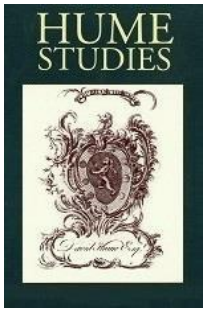

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STEFANIE ROCKNAK

§1 Response to Baxter

First, let me note that I agree with one of Donald Baxter's opening claims, namely, that Hume often uses the word "object" to include perceptions. Indeed, my entire book is devoted to showing as much. In particular, I show that we must distinguish between three distinct ways in which Hume explains the psychological process whereby we conceptualize an object, or a body. In all three processes, it turns out that objects, or bodies, are perceptions. In particular, they are imagined ideas, and so, in no case, are they mind-independent things. These three processes are: the vulgar process, the philosophical process, and the Humean process.

Very briefly, we may distinguish these processes as follows: 1) The vulgar *imagine* that objects are identical to impressions. 2) The philosophers, in virtue of making a reasoned rejection of the vulgar position, *imagine* that objects are mind independent and are the causes of our perceptions. However, they are unaware that they are imagining objects. Instead, they think that reason, and reason alone, shows that objects exist as mind-independent entities. 3) Hume thinks that we always *imagine* that objects are the "invariable and uninterrupted" causes of our perceptions; this is a condition of possibility for almost all thought, including our ability to reason. In this very general respect, we may refer to this as a transcendental conception of objects.

However, unfortunately, in the course of his remarks, Baxter does not explicitly acknowledge these distinctions (that is, 1–3 above), both in regard to my reading of Hume, as well as in regard to his own interpretation. Doing so highlights a very significant disagreement between the two of us—in addition to our disagreement about "steadfast objects."

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For instance, on the second page of his remarks, after sketching my position regarding the Humean transcendental position on objects, Baxter writes: "I myself do not see how the vulgar could feel the pull of this question . . . in my view the idea that bodies cause impressions is much further downstream when the philosophers get into the picture" (Baxter, "Comments").[1] However, as noted above, I address at length in my book how the transcendental position is related to (and distinct from) both the vulgar and philosophical position. In particular, as far as the vulgar are concerned, they never consciously "feel the pull of this question." According to my reading, it would make sense to say that *none* of us, including the vulgar, "feel the pull" of this question—rather, almost unconsciously, imagining ideas of objects is something that we must all do, almost immediately it seems, in order to function at all. More specifically, to even think that impressions are identical to "objects" (as the vulgar do), we must first have some idea of what an "object" is such that we mistakenly identify "it" with impressions; in other words, we need what Bennett would call an "objectivity concept."[2]

With these general remarks in mind, let me now address some of the more specific claims that Baxter makes, beginning with Hume's notion of "reality."

§1.1 Reality

Baxter writes: "Rocknak takes [Hume's] first system of realities to consist of impressions and memories of impressions and takes the second system of realities to consist of transcendentally imagined causes of the first system" (Baxter, "Comments"). However, this is not quite what is going on in my book. Although I show that transcendentally imagined causes could not belong to the first system of reality, and so, must belong to the second system, my explanation of Hume's two systems of realities is meant to illustrate Hume's notion of *justification*. In particular, actual impressions, and memories of impressions are "real" and so, in Hume's sense of the word, are "justified." In this respect, everything in the first system of reality is justified.

Moreover, I point out at length in my book, that according to Hume, in the second system of reality, we do not necessarily use transcendental causal reasoning. Rather, we also seem to use what I call "indirect causal reasoning" as well as ordinary causation to conclude for example, that Rome exists (Rocknak, *Imagined Causes*, 57). In the former case, we can justify the "reality" of something that we have not had an impression of (for example, Rome) via the experience of a trustworthy source. As a result of understanding Hume's notion of justification, we can, ultimately, understand why some imagined causes are justified, and others are not, that is, why some are "real" and others are not. In particular, those imagined causes (that is, ideas that we imagine are invariable and uninterrupted objects) that are also imagined to cause a series of resembling impressions that we have actually had (or maybe that a trustworthy source has had) are *justified*. Meanwhile, other imagined causes are *not* justified, for instance, unicorns, substances, or primary qualities.

§1.2 Treatise Passage 1.3.2.2

Baxter, Garrett, and Marusic all make specific remarks about my reading of T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73). For the sake of organization, I will address all of their objections in this section, and after doing so, return to addressing Baxter's remarks.

First, let us consider Baxter's objections. In regard to T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73), Baxter suggests, contrary to my reading, that:

> [Hume] is in the process of arguing that only ordinary causation enables us to infer the existence of objects we are not currently sensing. When we have observed that things of one type are always accompanied by things of another type, and we have an impression something of the first type, we infer the existence of the second type that we are not currently sensing. (Baxter, "Comments")

However, I explicitly address this aspect of ordinary causation[3] and the possibility of applying this notion of causation to T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73) at some length in my book (see for instance [Q5] in chapter 5 and also see chapter 2). Accordingly, I summarize some of my thoughts regarding ordinary causation and T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73) below.

But before I do so, we must realize that in my book, I note that T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73) is not the paradigmatic case for imagining what I call transcendental causes. Rather, I write: "The reader should note that this chapter merely serves as an introduction to Hume's theory of imagined causes and perfect identity, while chapters 6,7, and 8 provide us with more fully developed version" (Rocknak, *Imagined Causes*, 91).

With these caveats in mind let us now consider T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73) in its entirety:

> All kinds of reasoning consist in nothing but a comparison, and a discovery of those relations, either constant or inconstant, which two or more objects bear to each other. This comparison we may make, either when both the objects are present to the senses, or when neither of them is present, or when only one. When both the objects are present to the senses along with the relation, we call this perception rather than reasoning; nor is there in this case any exercise of the thought, or any action, properly speaking, but a mere passive admission of the impressions through the organs of sensation. According to this way of thinking, we ought not to receive as reasoning any of the observations we may make concerning identity, and the relations of time and place; since in none of them the mind can go beyond what is immediately present to the senses, either to discover the real existence or the relations of objects. It is only causation, which produces such a connexion, as to give us assurance from the existence or action of one object, that it was followed or preceded by any other existence or action; nor can the other two relations be ever made use of in reasoning, except so far as they either affect or are affected by it. There is nothing in any objects to perswade us, that they are either always remote or always contiguous; and when from experience and observation we discover, that

> their relation in this particular is invariable, we, always conclude there is some secret cause, which separates or unites them. The same reasoning extends to identity. We readily suppose an object may continue individually the same, though several times absent from and present to the senses; and ascribe to it an identity, notwithstanding the interruption of the perception, whenever we conclude, that if we had kept our eye or hand constantly upon it, it would have conveyed an invariable and uninterrupted perception. But this conclusion beyond the impressions of our senses can be founded only on the connexion of cause and effect; nor can we otherwise have any security, that the object is not changed upon us, however much the new object may resemble that which was formerly present to the senses. Whenever we discover such a perfect resemblance, we consider, whether it be common in that species of objects; whether possibly or probably any cause cou'd operate in producing the change and resemblance; and according as we determine concerning these causes and effects, we form our judgment concerning the identity of the object. (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73)

In particular, here Hume writes: "There is nothing in any objects to perswade us that they are always remote or contiguous" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73). Note that in my book, there is a typo in my citation of this passage that affected my reading. I mistakenly wrote "object" rather than "objects." Once I caught this typo (after the book went to press), I realized that it makes more sense to conclude that Hume is talking about at least *two* objects here, where they are remote and contiguous from *each other*. This is opposed to the interpretation I offer in my book, where I argue that an object is contiguous with itself (and thus, admits of a certain kind of unity) and is distinct from (remote from) our perception.

However, in no way does this amendment affect the deeper implications of my interpretation. For, Hume explains here, we must conclude that there is a "secret cause" that is responsible for any contiguity and remoteness that might hold between objects. Immediately afterwards, he writes: "*The same reasoning* extends to identity" (emphasis added). That is, and crucial to note, Hume is setting up an *analogy* here: Just as a "secret cause" is responsible for either the "remoteness" or "contiguity" between at least two objects, when we observe a "perfect resemblance" that obtains of "a species of objects" (let us refer to that species as "B"), we conclude that some unobserved (and thus, "secret") object (let us refer to this "object" as "A") caused that resemblance. This phenomenon—where we speculate that an unobserved object (A) causes, or is responsible for the resemblance that obtains between certain sets of resembling perceptions (B)—captures, I claim, the spirit of Hume's notion of identity.

However, if we interpret this passage as Baxter suggests, then the idea is that we may, using ordinary causal reasoning, infer the identity of an unobserved "object" (Y) from the existence of an observed "object" (X); that is, the existence of (X) causes us to believe in the existence/identity of (Y), primarily because we have *experienced* (X) and (Y) constantly conjoined. However, as I explain in my book, this could not be what Hume has in mind in T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73) regarding identity (Rocknak, *Imagined Causes*, 101). For Hume explicitly tells us in T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73) that we imagine a cause that we have *never* sensed (nor does

it resemble anything we have ever sensed). In particular, it is "secret," and so it constitutes a conclusion that "lies beyond the impressions of our senses." In particular, we think that this analogous "secret cause" has the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness, properties that we know are *imagined* (thanks to all of T 1.4.2, but particularly T 1.4.2.24, 1.4.2.29–30, 1.4.6.6; SBN 199, 200–201, 253–55).

And thus, quite simply, we could never have had an impression of such a cause such that we have observed it constantly conjoined with anything else; again, this is precisely why it is "secret."

With this in mind, let me now respond to one of Jennifer Marusic's comments regarding my interpretation of T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73). In particular, similar to Baxter, she asks why this passage does not pertain to a "regular old cause" (Marusic, "Comments"), as opposed to what I identify as a transcendental cause. But this question was answered just above: this passage does not pertain to a "regular old cause" because we never have an impression of the "secret cause" discussed in T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73); nor do we have impressions of a similar kind of secret cause discussed in T 1.4.2.15–24, 1.4.2.25–30, 1.4.6 (SBN 194–99, 199–201, 251–63). I explain how and why this is the case in chapters 5, 6, 7 and 10 in my book.

Marusic also writes: "Hume seems here to be describing a kind of causal reasoning that depends on *our already having a belief in body*, rather than explaining how we come to think of bodies in the first place" (Marusic, "Comments", emphasis added). She cites the following line from T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73) as evidence: "we conclude, that if we had kept our eye or hand constantly upon it, it wou'd have convey'd an invariable and uninterrupted perception."

However, I do not think that this is the case. In the immediately following sentence, Hume writes that we determine a "conclusion beyond the impressions of our senses." Moreover, it is a conclusion that "can be founded only on the connexion of cause and effect." That is, our notion of identity (that is, this "conclusion") which "lies beyond the senses," is a *product*, or a *result* that comes about *thanks* to this peculiar kind of causal reasoning. Thus, this causal reasoning could not presuppose our notion of identity. Rather, it *produces* our notion of identity such that we imagine that an object is invariable and uninterrupted. Moreover, if T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73) presupposed our understanding of identity, we would have to wonder why Hume would present it as explanation *of* identity.

With this in mind, let us now consider Don Garrett's thoughts on T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73). First, I need to stress that I do not think that Garrett is correct to underline what he takes to be the *difference* between contiguity and remoteness vs. uninterruptedness and invariability such that (as I read his interpretation) there is no analogy that holds between these pairs of properties regarding the role of "secret causes." And thus, when Garrett claims that a "secret cause" only pertains to spatial relations, that is, to contiguity and remoteness, I think that he is overlooking Hume's claim that "*the same reasoning extends to identity*;" that is, Garrett is overlooking the clear analogy that Hume is setting up here.

Garrett also offers a competing interpretation of what Hume means by "species of objects" in T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73). In particular, Garrett explains that each resembling member of the species would belong to a "kind." For example, a snowflake would be a kind of object that

manifested itself in resembling particulars. Accordingly, Garrett's reasoning seems to be, if I perceive a snowflake at time T1, and then another similar snowflake (or the same snowflake again)[4] at time T2, then I know that they both belong to the same kind.

However, it seems to me that this presupposes that we already know that particular things, for instance, snowflakes, are things, that is, have an identity, such that they belong to a "kind." Moreover, it seems fairly clear that Hume is attempting to explain how we come to understand the identity of *particular* things in this passage, not general things, that is, "kinds." Note, however, that in my book, I argue that Hume's account of particular things is related to his account of general things (that is, abstract ideas). For when we (justifiably) imagine a cause, we select a member of the species of resembling objects, and imagine that is the invariable and uninterrupted cause of the set. In virtue of doing so, a particular member effectively "calls to mind" the rest of the set (or most of it) (see Rocknak, *Imagined Causes*, 148–49, 227–28).

Relatedly, Garrett claims in regard to T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73) that "here as everywhere else up to this point in the *Treatise* (until 1.4.2) Hume takes it for granted that our senses inform us about the existence and relations of (continued and distinct) bodies" (Garrett, "Comments"). However, I would need to see the textual evidence that is necessary to substantiate this interpretation. Also, I find it odd that Hume would assume that the senses legitimately provide us with a concept of objects/identity and then completely overturn this account in T 1.4.2.4–11 (SBN 191–92) where he writes: "We may therefore, conclude with certainty, that the opinion of a continu'd and of a distinct existence *never* arises from the senses" (T 1.4.2.11; SBN 192 emphasis added). And of course, Hume also rejects the notion that the senses provide us with a concept of identity/objects when discussing the vulgar (T 1.4.2.31–43; SBN 201–209). Thus, if Garrett is correct that T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73) presupposes that our notion of an object/identity is provided by the senses, then Hume must be contradicting himself in T 1.4.2.11 (SBN 192) and in T 1.4.2.31–43 (SBN 201–209). Or, somehow, Hume just changed his mind in these later passages. Either way, this shift in Hume's thought would have to be accounted for by Garrett.

Finally, Garrett asserts in regard to my interpretation of T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73) that continuity and distinctness are relations to the mind, while invariableness and uninterruptedness are non-relational features that may be possessed by either perceptions or bodies (Garrett, "Comments"). However, I think that this claim is problematic in three respects: a.) There is at least one other instance (in addition to, I claim, T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73)) where Hume uses these pairs of terms somewhat interchangeably, that is, T 1.4.2.33–36 (SBN 203–205). B.) Garrett seems to suggest that impressions can be invariable and uninterrupted, that is, "steadfast" in the Baxterian sense (which I disagree with; see below). C.) Garrett suggests that according to Hume, there are invariable and uninterrupted mind-independent bodies. Garrett seems to believe that Hume was a realist in regard to bodies. Indeed, b.) and c.) might constitute the most important points of disagreement between myself and Garrett.

§ 1.3 Constancy and Coherence

Let us now return to Baxter's comments, particularly, his comments on the relations of constancy and coherence. First however, it will be helpful to sketch the basic structure of T 1.4.2.

In the opening passages—T 1.4.2.1–14 (SBN 187–93)—Hume explains why neither the senses nor reason "produces the opinion" (T 1.4.2.2; SBN 187–88) of continued and distinct existences. Rather "that opinion must be entirely owed to the imagination" (T 1.4.2.14; SBN 193). Immediately following, that is, in T 1.4.2.15–24 (SBN 194–99), he discusses how this is possible—this is the "constancy and coherence" section. Immediately following this, to better explain the role that constancy plays (and how it invokes the vulgar position), Hume launches into his four-part system. Part 1 consists of a discussion of his *principium individuationis* (T 1.4.2.26–30; SBN 200–201). In Part 2, he dismisses what, I argue comprises Version I of the vulgar position (T 1.4.2.31–36; SBN 201–205), while Part 3 consists of an explanation of Version II of the vulgar position (T 1.4.2.36–40; SBN 205–208).[5] Meanwhile, Part 4 consists of a discussion of why we might believe in Version II of the vulgar position (T 1.4.2.41–42; SBN 208–209). Immediately following this, he discusses the philosophical position (T 1.4.2.43–57; SBN 208–209), where we come up with ideas thanks to the imagination AND reason; he also makes some skeptical remarks here.

However, as noted in my opening remarks, I do not think that Baxter effectively distinguishes the vulgar position from Hume's position. In particular, I argue that in the initial passages of his discussion of constancy and coherence, Hume seems to mistakenly suggest that we can imagine impressions. I say "mistakenly" because Hume makes it fairly clear in T 1.1.3 that we do not imagine impressions—we only imagine ideas. Indeed, if we *could* imagine impressions, Hume's distinction between memory and imagination would be significantly compromised. For recall that according to Hume, anything we remember must retain the order in which it was perceived, while this is not the case with the imagination. Moreover, imagined ideas, for the most part, are less vivid than ideas that are based on impressions.

However, if we could imagine impressions and then remember them, it seems we could not, on this account, effectively distinguish between the memory and the imagination. For instance, I could *imagine* an impression of a unicorn dancing on my lawn, and then remember that impression. Because this remembered idea is, technically, based on an (imagined) impression, it would seem to be as vivid as most ideas based on impressions, and thus, it would be as credible, or as "real" as most ideas based on impressions. This would clearly have a significant effect on Hume's conception of reality. And thus, it just makes more sense to conclude that Hume is being rather careless on T 1.4.2.15–16 (SBN 194).

However, to suggest otherwise, and to support his case that Hume *does* think we can imagine impressions, Baxter cites T 1.4.2.37ff (SBN 205–206). However, in this passage, Hume is pretending to speak as the vulgar would—in other words, he is clearly articulating the vulgar position, not his own. And thus, we would be hard pressed to say that this passage can be used to support any passage where Hume is *not* speaking from a vulgar point of view—as he is in the constancy and coherence section of 1.4.2. Moreover, even when in a vulgar frame

of mind, we do *not*, according to Hume, imagine impressions. Rather, we imagine ideas; I explain why this the case at length in my book in chapter 8.

§ 1.4 Steadfast Objects

According to Baxter, a "steadfast object" is "a single thing coexisting with a succession of things" (Baxter, "Comments"). In brief, this amounts to claiming that according to Hume, we may perceive invariable and uninterrupted impressions. In response to my criticism of his interpretation (Rocknak, *Imagined Causes*, 125–38), Baxter begins by claiming that I use the Humean terms "'constant,' 'uninterrupted,' invariable,' 'continued,' and 'steadfast' interchangeably" (Baxter, "Comments"). Relatedly, he argues that a.) I am mistaken to identify "constant" with "invariable." Rather, "constant" means "the exact resemblance of impressions in an uninterrupted succession" (Baxter, "Comments"). B.) However, Baxter explains, such a succession cannot be identified with a Baxterian "steadfast object" because on T 1.2.3.8, Hume explains that the former can produce an idea of time while the latter cannot.

In response to a.), realize that I claim that only in *some* cases may the term "constant" be used interchangeably with the term "invariable." Indeed, I explain that in some cases, "constant" means just what Baxter thinks it means. Note: "Level 1 perceptions are, indeed, 'constant' in the respect that they occur in a succession where each perception in the succession exactly *resembles* each other. As such, these perceptions do *not* appear to change, although they are interrupted" (Rocknak, *Imagined Causes*, 134).

However, in other cases, contrary to Baxter's reading, I do argue that "constant" seems to mean invariable. In some cases, this pertains to the way that we perceive, that is, constantly perceiving seems to mean invariably perceiving (as is the case, I argue, in T 1.3.2.2 (SBN 73); note: "if we had kept our eye constantly upon it, it would have conveyed an invariable and uninterrupted perception"), and in other cases, it pertains to the perception itself, that is, a constant perception seems to be an invariable perception (see T 1.1.5.2, 1.4.2.22–23; SBN 14, 198–99; and Rocknak, *Imagined Causes*, 134, and chapters 5 and 6).

Thus, Baxter should have addressed my interpretation of *these* passages to effectively make his case that "constant" never means "invariable." However, recall Baxter's objection b.) above. He claims that something that is "constant"—what he interprets to always be a succession of exactly resembling ideas—cannot be identified with a "steadfast" object. This is the case because according to T 1.2.3.8 (SBN 35–36), the former can produce an idea of time, while the latter cannot. Note however, that on page 137 of my book, I explicitly address T 1.2.3.8 (SBN 35–36), and in *agreement* with Baxter, I explain that the term "unchangeable" (which I argue, also seems to mean "steadfast") could not pertain to a succession of resembling impressions here, that is, something that is "constant." In still other words, in *agreement* with Baxter, I argue that "steadfast" or "unchangeable" could not mean "constant" here. Rather, "unchangeable" (that is, "steadfast") seems to pertain to what I call an imagined cause. In particular, I write:

> However, there is at least one instance where, in regard to "steadfast" or unchangeable objects, Hume does not seem to be making a distinction between successions of changeable perceptions v. successions of unchangeable perceptions (the latter being what I believe is a correct interpretation of "steadfast objects"). He writes: "Now as time is compos'd of parts, that are not co-existent; an unchangeable object, since it produces none but co-existent impressions, produces none that can give us the idea of time" (T 1.2.3.8; SBN 35–36). Given what we have seen thus far in this book, we know that if Hume is speaking of an invariable and uninterrupted object that seems to "produce" certain impressions here, he must have an imagined idea of an object in mind. Thus, here, he seems to be speaking of an imagined cause of our perceptions, which, as such, may seem to cause or "produce" co-existent impressions. For instance, if I imagine that an invariable and uninterrupted chair is causing my impressions of a chair, these impressions would seem to occur simultaneously, as I look at what at what I perceive to be the object "the chair." However, such a set of perceptions cannot, Hume tells us, inspire the idea of time; they do not change. Our imagined idea of the invariable and uninterrupted chair does not seem to change, and thus, the impressions that are allegedly caused by it do not seem to change either. As a result, Hume concludes: "consequently [the idea of time] must be deri'vd from a succession of changeable objects." (Rocknak, *Imagined Causes*, 138)

Thus, Baxter should have noted that I do address T 1.2.3.8 (SBN 35–36), and then explained why my interpretation of "unchangeable" (that is, "steadfast") is incorrect here.

Baxter then objects that contrary to my reading Hume, the term "steadfast" is also not interchangeable with the term "continued." Baxter's argument is, as I understand it: "continued" means that an object continues to exist even we are not perceiving it. In other words, continuity applies to those times we are *not* perceiving an object. However, Baxter claims, an object can be "steadfast" when we *are* perceiving it, and yet *not* continue when we are not perceiving it.

However, to make his case, Baxter once again cites Hume's explanation of the *vulgar* conception of objects, and so, I think, confuses matters. Moreover, as noted above, I explain at length in my book that even in the vulgar case, our perceptions are ultimately interrupted, despite how "steadfast" or invariable they may initially seem. In brief, this is the case regardless if we (while in a vulgar state of mind) "fix our gaze," that is, stare in one direction for a prolonged period of time. For in this case, although, our perceptions might *seem* to be invariable, ultimately, they are not. Or, as I explain in my book:

> In particular, according to Hume, when in a vulgar state of mind, we may grasp perfect identity only as the ultimate result of trying to uninterruptedly observe what we take to be an object. This occurs when "we fix our thought on any object" (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203). For instance, we might just stare at a violet for some length of time without looking away. As a result, our impression of the violet, is, it seems, virtually invariable and uninterrupted. But just "fixing our thought" does

> not quite give us an idea of perfect identity. For although it would seem to follow that any impression or corresponding idea that we have of the violet while we are "fix[ing] our thought on it," is invariable and uninterrupted, this is not the case (at least initially). Rather, Hume claims, simply due to the successive nature of all our impressions (despite how much we fix our thought), a certain discreteness obtains of the impression we "fix our thought" on and the idea have of it. This occurs as we proceed from "one moment to another" (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203), although this procession (succession) is "scarce felt" (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203). . . . Or, as Hume puts it immediately after the passage cited above: "The faculties of the mind repose themselves in a manner, and take no more exercise, than what is necessary to continue that idea, of which we were formerly possest, and which [as such, thanks to these faculties] subsists without variation or interruption" (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203; emphasis added). This means that the "faculties" of the mind, i.e., the imagination processing the idea at hand, 14 "continue[s]" that idea, e.g., the violet. Thus, contrary to Baxter (2008, p. 32), we (particularly, the vulgar) do not have an uninterrupted impression, and thus, this passage does not support Baxter's notion of a "steadfast" object. (Rocknak, *Imagined Causes*, 165–67)

Thus, to effectively make his case, Baxter should have, I think, addressed this passage from my book.

In regard to T 1.4.6.2 (SBN 251–52), Baxter objects that Hume is not claiming that we do not have perceptions that are both invariable and uninterrupted; rather, he is claiming that we do not have an impression of the self that "continue[s] invariably the same, thro' the course of our lives; since self is uppose'd to exist after that manner" (T 1.4.6.2; SBN 251–52). Moreover, Baxter continues, when Hume claims here that "They are the successive perceptions only that constitute the mind" (T 1.4.6.4; SBN 252–53), this is not inconsistent with his notion of steadfast objects. Rather, an invariable and uninterrupted object that is not a succession may be a *part* of a succession: "Being steadfast is being a single thing coexisting with a succession. It is certainly not being a single thing that exists for all eternity in a succession" (Baxter, "Comments").

I do not think though, that this is what is going on in T 1.4.6.2 (SBN 251–52), and I explicitly anticipate and address part of this objection on page 132 of my book. Here, Hume is claiming that *all* perceptions are interrupted and variable. As a result, we could not, in principle, ever have an impression of the self that is uninterrupted and invariable, *regardless* if it is a part of a succession or not. I think that Hume makes this rather clear when he writes: "there is *no* impression constant and invariable" (T 1.4.6.2; SBN 251–52; emphasis added), Indeed, as a result of this fact, Hume claims that it cannot "be from any of these impressions, or from any other that the idea of [an invariable and uninterrupted] self is deriv'd" (T 1.4.6.4; SBN 252–53). Rather, in no uncertain terms, Hume claims that we must *imagine* the idea of the self—an idea of the self that is invariable and uninterrupted, that is, admits of a perfect

identity; see at least the following passages to substantiate this reading: T 1.4.6.2, 1.4.6.5, 1.4.6.6, T 1.4.6.7, 1.4.6.8, 1.4.6.11, 1.4.6.15, 1.4.6.16, 1.4.6.18, and T 1.4.6.22 (SBN 251–63).

In short then, as explained in my book, *contra* Baxter, we do not have a sense perception (impression) of an invariable and uninterrupted self because none of our sense perceptions (impressions) are invariable and uninterrupted, even when in a vulgar state of mind.

Baxter also addresses T 2.1.4.2 (SBN 283), where Hume writes: "'Tis impossible for the mind to fix itself steadily upon one idea for any considerable amount of time." Baxter explains that this passage "must be put in contrast" with a passage from Book 1, namely, "Hume's discussion of a "man 'strongly occupy'd with one thought." (T 1.2.3.7; SBN 35). The latter passage leads Baxter to conclude that it is possible, according to Hume, to have an invariable and uninterrupted sense perception, namely, one that occurs as result of "fixing" or "occupy[ing]" ourselves with one thought. He once again cites T 1.4.2.33 (SBN 203) as evidence for this.

In response, I must say, a.) As explained above, in T 1.4.2.33 (SBN 35), Hume is discussing the *vulgar* position, not his own position on objects, and b.) even still, here Hume does *not* think that we have a sense perception of an invariable and uninterrupted object; rather it is imagined, as noted above and as explained at length in my book. Finally, c.) Baxter does not address the passages that I cite to present clear evidence that according to Hume, we never have an impression of an invariable and uninterrupted "object," regardless if that "object" is the self or not—T 1.2.3.11, 1.2.5.28–29, 1.4.2.3–11, 1.4.2.15–22, 1.4.2.27–29, 1.4.2.32–35 (SBN 37, 64–65, 188–92, 194–98, 200–201, 202–204), as well as numerous passages from T 1.4.6, cited above.

Thus, in short, I think to effectively address my position, Baxter should have 1.) shown why Hume does not distinguish between the vulgar position and his own position; 2.) shown why my explanation of the vulgar case where we seem to perceive and uninterrupted and invariable perception T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203 but do *not*, is wrong, and finally, 3.) shown why the numerous passages I have cited above do not significantly compromise the claim that according to Hume, we perceive invariable and uninterrupted impressions.

§2 Response to Garrett

Garrett divides his remarks into two sections. In the first, he sketches four "costs" that we must pay if we accept my claim that according to Hume, objects are imagined ideas. In the second section, he addresses what he takes to be an additional cost—the idea that according to my interpretation, Hume offers incompatible accounts of objects as the causes of impressions.

§2.1 The Four Costs

As Garrett sees it, if we accept my reading, we must pay the following 4 costs: [1] Hume equivocates between "five different and largely incompatible senses of the term 'object,' switching among them seemingly without warning" (Garrett, "Comments"). [2] "if we combine Rocknak's interpretive claim that *all objects are ideas* with her further interpretive claim that *all objects*

are causes of sense impressions, it seems we can infer that, for Hume, *all objects are ideas that cause sense impressions*" (Garrett, "Comments"). And thus, Garrett immediately concludes: "Yet as Hume defines his terms, any impressions that are (immediately) caused by ideas will not be impressions of sensation at all but rather 'impressions of reflection.' (T 1.1.2.1; SBN 7–8)" (ibid.). [3] Hume contradicts himself about the way in which an idea may represent an impression. [4] Bodies, or objects, are causally dependent on the mind, but this contradicts what Hume says about bodies/objects on T 1.4.2.2 (SBN 187–88).

Let me address these costs in order:

[1] *Objects as Imagined Ideas*: In my book, I do, indeed, argue that Hume uses the word "object" in multiple ways, and sometimes he does switch between them without warning. For Hume, on occasion, uses the word "object" in I) what we might call a "phenomenonalist" sense, where objects are impressions; this is the way in which the vulgar attempt to think of objects. II) The intentional sense, where objects are the "objects of thought." As such, this kind of object includes impressions, ideas, and mind-independent things, because they all can be the objects of our thoughts/ perception/ knowledge.[6] III) The realist reading, where the term "object" simply means a mind-independent thing. IV) Objects are imagined causes of our perceptions. V) Objects can also be understood as what I call "proto-objects." These are the impressions and/or the ideas that exactly represent impressions (and so, are not imagined); to some degree, this characterization overlaps with the phenomenalist sense of objects.

However, although Hume does, I argue, switch between these terms, this does not mean that he has presented us with an entirely inconsistent system in the *Treatise*. Rather, it is just very complicated, and it is our job to sort through that complexity as best we can. In my book, I provide extensive evidence for each sense in which Hume uses the term "object." Thus, to reject my taxonomy, we would need to carefully consider that evidence, which Garrett does not do here.

[2] Crucial to note, I never argue in my book that according to Hume "all objects are causes of sense impressions" (Garrett, "Comments"), and nor do I claim, or infer, that according to Hume, "all objects are ideas that cause impressions" (ibid.). Rather, I take pains to explain throughout my book that we *imagine* that our ideas of *some* objects (namely, those with a perfect identity) cause sense impressions. And thus, the title of my book: *Imagined Causes*. Accordingly, at no point do I argue, or infer, that ideas *actually* and immediately cause impressions that are not impressions of reflection. I am afraid that this is simply a misreading on Garrett's part.

[3] *Representation*. In my book, I argue that in Book 1 of the *Treatise*, Hume did not think that what contemporary scholars refer to as the "Copy Principle" means that ideas are *identical* to impressions in all respects except for how "vivacious" they are. For, according to this reading, an idea of red square would literally be red, and would literally be square. Similarly, the idea of the smell of a rose, would, literally, smell. I argue that saying as much would put Hume in a rather difficult position. It would mean, for instance, that thinking about say, sitting in the sun, could literally entail getting a sunburn, although a less vivacious one. Similarly, thinking about jumping off the Empire State building would entail dying, but

somehow, in a less vivacious way. Garrett's response, as I understand it, is as follows: in these cases, I conflate the bodily *effects* of impressions (for example, a sunburn and dying) with the qualities of the impressions. Ideas, for example, the ideas of say, sitting in the sun or jumping off the Empire State Building, he argues, may or may not incur the same *effects* that impressions do, for example, respectively, sunburns and dying.

However, there may be an issue with my examples here. Rather than saying "sitting in the sun," I could have used the examples of "getting a sunburn" and "experiencing significant bodily harm." In these cases, on Garrett's account, if I remember these impressions, I should re-experience all of their qualities, but in a less vivacious way, which entails their bodily effects, since these impressions *constitute* bodily effects; they *are* the impressions of effects. Thus, I should experience a less-vivacious sunburn, and less-vivacious bodily harm (which could put me in the hospital, nevertheless). Similarly, in my book, I also use the example of the impression of getting warm, which Garrett does not mention in his remarks. For if I remember the impression of getting warm, I should, on Garrett's account, literally get warm (although in a less vivacious way). And thus, realistically, no one would freeze to death, they need only recall those times they sat by a fire, and so on.

Moreover, Garrett cites the following line from my book: "Thinking *about* an impression neither is, nor causes us to have an impression. Thus, ideas are qualitatively different from impressions" (Rocknak, *Imagined Causes*, 26). Garrett responds: "But this is a *non sequitur*; there is no reason why an idea need bring with it the additional vivacity required to make it into an impression. One might equally well argue that, since having an impression does often "cause us to have" an idea of the impression, ideas are not qualitatively different from impressions" (Garrett, "Comments").

True enough. I am not however, trying to say that in every instance, if (X) causes (Y), then (X) is not qualitatively distinct from (Y). Rather, the point is Hume's. Recall the passage that inspired this discussion: "To give a child an idea of scarlet or orange, of sweet or bitter, I present the objects, or in other words, convey him these impressions; but proceed not so absurdly, as to endeavor to produce the impressions by exiting the ideas" (T 1.1.1.8; SBN 5). In other words, according to Hume, it is "absurd" to say that an idea of say, sweetness, will "produce," that is, cause us to have a sweet sensation, or an impression of sweetness. This suggests that having an idea of sweetness is *not the same as having an impression* (an actual sensation) of sweetness, even if that is a "less-vivacious" impression/sensation. Rather, an idea *represents* an impression without *being* an impression. In other words, an idea is not an impression, less vivacious or not. Thus, it seems, generally speaking, that impressions are qualitatively distinct from ideas.

[4] Garrett claims that "Hume does indeed regularly claim that bodies cause sense impressions, but nowhere does he claim that bodies are also *ideas* or are *produced by the imagination*" (Garrett, "Comments"). Indeed, as I explain at length in my book, Hume does occasionally speak as if he is a realist, where mind-independent "bodies" seem to cause sense impressions, but in every instance where he does so, these remarks must be understood in context. As a result of doing so, we see that they do not necessarily commit Hume to a realist

position. In particular, not only do these remarks need to be understood in regard to their immediate textual context, they must be understood in juxtaposition to claims like: "[impressions of sensation] arise in the soul originally, from unknown causes" (T 1.1.3.1; SBN 8–9). That is, according to Hume, we do *not* know if impressions are caused by bodies. And "[t]he only existences, of which we are certain, are *perceptions*, which being immediately present to us by consciousness, command our strongest assent and are the first foundations of all our conclusions" (T 1.4.2.47; SBN 212, emphasis added). That is, we *don't know* if "bodies" exist; but we can be certain that our perceptions exist.

Moreover, and most importantly, as I point out at length in my book, Hume repeatedly claims that our *ideas* of bodies or objects are necessarily *imagined*, regardless if we are in a vulgar, philosophical, or what I call, a transcendental state of mind. This is evidenced, in particular, by at least the following passages: T 1.4.2.14, 1.3.2.2, 1.4.2.22, 1.4.2.29, 1.4.2.32–34, 1.4.2.36, 1.4.2.47–52, 1.4.2.40, and almost all of T 1.4.6 (SBN 193, 73, 198, 200–201, 202–204, 205, 207, 212–16).

And thus, when Garrett writes, "As far as I can judge, Rocknak is led to treat Humean bodies as ideas by a well-known paragraph about "two systems [of] reality" (Garrett, "Comments")," this is surely not the case. Rather, as explained at length in my book, I conclude that Hume thought that we imagine ideas of objects, or bodies, through careful consideration of the passages noted above, *in addition to* consideration of Hume's notion of the two systems of reality. In particular, the following chapters are devoted to these passages: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

§2.2 Incompatible Accounts of Objects as Causes of Impressions

In this section, Garrett addresses in more detail the three portions of text in the *Treatise* that, I argue, support my interpretation for a transcendental account of objects. With this in mind, let me address Garrett's three broader concerns.

First, he objects that according to my interpretation, there is a conflict between the transcendental account and the philosophical account—for on the one hand, we always imagine causes, and on the other hand, we only do so in virtue of a reasoned rejection of the vulgar. And this conflict, according to Garrett, is a "cost."

I argue that this is, indeed, a conflict. In particular, in my book, I argue that the conflict between the transcendental conception of objects vs. the philosophical conception of objects manifests itself in T 1.4.6, where Hume discusses personal identity, that is, the imagined object, "the self." However, this should not come as a surprise. Recall that Hume explicitly acknowledges that his account of the "self" is flawed in the Appendix, and so, if it can be shown that this flaw occurs as a result of a conflict between the transcendental concept of the object the "self" vs. the philosophical account, then it is entirely plausible to conclude that this conflict pervades all of Book 1—cost or no cost.

However, there is another, very general way to look at this conflict, which makes it seem less problematic for Hume, and so, to some degree, addresses Garrett's (as well as Marusic's) suggestion that this tension is just too significant to accept: in order to conceive of objects

at all (that is, generate "objectivity concepts"), we must, very early on, imagine that there are continuous and distinct (or uninterrupted and invariable) causes of our impressions. From there, we naturally proceed to (mistakenly) imagine, *qua* the vulgar position, that objects are impressions (while all the while retaining our legitimate objectivity concepts, such that we can even make this mistake). Following, we reject the vulgar position, and become "philosophers" where, using reason, we come to believe that objects are mind-independent causes. However, *all the while,* our notion of an "object" is being informed by our initial transcendental conception of objects such that we can conceptualize the fact that the vulgar have the wrong notion of an "object." And thus, there is no substantive conflict. However, I do not push for this reading in my book, although I think I could have, and perhaps should have.

Second, Garrett objects that "[my reading] requires Hume to deny that persisting impressions can have "perfect identity" even when they satisfy his definition of "perfect identity" as "invariable and uniterrupt'd existence though a supposed variation of time" (T 1.4.2.30, 1.4.6.6; SBN 201, 253–55)" (Garrett, "Comments"). Here, Garrett seems to be referring to a Baxterian "steadfast object" with an appeal to the vulgar account of objects, and the section on personal identity, to support his claim. But as noted earlier, I think that Baxter's notion of "steadfast objects" is very problematic, and so, I think that Garrett's objection is likewise problematic.

Third, Garrett claims that "[my reading] requires Hume to postulate special "transcendental" forms of probable reasoning and causation that evidently do not involve or require constant conjunction, contrary to his explicit accounts of probable reasoning and causation" (Garrett, "Comments"). Yes, this is true, and I acknowledge as much in my book. This is why this is a special kind of causation, as noted by Hume. However, although this complicates our reading of Hume, I do not think, as noted earlier, that complication necessarily warrants skepticism.

Finally, let me respond to one of Garrett's more specific remarks about the three portions of the text to which I appeal to make my case. In regard to T 1.4.2.26–30 (SBN 200–201), Garrett writes: "As I read the passage . . . it makes no mention of *imagining a cause* in order to conceive of perfect identity" (Garrett, "Comments"). However, as explained at length in my book, on T 1.4.2.29 (SBN 200–201), Hume tells us that his account of identity here is *analogous* to his conception of time (and thus, he writes, we must "have recourse to it.") And so, I write in my book:

> To get around the fact that unity and number appear to be disparate concepts, we must, Hume asserts, conclude that the idea of identity is imagined, analogous to how we think of time in terms of objects [1.4.2.29]. In this respect, an "unchangeable" object somehow "participates" (emphasis added) in "the changes of co-existent objects;" in particular, in our changing "perceptions." Thus, to properly understand this analogy, we must pause to recover Hume's thoughts on time in 1.2.5, "The same subject continu'd." (Rocknak, *Imagined Causes,* 125)

Thus, in my book, I explain at length how time may be understood as an imagined cause, where I examine, in particular, T 1.2.5.29 (SBN 65) (where Hume discusses objects observed

at five o'clock and six o'clock). Here is where we see the evidence for imagined causes that Garrett claims is lacking in T 1.4.2.26–30 (SBN 200–201).

§3 Response to Marusic

In the course of responding to Baxter and to Garrett, I have addressed almost all of Marusic's major concerns, but let me end by addressing some important questions she raises about my use of "transcendental." In particular, she suggests that it might be too liberal, and so, it would seem to incorporate all of the psychological machinery that Hume employs in the *Treatise*, for example, all of our natural tendencies to associate perceptions in a certain way, including ordinary causation, and so on.

However, this is not quite the case. Rather, there seems to be a hierarchy of psychological abilities at play for Hume, that is, some abilities must be employed before others. In particular, according to Hume, as I see it, we must be able to imagine ideas of objects (that is, come up with "objectivity concepts") before we can engage in what he refers to as "common experience" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 195–97), where "common experience" seems to involve experiencing a world of "objects." In the course of such experience, we become conditioned to causally associate certain "objects" with other "objects;" obviously we could not do so if we did not have any idea of what an "object" is. This suggests that our notion of an "object" is privileged, or in other words, "common experience" presupposes it.

However, as pointed out in my book, it is not entirely clear if Hume's notion of natural causation (which recall, is merely a habituated reflex that does not involve reflection) presupposes our notion of an "object." For the textual evidence suggests that we may become conditioned to associate perceptions without necessarily imagining that these perceptions are either distinct from ourselves, or "continue" when we are not perceiving them. Nor must we necessarily think of them as being invariable and uninterrupted (although it seems we should be able to conceive of them as being distinct from each other, but we need not tackle this difficulty here). And thus, it seems that the natural relation of causation is "transcendental" in the general respect that I have used the term in my book; perhaps Hume could have argued that we become conditioned to think in a natural "causal" way first, such that we may then have a notion of cause which we can employ in our transcendental notion of identity, that is, a "secret *cause*." However, I do not think that is necessarily problematic for my interpretation or for Hume, although I think that Marusic is correct to ask these questions.

NOTES

1 Note that Jennifer Marušić has a similar objection in her remarks, which may be addressed in the course of responding to Baxter.

2 Bennett, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, 324.

3 For our purposes, "ordinary causation" is that which is based on habituation, where we have actually experienced (X) (the "cause") and (Y) (the "effect") as constantly conjoined. In cases of *natural* ordinary causation, we will, upon experiencing (X), reflexively *imagine* (Y), but realize that we imagine (Y) based on our experience of similar (Y) impressions that we have had in the past.

4 I am not entirely sure what Garrett has in mind here, that is, if we are experiencing similar particular snowflakes, or the same snowflake multiple times.

5 See Rocknak, *Imagined Causes*, 159–78, as well as Rocknak, "The Vulgar Conception of Objects" and "Constancy and Coherence in 1.4.2 of Hume's *Treatise*."

6 To some degree, this seems to be the way in which Garrett occasionally interprets a Humean object, in light of the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition that Garrett attributes to Hume in his comments, that is, an object is "a thing [considered as] perceived, thought of, known, etc." (Garrett, "Comments").

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