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# Reply to My Critics

DONALD C. AINSLIE

I owe thanks to Annemarie Butler, Jonathan Cottrell, and Barry Stroud for their thoughtful criticism of my interpretation in *Hume's True Scepticism* (hereafter "HTS") of David Hume's epistemology and philosophy of mind as presented in *A Treatise of Human Nature* (especially Part 4 of Book 1).<sup>1</sup> Butler focuses on my account of the mental mechanisms Hume provides for our everyday beliefs about external objects. She also challenges my appeal to what Hume calls "secondary" ideas (T 1.1.1.11; SBN 6) in my explanation of Humean introspection. Cottrell raises questions about my interpretation of perceptions generally, both introspective and non-introspective, as well as my understanding of Hume's conflicted statements about the mind as a "bundle" of related perceptions. Stroud's main concern is my interpretation of Hume's scepticism. I will address these criticisms more-or-less following the order in which they appear in the book, which in turn mostly follows the order of exposition in *Treatise* 1.4. I finish with a response to Cottrell's discussion of Hume's second thoughts about personal identity in the "Appendix" to the *Treatise*.

## I. Vulgar Beliefs

Butler worries that I over-emphasize the role of language in Hume's account of the vulgar belief in external objects (HTS 73–74, 91–97), in that I analyze fictions, including those of such objects, through the lens of his treatment of general ideas, where linguistic terms trigger the associative tendencies involved in these thoughts (T 1.1.7.7; SBN 20–21). She is right that he does not thematize language in "Of scepticism with regard to the senses" (hereafter "SwS"), though it does not go unmentioned, as in his concern with what we "say" about absent objects (T 1.4.2.38; SBN 207) and what the "propriety of speech" (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 201)

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requires in our identity claims; it is also striking how much he treats identity claims as “verbal” or “grammatical” in “Of personal identity,” both as they apply to persons and to other kinds of entities (T 1.4.6.21; see also T 1.4.6.7, 1.4.6.13; SBN 262, 255, 258). Nonetheless, Hume repeatedly stresses our continuity with non-linguistic animals throughout the *Treatise* (for example, T 1.3.16, 2.1.12, 2.2.12; 2.3.9.32, SBN 176–79, 324–28, 397–98, 448), and I do not disagree with Butler that my claiming that vulgar beliefs about the world have a linguistic structure is in some tension with Hume’s claims about non-human animals, which surely also have similar beliefs.

In my defence, recall that Hume compares linguistic conventions to those that define property, where a person’s actions “have a reference to those of . . . other[s]” (T 3.2.2.10; SBN 490); similarly, when someone believes that, say, the desk in the office is the same as the one that was there when she was last in the room, her beliefs have an implicit reference to our shared expectations for how desks behave—they tend not to move about on their own—and how we all respond to constant and coherent experiences. And she ought to defer should someone in a position to know explain to her that the desk had actually been switched for the one from next door. Animal belief will not have this structure, even if it has some of the same associative bases as the human analogues. The difference is the kind of normativity. While the woman and those in her community hold her to their shared standards for desk-persistence, an animal’s errors will emerge only by its failed practical interactions with the object in question. When its associations lead it to believe, say, that the poison it encounters is the same object as the tasty snack that was there earlier, it will end up dead. Our linguistic practices allow us to navigate the world collectively, rather than simply waiting for it to surprise us when it does not conform to our expectations. The analogy between property and language as both being convention-dependent is telling, for Hume acknowledges that animals are “incapable of right and property” (T 2.1.12.5; SBN 326); I think it follows that they are incapable of interacting with external objects with the kind of right that follows from the “propriety of language” (T 1.4.6.13; SBN 158).<sup>2</sup>

Butler also worries that, in my explanation of the four-part mechanism at the heart of Hume’s explanation of our beliefs about objects (T 1.4.2.24–43; SBN 199–210), I have unduly separated the first two parts—those yielding a belief in an object’s being the same despite our interrupted awareness of it—from the latter two—those yielding a belief in the existence of an unperceived object. On the one hand, I think there is both textual and phenomenological evidence for this separation. Hume says, after explaining the first two parts, that “[t]he persons, who entertain this *opinion* concerning the identity of our resembling perceptions, are in general all the unthinking and unphilosophical part of mankind” (T 1.4.2.36; SBN 205, emphasis added). And indeed, when I, say, return to my office, I typically take the desk to be the same as the one that was there previously, giving literally no thought to what the desk was up to between my sensings of it. On the other hand, Butler is right that Hume attributes an instability to this belief that is resolved by a conception of the desk as existing between the times I was perceiving it (T 1.4.2.36–40; SBN 205–208). I think our interpretations ultimately put different emphases on a common point: when I encounter a desk, I take it to be a

temporally extended object that lasts beyond my momentary sensing of it (see HTS §3.3) in part because of my tendency, emphasized in the third and fourth parts of Hume's explanation, to take the desk to continue existing identically when I happen to think of it during those times I am not sensing it.

## II. Secondary Ideas

Butler raises several challenges to my account of Humean introspection in terms of secondary ideas (as does Cottrell, whose criticisms I discuss in the next section of my reply). First, she worries that Hume will end up over-populating the mind, with every impression being copied into both primary and secondary ideas.<sup>3</sup> I think rather that, while every sensory impression is copied into an idea (T 1.1.1.5; SBN 3), we do not usually form secondary ideas of our perceptions. Sometimes they will occur spontaneously, as when we find ourselves thinking not of *things* we have experienced but of our *experiences* (T 1.3.8.16; SBN 106). Philosophers use this capacity in a more disciplined fashion by “entering most intimately” into themselves in order to “observe” the mind (T 1.4.6.3; SBN 252) and, in this case, secondary ideas serve as the vehicles for their observations.

Second, Butler also wonders whether it is legitimate to appeal to secondary ideas to account for Humean introspection and, third, if so, whether he actually needs to appeal to them. Both problems arise because of my claim that Humean perceptions are properly understood as mental events—perceivings—rather than as mental objects (HTS §6.6). Briefly, I worry that the standard object-interpretation must appeal to some kind of mental activity that would make us aware of the perceptions (as if we were, say, “conscious” of perceptions,<sup>4</sup> or have “experiences” of them<sup>5</sup>), landing it in conflict with Hume's claim that the mind is nothing but a bundle of related perceptions (T 1.4.6.4; SBN 252). I argue that, instead, a perception is an *episode* of awareness that, in the case of sensations, includes both imagistic content and the mental “action” (T 1.2.5.21, 1.3.8.16, 1.4.2.35n39, 3.3.1.2; SBN 61, 106, 204–205) by which we are aware of that content. These two aspects of sensations are inseparable, though by a “distinction of reason” (T 1.1.7.17–18; SBN 24–25) we can think of each.

Butler questions the legitimacy of my appeal to secondary ideas when she notes that, because “a primary idea can copy the image-content of an impression without copying its manner, . . . it separates features of an idea which seem not to be separable” (her question [2]). I do not think there is a problem here, in that the primary idea copies a sensory impression, not by *separating out* the impression's image-content, but by making a qualitatively identical *copy* of it, accompanied now by a different, inseparable mental action, a thinking, as opposed to a sensing. Consider the analogous case of a white globe, where the globe's shape and colour are, for Hume, inseparable though distinct by reason (T 1.1.7.18; SBN 25). A black copy of the globe could be made that had a qualitatively identical shape though now with a different colour. The inseparability of neither the original globe's colour and shape, nor of copy's colour and shape, is threatened.<sup>6</sup>

Butler's third worry is that secondary ideas are not really needed: Because a primary idea copies the image-content of a primary impression, she suggests that it can just as easily be used to copy the mental-activity aspect of the impression. As I understand it, her point is that since, by a distinction of reason, we can think of either the content or the mental action involved in a primary perception, this distinguishing is sufficient for both introspective and everyday mental activity. I think this proposal will not work. Consider again Hume's example of a white globe; we must already have it in view prior to distinguishing its (inseparable) aspects. In the case of introspective thought, then, we would already need to have the perception in view before we could separate out either its image content or its being an episode of awareness. And this is where I take Hume to appeal to secondary ideas: they allow us to have our perceptions in view. Perhaps Butler has something else in mind, but I do not see how distinctions of reason could enable Hume to avoid positing what I take to be his replacements for Locke's ideas of reflection (see HTS §4.3.1).

### III. Perceptions

Cottrell raises concerns, not just about my treatment of secondary ideas, but also about my interpretation of perceptions more broadly. I discuss this topic primarily in chapter 6 when examining how Hume responds to "modern" systems of the "internal world" (T 1.4.2.57; SBN 218). He attributes a view to "some philosophers"—I suggest in HTS that Locke comes closest to his target (HTS §6.2)—whereby we have a special, intimate grasp of the simplicity and identity of mind (T 1.4.6.1; SBN 251), and rejects it after entering "most intimately" into himself and observing "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement" (T 1.4.6.3–4; SBN 252). As I noted above, I take the perceptions that compose the mind to be best understood as *perceivings*—episodes of awareness—and Cottrell takes issue with this claim. He raises two main concerns. First, I have left Hume with an unreduced notion of awareness that Cottrell takes to be in violation of Hume's naturalistic scruples. Second, I am not able to adequately account for impressions of reflection—passions and emotions—and the ideas that copy them, especially as they play a role in his account of sympathy.

Taking the second objection first, Cottrell worries that my interpretation seems to leave all ideas that copy passions as secondary ideas. Because my focus in the book is Part 4 of Book 1 of the *Treatise*, I mostly neglect impressions of reflection, which Hume primarily considers in Books 2 and 3 (though of course the impression of necessity is a crucial such impression that appears in Book 1; see T 1.3.14.22; SBN 165–66). I do briefly suggest, however, that, whereas sensations for Hume have imagistic content and thus should be understood as awarenesses-of-image-content, impressions of reflections lack such content (T 2.3.3.5; SBN 415) and thus should be understood as modifications of *how* we are aware of whatever objects we are thinking of. They are mere "flavours" of vivacity that thereby serve to "colour . . . our outlooks on the world" (HTS 213–14).

Cottrell suggests that this understanding of impressions of reflection will prove inadequate for Hume's analysis of sympathy, where we come to feel what another person is feeling, first, by a causal inference's leading us to form an idea of her or his passion, and then by this idea's being converted into the passion itself by an infusion of vivacity from the "idea, or rather impression of ourselves" that is "always intimately present with us" (T 2.1.11.4; SBN 317). This analysis, no matter how you understand Humean perceptions, is far from trouble-free,<sup>7</sup> but Cottrell worries in particular that I will need to treat the idea of the other's passion as a secondary idea; it will thus have something analogous to image-content that would allow for it to serve as a belief in the existence of a mental state (HTS 131–32). How then would an injection of vivacity convert this perception into the passion, where passions lack such content (T 2.3.3.5; SBN 415)?

I think this problem can be avoided if Hume can be found to have two different ways that an idea can copy a passion, just as he has two different ways that an idea can copy a sensory impression (HTS 127). In both cases, it is possible for the idea to copy the prior perception so that it becomes *of* that perception-as-a-mental-state; the idea, in this case, would be a secondary idea that is a form of introspective thought. In addition, for sensory impressions, a (primary) idea can copy the impression by copying its image-content, though it is now entertained with less vivacity; thus, we can think of what we have previously sensed. I think that something analogous can also happen with passions, though of course, lacking image-content, all that the primary idea can copy will be the "flavour" or "outlook" the passion in question involves, though with less vivacity. An idea of, say, the desire for chocolate would be a perception of chocolate (a separate perception with imagistic content) accompanied by a flavouring of that awareness by the addition or superimposition of a desiderative manner of conceiving. We would be thinking of the chocolate *in a wanting manner*, though not to the extent that we actually want it. A secondary idea of the desire, in contrast, would be a thought of the *wanting*. If Hume can appeal to this kind of idea in his sympathy mechanism—and there is no direct textual evidence for or against—he avoids the problem that Cottrell points to.

Cottrell's primary—and more significant—challenge to my interpretation of Humean perceptions is a defense of the more standard view that takes perceptions to be mental objects. He argues that perceptions can be understood as the sensible qualities or feelings we are *aware of* when, say, seeing an object or in the grip of a passion. He notes that I challenge interpretations of this kind in part by questioning how they can understand the *awareness* they invoke, given that Hume identifies the mind with a bundle of related perceptions, not a bundle plus a set of awarenesses of them. Cottrell responds to this concern by pointing to Hume's claim in the middle portion of SwS that "*seeing, feeling, and perceiving*" (T 1.4.2.38; SBN 207) are nothing but perceptions' acquiring "such a relation to a connected heap of perceptions, as to influence them very considerably in augmenting their number by present reflections and passions, and in storing the memory with ideas" (T 1.4.2.40; SBN 208). Being aware of a perception is thus nothing but its being in the bundle, casually linked to other perceptions in the right way. Moreover, Cottrell suggests, this analysis of perceptions allows

Hume to naturalize intentionality by explaining it in terms of relations “found throughout the natural world (not just in minds).”

I am not persuaded by Cottrell’s proposal. Hume, I think, in “glean[ing] up [his] experiments . . . from a cautious observation of human life” (T Intro. 10; SBN xix), is trying to explain, *inter alia*, our everyday awareness<sup>8</sup> of things when we sense and think, and our feelings and reactions to what we experience. Where does this awareness fit into Cottrell’s model? A child’s seeing of an orange (T 1.1.1.8; SBN 4) is, for him, the entrance of the relevant perception—the complex impression that is an orange sphere—into the child’s mind-bundle (where it causes the thought of the orange, a desire for the taste, a memory of a trip to Florida, and so on; and note that the awareness that is part of our normal conception of thinking, desiring, and remembering cannot be assumed by Cottrell). It seems then either that the impression when in the bundle just is the *seeing-of-the-orange* that my interpretation posits, or that Cottrell’s Hume is an eliminativist, where the everyday notion of awareness is explained away, with the impression remaining simply an orange sphere whether in or out of the mind. I take it that Cottrell must take the latter option, for he holds that the perception remains the same whether it is inside or outside of the bundle—and indeed such a conclusion follows from Hume’s view that causal relations, which for Cottrell constitute the perceptions as a bundle, do not involve changes in the relata, but rather simply their conjunction in the right sort of way (T 1.3.14.31; SBN 170).

I think, however, that there is good textual evidence that Hume is not an eliminativist of this type. He emphasizes at various points, for example, that thoughts of objects include an “action of the mind in the meditation”—“that certain *je-ne-scai-quoi*, of which ’tis impossible to give any definition or description, but which every one sufficiently understands” (T 1.3.8.16; SBN 106)—and that we can represent this action through a memory of a *thought* (as opposed to a memory of its object). Ideas can thus be associated not just because of relations between their objects but because of resemblances in the relevant mental actions, a point that Hume describes as being “of great consequence” when he first introduces it (T 1.2.5.21; SBN 61), and that makes a crucial appearance in the four-part explanation of our vulgar beliefs about objects in SwS (T 1.4.2.35n39; SBN 204–205).

Another problem for Cottrell’s view is his assumption that perceptions must enter into causal relations with *other* perceptions for them to be fully mental items. Hume, however, allows that: “We can conceive a thinking being to have either many or few perceptions. Suppose the mind to be reduc’d even below the life of an oyster. Suppose it to have only one perception, as of thirst or hunger” (T App.16; SBN 634). Presumably the sub-oyster’s thirst or hunger counts as a primitive mode of awareness, even though it is the sole perception in the relevant bundle. Thus, when Hume emphasizes the separability of a perception from our mind-bundle (for example, T 1.4.5.5, 1.4.6.3, App.12; SBN 233, 252, 634), I take him merely to be indicating that it lacks an intrinsic connection with the others in the bundle and could conceivably be found on its own, a lonely perception like the mind of the sub-oyster.

Finally, the textual evidence that Cottrell relies on (T 1.4.2.38–40; SBN 206–208) is less than clear. Hume is here considering a possible Berkeleyan objection to the third part of his

four-part explanation of the belief in the continued existence of objects that display constancy in our sensing of them: How can I even *think* of an object's existing when unperceived? He puts his response in terms of his analysis of the mind as a bundle of related perceptions, each of which could exist apart from the mind. This is a difficult portion of an already difficult stretch of text, and I offer my analysis of it at HTS 102–103. The main challenge as I see it is that Hume is struggling with how to characterize the vulgar belief in (what philosophers understand as [HTS 99]) external objects. The content of the vulgar belief is not found in the content of any perception taken singly, but rather is the result of the dynamics of the imagination. How then to characterize the content of this belief when explaining it philosophically? Hume settles on the less-than-helpful move of treating 'perception' and 'object' interchangeably, because the vulgar believe that what they sense exists, and the philosophers hold that what they sense is the content of a perception (T 1.4.2.31; SBN 202; he returns to his more standard use of "perception" at T 1.4.2.46; SBN 211). Ultimately, like other of Hume's interpreters,<sup>9</sup> I suggest he uses 'perception' ambiguously, sometimes to indicate an *object* we are aware of, and sometimes the *episode* of awareness, though for the reasons I offer in the book (HTS §6.6), I think the latter usage must be his official position on the issue.

Cottrell's most programmatic concern with my interpretation of Humean perceptions is that, by taking them to be mental episodes or states of awareness—perceiving—I violate what he takes to be Hume's naturalistic commitments. I worry, however, that Cottrell understands these commitments in a way that is too close to the "modern philosophy," of which Hume says "many objections might be made" (T 1.4.4.6; see HTS §§6.1–4). Like the moderns, Cottrell wants to separate the mentalistic (or secondary) qualities from the primary—those features of the world that figure in the natural sciences broadly. I do not think that Hume is committed to naturalism in this sense. Consider especially his discussion of the will, where he emphasizes that bodily states can cause mental ones and vice versa, where of course the perceptions here, like all causes and effects, are distinct from their correlative effects and causes (T 2.3.1, SBN 399–407; see also T 1.4.5.29–30; SBN 246–48). He does not seem bothered that the science of human nature includes mental states such as sensations that "arise in the soul originally, from unknown causes" (T 1.1.2.1, SBN 7–8; see also T 1.3.5.2; SBN 84).

#### IV. Scepticism

Stroud objects to my "philosophical" reading of Hume's scepticism that takes its core concern to be how philosophy fits into everyday life—that we have no "obligation" to pursue it, and that only those with an inclination should bother with it, using of course the method of a "true sceptic" (T 1.4.7.10, 1.4.7.12, 1.4.7.14; SBN 270, 270–71, 273). Stroud argues instead for a more traditional, sceptical reading, where the "desponding reflections" (T 1.4.7.1; SBN 264) of the "Conclusion of this book" (T 1.4.7; SBN 263–74, hereafter "CtB") that call into question the verdicts of reason and the senses are never resolved but rather simply ignored, as nature causes us to believe, despite our negative verdict on our human faculties. My concern with such readings is that they suffer from what Phillip Cummins has called the "integration"

problem:<sup>10</sup> how can we understand Hume's willingness to continue on with his scientific project in Books 2 and 3, if he has so fully undermined the capacities we need for that science in CtB (see HTS 227)? Stroud's response is that Hume's nature inclines him to philosophy and that this fact suffices to explain his forging onwards with the rest of the *Treatise*. I think, however, that an appeal to inclination of this sort could be at best a causal explanation and would not yet show any positive reason for Hume to go on; but, he says that he hopes to "contribute a little to the advancement of *knowledge*, by giving in some particulars a different turn to the speculations of philosophers, and pointing out to them more distinctly those subjects, where alone they can expect *assurance* and *conviction*" (T 1.4.7.14; SBN 273, emphases added). In fact, if Hume thought that the sceptical attacks on reason and the senses remained intact, he himself admits that he would immediately give up on further inquiry (T Intro.9, 2.3.3.7; SBN xviii, 416–17). I do not think Stroud has avoided the integration problem.

The root of Stroud's and my disagreement concerns how to read CtB. Where he sees no discontinuity between the narrative voice in that Section and in the rest of the Book 1 ("it is David Hume who complains. . ."), I see it as an account of the transition from "false" philosophy to "true philosophy" (T 1.4.3.9, SBN 222–23), namely "true" scepticism (T 1.4.7.14, SBN 273). My approach thus has some similarity with what I call the "dialectical" interpretations of Annette Baier, Edward Morris, and others (see HTS §7.4).<sup>11</sup> And I think there is good textual evidence for seeing Hume as starting CtB with a different attitude towards his endeavour from what he had previously displayed. Consider especially his seeming upset over the discovery that he lacks insight into the intrinsic connections between causes and effects (T 1.4.7.5; SBN 266–67)—a discovery that caused no distress in T 1.3—and the embrace of the conflict between reason and our imagination-generated belief in body (T 1.4.7.4; SBN 266) that he had previously seen as merely the expression of the "modern philosophy" (T 1.4.4.15; SBN 231; see HTS 200–204). I differ from the other dialectical interpreters, however, in that, where they hold that Hume starts CtB by impersonating "rationalist" opponents, I take him rather to be exemplifying a temptation that afflicts all forms of reflection, his own included. Because, when we reflect, we remain focused on only the mind we observe, and not the vehicles of that reflection (secondary ideas), it is easy to start thinking that a reflective attitude towards the mind comes for free, as if we were *always* superintending the mind, having to make decisions about what to believe. As he moves through the denouement of CtB, he comes to acknowledge that reflection depends on the same principles of association as our everyday forms of awareness, and thus that attacks on the latter also undermine the former (what I call "reflective interference"). When Hume then narrates the return to philosophy at T 1.4.7.11–13 (SBN 270–72), he can view the sceptical challenges, not as undermining reason and the senses, but as posing questions that philosophy turns out to be unable to answer positively or negatively (T 1.4.7.14; SBN 272–73); we can continue to reason and sense even while, as "true sceptics," recognizing that we lack a philosophical foundation for our capacities.

It is notable that Stroud must turn to the analogous section of the first *Enquiry*<sup>12</sup> when trying to make sense of Hume's attitude towards sceptical arguments. I take this later work, in recasting Book 1's arguments about the structure of the mind in epistemological terms, to

be more amenable to a sceptical interpretation. Most famously, in the *Enquiry*, Hume uses sceptical tropes to present his argument about causation, while in the analogous Part 3 of Book 1 of the *Treatise*, the word ‘sceptic’ (and its cognates) appears precisely once (T 1.3.13.12; SBN 150). Hume does later say that he changed only the “manner,” and not the “matter,” of his philosophy when writing the *Enquiry*, and that the “Principles are the same in both” works.<sup>13</sup> How best to understand the differences between them remains an open question,<sup>14</sup> but, as I argue in the “Introduction” to HTS (16–17), I think it is worthwhile to consider how the *Treatise* reads on its own terms, not through the retrospective lens of the *Enquiry*. I remain convinced that the “true” scepticism in the former work is a scepticism about philosophy, what it can accomplish, and its place in life.

## V. Personal Identity

Hume’s second thoughts about personal identity in the “Appendix” to the *Treatise* have probably sparked more interpretations than almost any other topic in his philosophy; certainly, as Hsueh M. Qu has pointed out, the ratio of the secondary literature to the paragraphs of source text is extremely high.<sup>15</sup> Cottrell and I have both contributed our fair share already, but his criticisms of the interpretation I present in HTS helps to highlight a previously neglected issue: the difference between Hume’s accounts of the *bundle of perceptions* and of the *mind* as consisting of related perceptions.

Cottrell takes my interpretation of Hume’s position—that he is unable to explain our belief in the unity of observed perceptions with the secondary ideas that enable this observation—to be wholly psychological, concerned only with our *beliefs* about mental unity, and he goes on to argue for his preferred metaphysical interpretation.<sup>16</sup> He is not wrong that I emphasize Hume’s account of our beliefs, but I take it also to have metaphysical import (it might thus best be characterized as *psychology-first* interpretation, rather than as a psychological one). Though the mind as a bundle does not have “perfect” or intrinsic unity, it does have what Hume calls “imperfect” unity that it exemplifies by causing our belief in its unity: “[T]he uninterrupted progress of the thought . . . constitutes the imperfect identity” (T 1.4.6.9; SBN 256; see HTS 90, 93, 206ff., 249, 258, 261) and, analogously, simplicity (T 1.4.6.22; SBN 263) of the mind.<sup>17</sup>

Cottrell, in contrast, thinks that Hume’s concern is more fully metaphysical, particularly focusing on how perceptions come to “compose” a mind (T 1.4.6.16, App. 15, 20; SBN 256, 634, 635). He suggests that, for Hume, such composition is “ideal” depending on our forming secondary ideas that, by association or active relating, bring together the perceptions being composed.<sup>18</sup> Cottrell’s and my interpretations are closely related but importantly different, in that they see Hume as addressing different questions. For Cottrell, Hume wants to analyze how perceptions come to form the “system” that is the mind (T 1.4.6.19; SBN 261); it is thus what I call a “bundling” interpretation (HTS §8.3.3). This approach is related to Cottrell’s view of perceptions that I discussed above, in that he takes them to be able to enter and depart the mind depending on whether they have the relevant causal relations with the other perceptions in the system; Hume’s explanatory starting point, for Cottrell, seems to be a universe

of free-floating perceptions with their being 'bundled' only when they develop the relevant relations that enable them to compose a mind. Note, however, that, because perceptions are in the mind only when they are related to other perceptions in the right way, it follows that there can be no such thing as a *chaotic* bundle with random, disconnected perceptions. But surely such a bundle is conceivable (and thus possible [T 1.2.2.8, SBN 32; see HTS §5.4]); indeed, Hume seems open to such a possibility at T 1.4.6.17 (SBN 260), where he sets out to see whether resemblance and causal relations actually do obtain between perceptions.

My interpretation, in contrast, focuses on how the mind has "imperfect" identity and simplicity—that is, how, when we observe perceptions within us that have no intrinsic connections between them, we nonetheless believe that they are unified with one another. Should they not have the causal and resemblance relations we happen to find there, the bundle would not be imperfectly unified. It would be a mere bundle. And Cottrell is right that I take Hume to treat its being a bundle as a brute fact (see HTS 264). The universe comes with different 'islands' of perceptions (HTS 264), each such island being a "universe of the imagination" (T 1.2.6.8; SBN 68) or "of thought" (T 1.4.5.21; SBN 242). Each person, when reflecting, cannot observe another person's perceptions; only by a thought experiment where we "see clearly into the breast of another" (T 1.4.6.18; SBN 260) could we cross the gap between different bundles. Thus, I take Hume's retraction in the "Appendix" to concern only his account of the imperfect unity of the mind, not the bundle view as such (see HTS 250).

Cottrell worries that taking the bundling of perceptions to be a brute fact conflicts with Hume's theory of relations, where 'co-bundling' does not fall into the seven categories of relations he gives: "If it were a brute fact that several perceptions compose a mind, then composition would have to be a basic or fundamental kind of relation, i.e., one that is not explained in terms of any further relations." Because Cottrell seems to take Hume's starting point to be a universe of free-floating perceptions, he needs something that would bring some of them together to compose minds. But once we distinguish between the issues of bundling and of mental unity, I can accept Cottrell's point about composition. The perceptions within a bundle *compose a mind* when they have the relations that cause us to associate our secondary ideas of them. That these perceptions are in the bundle in the first place remains a brute fact; equivalently, given Hume's reliance on introspection to understand the mind,<sup>19</sup> it is a brute fact that, when we reflect, we observe only a subset of perceptions, not all of those in the universe. If a relation is needed to characterize the perceptions in the bundle, their availability to introspection would suffice—with introspection being understood causally and thus having a place in Hume's taxonomy of relations (albeit the relation of any perception to the object it represents is a complex matter for Hume; see HTS 204).<sup>20</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 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 and Nidditch, cited in the text as “SBN” followed by the page number.
- 2 Karl Schafer also emphasizes the role of language and artifice in Hume’s theory of representation; see “The Artificial Virtues of Thought,” 1–20. But where Schafer takes the relevant kind of normativity here to be moral, I take Hume to allow for a kind of rule-governed normativity in a given domain that is non-moral. Note that he establishes the conventional nature of property first (T 3.2.2.1–22; SBN 484–98), and only then (T 3.2.2.23ff; SBN 498–501) considers that conformity to those rules is morally relevant because of the “sympathy with public interest” that respect for property makes possible (T 3.2.2.24; SBN 500).
- 3 Butler also worries that T 1.1.1.11 (SBN 6) seems to concern only secondary ideas *of ideas*, not secondary ideas *of impressions*. I acknowledge this point at HTS 122, where I note that he also recognizes (secondary) ideas of impressions at T 1.3.8.17 (SBN 106). Moreover, given that T 1.1.1.11 (SBN 6) concerns how he has been engaging in “this very reasoning concerning” perceptions – his establishment of his principle that almost all simple ideas are copies of prior simple *impressions*—he has been using secondary ideas of *both* ideas and impressions throughout T 1.1.1, even if T 1.1.1.11 overtly addresses only secondary ideas of ideas.
- 4 Wayne Waxman, *Hume’s Theory of Consciousness*, is the clearest defender of this view.
- 5 As David Norton suggests in the “Introduction” to *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I23.
- 6 This is not to say that Hume’s treatment of distinctions of reason is without its issues; see especially Donald Baxter, “Hume, Distinctions of Reason, and Differential Resemblance,” and Tarō Okamura, “Hume on Distinctions of Reason: A Resemblance-First Interpretation.”
- 7 See my “Sympathy and the Unity of Hume’s Idea of Self.”
- 8 I use the word ‘aware’ in part because it is suitably generic and less freighted with philosophical theory than, say, ‘conscious.’ Hume uses it only once in the *Treatise* (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254).
- 9 See HTS 53n18.
- 10 Phillip Cummins, “Hume’s Diffident Skepticism.”
- 11 Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*; W. E. Morris, “Hume’s Conclusion.”
- 12 Section 12 of *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*.
- 13 “My Own Life,” in *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, xxxv; “Letter to Gilbert Eliot,” in *Letters of David Hume*, 1:158.
- 14 See Miriam McCormick, “A Change in Manner: Hume’s Scepticism in the *Treatise* and the first *Enquiry*”; Hsueh M. Qu, *Hume’s Epistemological Evolution*.
- 15 *Epistemological Evolution*, 103.
- 16 See his “Minds, Composition, and Hume’s Skepticism in the Appendix.”
- 17 Cottrell takes T App. 10 (SBN 633) to favour a metaphysical interpretation. Hume proposes there to review the arguments “on both sides, beginning [and lasting until T App.19, SBN 635]

with those that induc'd me to deny the strict and proper identity and simplicity of a self or thinking being" and thus, to Cottrell, suggesting that the second side (T App. 20–21; SBN 635–36) should be similarly metaphysical. But, because my view has a stronger metaphysical element that Cottrell acknowledges, it can take this point on board. T App. 20 (SBN 635) starts with Hume's retelling of his treatment of the imperfect unity of the mind (brought about by the fact that "when reflecting on the train of past perceptions, that compose a mind, the ideas of them are felt to be connected together, and naturally introduce each other" [see HTS 254–55 for a discussion of the significance of the word 'past' here]). But then he comes to recognize that his earlier account cannot explain his belief in mental unity and derivatively the mind's imperfect unity.

18 "Minds, Composition," 552.

19 His attitude on this point is conflicted. See HTS 62, 132–34.

20 Yumiko Inukai also notes that Hume treats the occurrence of perceptions in a bundle as a "brute fact" and argues that the problem he identifies in the "Appendix" arises as a consequence ("Hume's Labyrinth," 267). She takes him to hold that the perceptions in the bundle are "unified" (268ff.) but is unable to account for the connections between perceptions she takes such unity to require (Cottrell's concern that brute bundling would require a relation not included in Hume's taxonomy at T 1.1.5 is similar). I think, in contrast, that there is no unity in the bundle unless the perceptions display the relations that trigger the association of (secondary) ideas of them. Inukai concludes that "Hume's problem is more fundamental than most of the commentators have made it to be, for it is not specific only to his account of the generation of our idea of a persisting self, but it is with his primary presupposition on which his psychological account is based" (270). The interpretation thus conflicts with Hume's statement that the personal identity Section contains his single mistake in Books 1 and 2 (T App. 1; SBN 623) and with the insulation of the "Appendix" problem from other appearances of the bundle theory (for example, T 1.4.2.39; SBN 207).

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