it is hard to avoid the conclusion that [Hume's] own considered opinion is an instance of the philosophical view" (*Hume*, 104). I do not think Hume accepts *any* account of "body"; the joint impact of 1.4.2 and 1.4.4 is to leave the ontological foundation of natural philosophy in shambles—all the more reason to turn to the science of the mind. See "Another Look," section 4.2.

30 I consider Hume's opting for this third option highly unlikely. See my "Naturalisms," 77–78.

31 References to Hume's *A Natural History of Religion* are cited in the text as "NHR," followed by section and paragraph. Garrett seems to imply that monotheism's postulation of subordinate deity-like figures between God and humans is a stable outcome (*Hume*, 286); I read NHR 8.2 as claiming that this is a conflicted and unstable stopgap.

32 I espoused a view of this sort in "Another Look," sections 2.3 and 4.1.

33 In these passages, Garrett restricts the regularities to "*constant* conjunctions" (emphasis added), a restriction that can seem to exclude the probability of causes from

“probable reasoning.” (Maybe Garrett is thinking that in the idealized point of view, all information is in, so that in light of Hume’s determinism only constant conjunctions are in play. See *Hume*, 131.) My formulation relaxes this requirement.

34 The structure of *Treatise* 1.4.2 dictates against treating Identity Misattribution as a sub-operation “of the senses”; Hume rejects “the SENSES” and “REASON” as the sources of the belief in body at paragraphs 3–13 and 14, respectively, driving him to turn to “the IMAGINATION”—the unreasoning imagination—beginning at the close of paragraph 14. The discussion of constancy is wholly proper to the subsequent material in *Treatise* 1.4.2.

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

36 I owe the connection noted in the text to Edwin Curley. For additional detail, see my “Epistemological Commitment,” 312–13.

37 In the *Abstract*, “No matter of fact can be *proved* but from its cause or its effect” (T Abs. 21; SBN 654, emphasis added); “The existence . . . of any being can only be *proved* by arguments from its cause or its effect” (EHU 12.29; SBN164, emphasis added). Garrett might contend that these claims simply reflect Hume’s stipulation about the meaning of the term ‘proof’ (see *Hume*, 95). I am dubious that in the *Abstract* and first *Enquiry* Hume is using ‘proved’ in the technical sense of *Treatise* 1.3.11.2 (SBN 124).

38 Garrett maintains that *Treatise* 1.3.6 is directed “at establishing a causal claim about the operation of probable reasoning” (*Hume*, 180), “not about whether a normative justification for [probable inferences] exists” (*Hume*, 182). Although finding in Hume the causal theory of *knowledge* is consistent with this interpretation, it puts pressure on it. See my “Psychology,” sections 2–5. Garrett’s discussion at *Hume*, 184–86 mounts a response.

39 For a recent discussion, see Schmitt, *Hume’s Epistemology*, esp. sections 9.5–11. Garrett offers an ingenious explanation of the “monstrous offspring” passage (*Hume*, 102–103), but he needs to explain away much more textual data to make his case.

40 Garrett might observe that this propensity must be “irresistible, permanent, and universal” in its operation to produce the belief in body—since that belief is inevitable apart from highly reflective moments—but not for the beliefs in substrata. But what would explain the differential psychological features of the propensity in the different cases? This is one aspect of the interpretive dilemma. See my *Stability and Justification*, section 5.6.

41 Immerwahr, “Failure” and “Skeptic’s Progress.”

42 For a powerful case more congenial to Garrett’s viewpoint, that “trivial” propensities are essential to Hume’s constructive purposes, see Williams, “Unity,” esp. sections 4–5.

43 Special thanks to Matt Evans for help in my effort to see through these matters.

44 Passages to the same effect include *Treatise* 3.1.1.26, 3.1.2.3 (SBN 469, 471) and second *Enquiry* 9.5 (SBN 272). (References to Hume's second *Enquiry* are to *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Beauchamp, cited in the text as "EPM" followed by section and paragraph numbers, and to the *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Selby-Bigge and Nidditch, cited in the text as "SBN" followed by page number.) Garrett does not cite any of the specific passages I quote in the text or cite in this note, save *Treatise* 3.1.1.26, which he reads as weaker than the more semantic or constitutive claim I think consonant with the other passages in my inventory (*Hume*, 253).

45 This reading helps explain well-known shortfall in Hume's argument that reason alone cannot excite passion or produce action (T 2.3.3.1, 3.1.1.6; SBN 413, 457). Why not, if "any thing may be the cause or effect of any thing" (T 1.4.5.32; SBN 249–50)? My answer is that Hume's point is that reason, unlike pleasure and pain, is not *essentially* motivating. Garrett has a different answer: Hume "treats his doctrine that reason alone cannot move the will as a substantive claim about the causal origins of volitions" (*Hume*, 113).

46 This formulation closely follows Mark Johnston. See, for example, his "Response-dependence and Judgment-dependence," 143.

47 For a helpful survey of response-dependence for non-specialists, see Haukioja, "Different Notions."

48 Garrett discusses Humean projection only in connection with CAUSATION. The doctrine of projection—though not the terminology—is front and center in the Kemp Smith interpretation. See my "Kemp Smith," section 5. A full assessment of Garrett's book would consider the impact of his not emphasizing projection in other contexts.

49 The surprising claim that CAUSATION is sense-based will, and should, generate controversy. I put this concept to the side. Hume's treatment of causality has distinctive complexities and has little impact on the line of argument from chapters 4 and 5 to chapter 7.

50 There are similar implications for the Kemp Smith interpretation. See my "Introduction" to *Reflection and Stability*, section 12.

51 I put to the side Garrett's argument (*Hume*, 142) based on *Treatise* 1.3.11.8 (SBN 127). I believe the material Garrett cites clearly distinctive to the probability of *chances*, where Hume is providing a naturalistic account of seemingly *a priori* judgments of probability.

52 See Kemp Smith, 66, 387, 551, for *Treatise* 1.3.8.12 and Kemp Smith, 362 for *Treatise* 1.4.1.8. Kemp Smith does not cite these passages in the 1905 articles in *Mind* that grew into the book. I maintain that the sentimentalist theory of belief is an accretion to Kemp Smith's original interpretation. See my "Kemp Smith," esp. section 5.

53 Smith, "Hume's Intentions," esp. 65, 70, and section 3.

54 For additional discussion, see my "Kemp Smith," esp. 787–88.

55 In the ellipsis, Hume exempts "knowledge," that is, demonstrative knowledge of the sort discussed in *Treatise* 1.3.1.

- 56 For detailed discussion, see my “Epistemological Commitment,” esp. section 3.
- 57 See Craig, *Mind of God*, chaps. 1–2.
- 58 Garrett will of course reject these claims. For a fuller development, see my *Stability and Justification*, section 2.2–3.
- 59 See my “Argument about Induction,” 329.
- 60 At *Treatise* 1.4.1.9, Hume backpedals in light of the worry that belief would be subverted “even upon my hypothesis” (SBN 184) about the nature of belief.
- 61 See Kemp Smith, 11–12, 44, 447, 547–49. For additional discussion, see my “Kemp Smith,” esp. 788–89.

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